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Introduction to the Special Issue on Organized Crime

JOSEPH SCIORRA

On March 20, 1971, the *New York Times* ran the front-page headline "'Godfather' Film Won't Mention Mafia" (Lichtenstein 1971, 1). The story reported that producer Al Ruddy of Paramount Pictures and representatives of the Italian American Civil Rights League had agreed to strike the words *mafia* and *Cosa Nostra* from the script of the film *The Godfather*, directed by Francis Ford Coppola and based on Mario Puzo's 1969 best-selling novel of the same name. One of the League representatives was Anthony Colombo. His father, Joseph Colombo Sr., was one of the organization's founders—and head of the Colombo crime family—and had nefariously appropriated the role of Italian American leader and spokesperson. Until that moment the production of the film had experienced intimidation, theft, and violence. So this was a propitious deal of quid pro quo; in exchange for script censorship, all the difficulties that had plagued pre-production and production ceased, and mob-controlled labor unions began cooperating with the filming (Seal 2009).

This sordid collusion was complicated by the fact that Italian American *prominenti* (literally "prominent ones")—including U.S. congressmen, New York State legislators, judges, businessmen, and representatives of the chapter-based national organization Order Sons of Italy—had been bemoaning the film's production as "anti-Italian" and threatening to wage an economic boycott and to stage protests of the movie (Pileggi 1971, 36–37). A blurring occurred in which the mobbed-up League was conflated in the popular imagination with civic-minded spokespeople, thus diminishing the latter's seemingly altruistic efforts (Kenna 2007, 193). But as historian Philip V. Cannistraro notes, "the *prominenti*'s constant preoccupation with the Mafia issue" (2005, 83), dating to the early 1930s when newspaper owner Generoso Pope launched an anti-defamation campaign against cinematic depictions of *mafiosi*, has historically been a self-serving agenda. "The dual focus of *prominentismo* has always been to promote the separate, self-aggrandizing interest of their own particular elite rather than the community as a whole, and to stress what Italian Americans are not" (Cannistraro 2005, 84). It is no surprise, then, as Fred Gardaphé observes, that "more unified acts by Italian Americans have been launched against fictional portrayal of the mafia than ever were mounted against real mafiosi in the United States" (2015, 365).

The extraordinary detente between Paramount and the League resulted in a peculiar comingling of actors and gangsters. Hollywood principals like Marlon Brando (Vito Corleone) and Robert Duvall (Tom Hagen) met with criminals to prepare for their parts. James Caan socialized with mobsters on and off the set, picking up gestures, accents, and phrases for his role as Mafia heir apparent Sonny Corelone. According to one source, undercover agents who saw Caan in the presence of crime boss Carmine Persico were convinced that the young actor was an up-and-coming hood (Pileggi 1971, 48). The actor-gangster identity crisis reached such bizarre heights that "one supporting actor got so confused about who he was that he joined a carload of enforcers on a trip to Jersey to beat up scabs in a labor dispute" (1971, 48). Others who were vying for roles claimed spurious and genuine mob connections like Alex Rocco (Moe Greene) and Gianni Russo (Carlo Rizzi) (Seal 2009). And some used their own Mafia connections to secure a part in this extravagant Hollywood period film. Pop crooner Al Martino (Johnny Fontane) revealed, "I had to step on some toes to get people to realize that I was in the effing movie. I went to my godfather, Russ Bufalino," the Pennsylvania mob boss (Seal 2009).

This encounter and exchange between the realities and representations of organized crime was further confounded when some gangsters were cast as bit players and extras. One noted example was ex-wrestler Lenny Montana who had been a bodyguard for the Colombo crime family when he was given the part of Luca Brasi (Seal 2009). In its search for authenticity, *The Godfather* film contributed to the replication of refracted Mafia imagery in a mediated house of mirrors. The film's legacy of converging mediascape and ethnoscape continues to reverberate in numerous cultural productions such as *The Sopranos*, *Mob Wives*, the "hip wop" rendition of rap music (Sciorra 2011, 33–51), and countless television commercials and web skits and parodies.

This special issue of the *Italian American Review* on organized crime brings together six essays exploring the realities and representations of Italian Americans and criminality. Given the historical association of Italian Americans with organized crime in the United States, it behooves us as scholars of Italian American studies to tackle this subject with all the intellectual rigor of our various disciplinary insights. As we know, organized crime is not unique to any one country or ethnic group but rather develops out of specific economic and social conditions across the globe at different historical moments. As the sole university research institute for Italian American studies, the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute and its scholarly journal are uniquely positioned to address this topic.

The Calandra Institute's seventh annual conference, titled "MAFIAs: Realities and Representations of Organized Crime" (April 25–26, 2014), is the origin of this special issue. The event sought to cover a variety of worldwide manifestations of organized crime, not just those concerning Italians or Italian Americans. Conference participants spoke on topics pertaining to Jewish and Polish American mobsters in the United States as well as organized crime in Colombia, India, Japan, Pakistan, and Sweden. The breadth of this conference program exhibited a wide and deep intellectual discourse across various disciplinary fields.

Given the *Italian American Review*'s purview, I, as journal editor, asked conference participants who were addressing the specificity of Italian Americans to submit their expanded papers for peer review. I would be remiss not to thank the anonymous peer reviewers who read all five essays. In addition, I invited keynote speaker Jane Schneider to submit to the journal a revised version of her conference paper.

Jane Schneider's "Mafia Emergence: What Kind of State?" sets out to explore the social, political, and economic conditions under which organized crime emerges and flourishes. Beginning her essay with Italy, Schneider also discusses Mafias in Hong Kong, Japan, Russia, Taiwan, and the United States to develop a theory of Mafia formation. In addition, she codifies the parameters of what constitutes a Mafia, as opposed to other forms of organized crime such as gangs or pirates. A key element in defining any criminal organization as Mafia, according to Schneider, is its collusion with an ineffectual state. The breadth of her interdisciplinary study references a wide range of scholarship by anthropologists, historians, sociologists, and economists as she unpacks Mafias' cultural aspects (ritualized behaviors, venues for socializing, art forms) and antisocialist, anticommunist, and anti-labor politicized violence. Schneider's in-depth analysis and broad overview are a fitting opening to this special issue.

Historian Tommaso Caiazza's essay, "'No Mafia Here': Crime, Race, and the Narrative of San Francisco's Italian American 'Model Colony'" looks at mediated depictions of criminality among San Francisco's Italian American communities during the Progressive Era. He is concerned with the intersection of criminality and racialization, or what he calls the "process of racialized criminalization" (32). Caiazza is attuned to both inter- and intra-ethnic dynamics—how the English-language press discussed crime and violence among the city's Italian immigrants but also how the Italian-language press in turn reacted to those depictions. Tensions existed between northern and southern Italian immigrants, as well as between the established and middle-class Italian Americans and the more recently arrived, working-class Italian immigrants. Looking at

newspaper accounts of a brutal murder in 1905, Caiazza expands on the ways race and community were constructed and negotiated. Furthermore, he situates Italian immigrants within a multi-racial city that included Asian Americans and Mexican Americans in explaining how the local *prominenti* created the myth of a "model community" in their attempts to distinguish West Coast Italians from their East Coast counterparts.

The interplay between mediated depictions in U.S. newspapers is further expanded upon in "Early Representations of Organized Crime and Issues of Identity in the Italian American Press (1890–1910)" by Marina Cacioppo. The author looks at the Italian-language press's creation of counternarratives to derogatory and discriminatory articles about Italian immigrant criminality in the English-language press. Scouring publications like *Collier's Weekly*, *Harper's Weekly*, *L'Eco d'Italia*, *L'Araldo Italiano*, and others, Cacioppo examines the discursive accounts of the 1891 lynching of Italians in New Orleans and a 1903 New York City murder. One of the ways that the Italian-language press combatted the xenophobic conflation of Italian immigrants, violence, and criminality in the guise of the Black Hand and the Mafia was with the promotion of Lieutenant Joseph Petrosino of the New York Police Department as a model ethnic and communal hero. In this and other sundry ways, the immigrant press with its *prominenti* editors and journalists helped shape an Italian American identity in the early days of mass migration.

Anthony Tasso updates the mediated *mafioso* by taking a psychological approach to the popular fascination with Italian American gangsters, in particular the heralded *The Godfather* and *The Godfather II* (1972 and 1974), *Goodfellas* (1990), *Casino* (1995), and *The Sopranos* (1999–2007). In "An Examination of Mafia Spectatorship Phenomena from a Psychological Perspective," Tasso frames his analysis of these works and their audiences on psychological concepts concerning narcissism and omnipotence, rules and structure, familial connectedness, and gender roles. For the author, the spectator of mob films and TV shows experiences an allure of and identification with powerful, violent, and non-socionormative characters who are also engaged in familial collective relationships, albeit of an extremely problematic nature. Ultimately, for Tasso, the viewer's voyeuristic engagement with mob fare "facilitates the psychological bifurcation" of transgressive, hostile behavior and the "organized" part of crime that "stimulates intrapsychic conflict" (85), a heady and emotional cocktail.

During the first half of the twentieth century, both Italian Americans and Polish Americans in Chicago and its environs were involved in organized crime. Yet, as Louis Corsino explores in his essay "Revisiting the Link between Italian Americans and Organized Crime: The Italian Americans and Polish Americans in the Community Context," Italian

Americans created an entrenched and vigorous crime operation, known simply as the "Outfit," while Polish Americans did not. Tracing the trajectories of these two groups in the Illinois city of Chicago Heights (thirty miles south of Chicago) vis-à-vis jobs, housing, residency patterns, social networks, voluntary associations, and discrimination, Corsino does not find much disparity between the two groups. So, why the divergence of the two groups in the involvement with organized crime? Corsino finds that social capital linked to external group affiliations in Chicago proper was key for Italian Americans in Chicago Heights solidifying and expanding their organized crime enterprise.

The final article in this special issue, Peter T. Schneider's "Havana, Cuba: Contraband Capitalism and Criminal Organization in North America," takes us to Cuba, which became a haven for the U.S. Mafia's laundering of money from various illegal activities during the Prohibition era. Contraband capitalism, a term Schneider introduces and explicates in his essay, is the profiteering of desirable yet illegal goods and services. As U.S. gangsters used Cuba as a base for hiding profits made from alcohol, drugs, gambling, prostitution, and other illegal commodities, they also took control of illicit activities on the island. Key players in this transnational enterprise included Santo Trafficante Sr. and his son Santo Trafficante Jr. of Tampa, and Charles "Lucky" Luciano and Meyer Lansky out of New York City. Schneider concludes his article by speculating on "What would have happened to the American Mafia, and its role in American history, had it not been for the Cuban Revolution of 1959?" (112).

Those involved in Italy's anti-Mafia movement have inspired people worldwide with their courageous strategies for confronting the silence and acquiescence that have existed for too long around criminal activities of this nature. They have successfully extricated themselves from an ideology of *omertà*, complacency, and collusion, in a project of "reversible destiny" (Schnedier and Schneider 2003). This special issue of *Italian American Review*, as well as the original Calandra Institute conference, is in keeping with that sentiment of resistance insofar as it aims to shine a light on heinous practices that so many have chosen to willfully ignore for so long.

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Mafia Emergence: What Kind of State?

JANE SCHNEIDER

Introduction

In the mid-1960s, while pursuing anthropological research in western Sicily, Peter Schneider had the extraordinary experience of attending five banquets, or *schiticchie*, organized over several months to celebrate a peace between butchers from several neighboring rural towns, all Mafia associates, and a meat wholesaler with whom they had quarreled. The locales were rustic country dwellings and restaurants, situated in the territories of the respective *cosche* (singular *cosca*), or Mafia groups, whose leaders made the arrangements, cooked the multicourse meals, and supplied abundant wine. Each banquet ended with hilarious, scatological entertainment in which some of the (all-male) participants, in gaudy costumes, parodied women and the church. Evoking patron saint festivals, two banquets culminated in fireworks. Participants numbered about eighty by the last banquet and included a mayor, two priests, four soccer players, and a veterinarian (the latter charged with inspecting livestock before slaughter). The hothouse effect of the fun and games led the assembled company to consider themselves above society, entitled to upend its conventions.

Three decades later, after the anti-Mafia process of the 1980s and 1990s in Sicily had yielded depositions from a number of justice collaborators, ironically known as *pentiti*, it became possible to document what had earlier been suspected—that memories of expansive hospitality and shared good times strengthened the collusive bonds between *mafiosi* and leading figures in business, politics, the clergy, the professions, the police, and the secret services. One *pentito*, Antonino Calderone, famously likened the *mafioso* to a spider, who "builds webs of friends, of acquaintances, of obligations" (Calderone inArlacchi 1993, 20). His and other depositions showed how the networks ensnared not only local but also regional and national politicians.

In addition to *schiticchie*, hunting parties nurtured relationships between *mafiosi* and notables. So too did crossing paths in luxury hotels. In the postwar decades, years of a colossal construction boom in the regional capital Palermo, the newly built Hotel Zagarella, on the coast outside the city, became the weekend playground for Nino Salvo, one of two *mafioso* cousins who had been granted the tax collection concession for all of Sicily on extremely favorable terms. According to *pentito* testimony, Nino entertained

powerful political leaders, among them a regular poker companion, Salvo Lima, Christian Democratic mayor of Palermo and national parliamentary deputy (eventually also a European Union deputy before being assassinated on March12, 1992) (Calderone in Arlacchi 1993, 175; Schneider and Schneider 2003, 122). Photographs taken at the Zagarella in June 1979 by photographer Letizia Battaglia became a centerpiece in the 1995 trial of former Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti, accused of having colluded with the Mafia.[1] One of them shows Andreotti with Nino Salvo. Lima and other regional Christian Democratic leaders were present as well. The manager of the hotel at the time testified that Salvo had ordered the "best possible" buffet for Andreotti and personally conducted him on a tour of the finest rooms (Arlacchi 1995, 105; Schneider and Schneider 2003, 122–123).

Impressed by these accounts, scholars of the Sicilian Mafia have adopted the word *intreccio*, by which they mean an "organic interweaving," an imbrication, to describe the Mafia–state relation in Italy. Umberto Santino, for example, considers the *intreccio* the key to the Mafia's economy and system of power (2000, 381; see also Catanzaro 1992 [1988]; Chubb 1982, 1996; Schneider and Schneider 2003). This does not mean that all of the state is enmeshed; on the contrary, scholars have also embraced the phrase *pezzi dello stato*—pieces of the state—noting that, since the Mafia's inception in the nineteenth century, there have always existed anti-Mafia "pieces." Historian Salvatore Lupo has reconstructed this tension, painstakingly working with police and other archives. An important chapter of Lupo's *Storia della Mafia* (1993) concerns the 1893 assassination of Emanuele Notarbartolo, mayor of Palermo from 1873 to 1876, then director general of the Bank of Sicily (1876–1890), in which role he exposed a ring of fraudulent traders, their affairs extending to the stock exchanges of Genoa and Milan. The accused murderer, who was simultaneously a deputy in the national parliament, a powerful member of the bank's council, and a protector of his district's *mafiosi*, had his conviction overturned in Italy's highest court, thanks to the intervention of well-placed friends. As Lupo shows, this particular *intreccio* entangled *mafiosi* with the judicial, banking, and financial systems of the entire country.

The nugget of the problem I want to explore is how to construct a theory of Mafia formation that takes account of the *intreccio*. As will become clear, I subscribe to a narrow definition of Mafia. The world is awash in an immense variety of criminal organizations, from gangs of bandits, pirates, and urban youth to the megasyndicates that orchestrate illegal trafficking. Such organizations are also variously structured, from tightly disciplined hierarchies to loose networks and transient coalitions. Within this mix, I reserve the word *Mafia* for translocal, adult male fraternal sodalities whose

respective local "chapters" lay claim to territories in which they "order," against the exaction of fees and favors and backed by their capacity to threaten violence, certain sectors of the economy. Additional characteristics include transgenerational continuity; an emphasis on respect, discipline, and loyalty; the recruitment of new members not solely (or even predominantly) through kinship but also by tapping talented wannabes; and cultural practices that underscore an exclusive, superior identity—for example, a charter myth, initiation rites, playful nicknames, tattoos or other visible markers, and transgressive conviviality from which women, or at least *their* women, are excluded. Significantly, Calderone refers to Sicilian *mafiosi* not only as "spiders" but also as "the elite of the criminal world . . . vastly superior to common criminals . . . worse than everybody!" (Arlacchi 1993, 2). *Mafiosi* call themselves and each other "men of honor."

Members of a Mafia also typically invest a lot of time resolving internecine conflicts through negotiation and peacemaking, lest their capacity for violence get out of hand. A Mafia prepares for the arrest and imprisonment of some of its members some of the time, mobilizing funds for this purpose. In addition, it promotes, among members and in the wider community, what Italians call *omertà*—the cultural practice of turning a blind eye toward violations of the law, of never betraying anyone to the legal authorities, of minding one's business and cultivating a stance of studied ignorance. Snitches are correspondingly punished in ways that telegraph the seriousness of this code. Finally, any powerful Mafia is characterized by what I have emphasized above—its *intreccio* with elements of the state.

Following Federico Varese (2011, 5–6), I consider such organizations to have consolidated themselves around the turn of the twentieth century in Italy, Japan, and the United States, somewhat later in Hong Kong and Taiwan, and—with qualifications—in 1990s Russia. Searching for a pattern, I first take up Italian sociologist Diego Gambetta and his followers (among them Varese), who have analyzed Mafia formation for just this cluster of cases. Each distinguishes Mafias from other kinds of criminal organization and locates their origins in relation to abrupt and rocky transitions to liberal capitalism—arguments that I find illuminating. Central to their approach, however, is the further proposition that, during the transition, the state, quite possibly in the process of shedding an authoritarian past, was "dysfunctional," "absent," or "absorbed with other priorities," creating vast opportunity fields for *mafiosi*. Once up and running, *mafiosi* then prevented state officials, whom they determinedly corrupted, from constituting normal structures, above all that sine qua non of stateness, monopoly control over the means and use of violence. Is this picture, I

ask, of a Mafia flourishing in the interstices of an ineffectual state and then corrupting (or further corrupting) it robust enough to capture the *intreccio*?

Richard Samuels's 2003 book *Machiavelli's Children: Leaders and Their Legacies in Italy and Japan* suggests an alternative to the "missing state" hypothesis: namely, the mutual accommodation of states and Mafias. Samuels locates post-1860 Italy and Japan in relation to the world system of nation- states, analyzes their respective projects to leap ahead in this system, and implies how their respective Mafias contributed to these projects and were rewarded for their contribution. To the extent that Mafias are *collaborators* in rapid capitalist development, their entanglements with the state are intrinsic to their formation.

The Gambetta School: Narrowing the Definition of Mafia

In his 1993 book *The Sicilian Mafia: The Business of Protection*, Gambetta defined Mafia as "a specific economic enterprise, an industry which produces, promotes, and sells private protection" (1993, 1). Clients can be individuals but mainly they are businesses; on a few occasions, Sicilian *mafiosi* protected groups of laborers from exploitation and abuse (Gambetta 1993, 86–87). According to Gambetta, an abrupt transition to capitalism in the absence of serviceable commercial laws and institutions supportive of a market economy calls such an enterprise into being. In the case of Sicily, Bourbon rulers set off the first stirrings when they began to dismantle feudal institutions in 1812. Following the 1860 unification of Italy, a new liberal state further advanced the privatization of property—for example, by legislating the appropriation of ecclesiastical holdings and their sale at auction.

Such moves provoked outbreaks of banditry and insurrection, above all in the formerly quasi-feudal agrarian south to which Sicily belonged. There, in the latifundist interior and west of the island, such an unarticulated leap into capitalism created immense uncertainty and conflict over the management and disposition of resources (compounded, Gambetta argues, by a deficit of social trust). As these structural conditions made protection by private intimidation a welcome—hence marketable—commodity, demobilized soldiers, estate guards, bandits, and others capable of using physical force stepped into the breach, organizing themselves as Mafia *cosche*. An "autonomous social force," *cosca* members sold protective services to the landlords and merchants of the latifundist interior, to small cultivators and entrepreneurs in the increasingly commercial zone of orchards and vineyards near Palermo, and to businesses in Palermo and other west Sicilian cities.

Many would characterize the sale of private protection as "racketeering," a word of uncertain etymology[2] that came into vogue during the

Prohibition era in the United States. Implying the use or threat of violence, its meanings straddle the line between provisioning wanted services and extorting money for services that are bogus or rendered necessary by the providers themselves. Gambetta skews toward the benign side of the equation, treating as more or less genuine a preponderance of the protection services that *mafiosi* supply—a position that critics consider too "functionalist" (Humphrey 1999, 211–212; see also Catanzaro 1993, 1994; Schneider 1994). An interesting example to the contrary is offered by anthropologist Caroline Humphrey, who studied Mafia emergence in 1990s Russia. Yes, she proclaims, the sudden opening of markets in the absence of a well-developed legal framework for protecting property and guaranteeing contracts did create a *demand* for protection. And, yes, a *supply* of protectors, skilled in the use of violence, emerged from the chaos—bandits, released prisoners, demobilized soldiers, and, as sociologist Vadim Volkov had already shown for Russia, wrestlers, weightlifters, bodybuilders, and boxers, trained in Soviet sports clubs and known, collectively, as *sportsmeny* (Volkov 2002). But these ingredients, key to a functionalist analysis, are only the beginning. To Humphrey, the protection racket is fundamentally "appropriative," that is, activated by persons "whose basic income, livelihood and 'surplus product' [are] founded on a constant threat of violence to others." The violence is intrinsic, not accidental; it fuels a dynamic capacity for scaling up that far transcends merely answering a demand for protection (see Humphrey 1999, 211–212; see also Catanzaro 1993, 1994; Schneider 1994).

Notwithstanding Gambetta's supply–demand functionalism, he acknowledges that the word *racketeer* is at least ambiguous (see Gambetta 1993, 29–33, 187–190). Nor are his descriptions of Sicilian Mafia practice inconsistent with economist Peter Reuter's pioneering book of 1987, *Racketeering in Legitimate Industries; A Study in the Economics of Intimidation*. Using reports of antiracket task forces in New York City, Reuter explores the commonalities of the most vulnerable enterprises—dry cleaning, trucking, garment making, stevedores, construction, garbage collection, and the wholesale distribution of meat, fish, and poultry. All shared multiple small-business units, a high proportion of costs devoted to labor, low profit margins, minimal product diversification, high failure rates, and what we might summarize as demographic pressure, that is, low barriers to entry and a crush of would-be entrepreneurs competing for market share. In the construction industry, exposure to delays in the delivery of manpower and materials was especially crucial (see Kelly 1999, 76–77). Organized racketeers established revenue streams for themselves by assisting the businesses in question in myriad ways, among them fostering cartels that,

through violence or intimidation, excluded competitors (Reuter 1987, 2–5; see also Landesco 1968, 149; Reynolds 1995, 7).

Gambetta interviewed tradesmen in several Palermo markets that fit Reuter's criteria: flowers, fish, produce, radio-taxi services, and—although considerably more complicated—construction. *Mafiosi*, he learned, helped advance business strategies of monopoly and exclusion in these sectors; the consolidation of full-blown cartels was, however, an uneven process, easily upended by greed, paranoia, and sabotage. Another Mafia service commonly provided was protection from theft, including the "theft" by borrowers who did not pay their debts. With a touch of irony, we learn that *mafiosi* protected thieves as well. Purse snatchers and pickpockets counted on Mafia muscle to discipline intruders into their respective territories, to find fences, and to restitute purloined objects to their rightful owners for a fee (Gambetta 1993, 228–229; also see 174, 190–191).

What about businesses engaged in smuggling illegal commodities? Like the Mafia, Gambetta points out, such businesses have issues with the law and are secretive and prone to risk; this makes their leaders "fatally attracted" to *mafiosi* and vice-versa. Nevertheless, in contrast to a great deal of U.S. mafiology, which conflates racketeering with pushing the "vices" of sex and drugs (see Woodiwiss 2001), Gambetta insists on disaggregating these phenomena (1993, chapter 9). Businesses that provision forbidden desires are in origin and trajectory autonomous of Mafia formation; their participants organize themselves and embark on commercial expansion without necessarily being, or becoming, initiated members of Mafia groups. Nor do *mafiosi* necessarily approve of them; on the contrary, at times they go out of their way to claim moral superiority. *Pentito* Calderone declared, for example, that "the mafia does not organize prostitution; it's an unclean activity. Can you imagine a man of honor living on pimping, on the money he makes from women?" (Arlacchi 1993, 3).

Yet Mafia racketeering and illegal trafficking are frequently entangled, and from both directions. On the one hand, illicit businesses are among the biggest consumers of Mafia expertise. Operating outside or on the edges of the law means that they, in particular, cannot depend on "normal institutions," least of all a normal police force, to solve their problems, including the problem of raising start-up capital. On the other hand, illicit traffics constitute phenomenal investment opportunities for *mafiosi*, however great their expression of moral misgiving. In Sicily in the late 1970s, interactions between trafficking and racketeering turned treacherous as the island became a crossroads for refining and shipping Southeast Asian heroin to the U.S. market. Participation in a commodity chain that encompassed multiple intermediaries and endless chances to skim and adulterate

catapulted *mafiosi* into a level of violent conflict, not to mention "suspicion, paranoia, and resentment," that the state could not ignore. In Gambetta's words, "how lethal [this] was for them is indicated by how many died in the internecine conflict of the early 1980s—five hundred is a conservative estimate—how many others turned state's evidence to save their own skin, and how many more ended up in prison as a result" (Gambetta 1993, 244).

Comparative Case Studies

Gambetta's model has influenced several students of other Mafias, most notably Peter Hill for Japan (Hill 2006), Federico Varese for post–Soviet Russia (Varese 2001), and Yiu Kong Chu for Hong Kong. Chu (2000), in a book titled *The Triads as Business*, examines the influence of racketeers in several Hong Kong businesses: restaurants, entertainment, construction, minibuses, and wholesale markets for fish (other, newer frontiers are also taken up: outdoor filming for the movie industry, interior decorating, and the sale of new flats). Whatever the context, racketeers walked the line between providing wanted services and extortion. On the positive side, they shielded businesses against attacks from urban gangs, helped them reduce competition, recovered stolen property, collected on unpaid debts, and warned those lacking licenses of pending raids. Still, Chu found many Triad clients who were ambivalent about the role of brute force in sustaining their livelihoods and upset to be periodically hit up by visiting racketeers for free food and drink, not to mention contributions for Triad members in legal trouble (Chu 2000, 55–56). Minibus drivers who were protected benefitted from the work of Triad-recruited youths who slashed the tires or smashed the windows of competing drivers, preventing them from picking up passengers or using the terminals. Nevertheless, some, at least, of the protected drivers joined unions, publicly demonstrated against extortion, and sought to guard the terminals on their own. According to Chu (2000, 57–62), left-wing unions declined in Hong Kong, as in so many places, during the 1980s, after which the minibus industry became more Triad controlled.

Chu devotes several chapters to illegal markets, in each case being careful to separate out the business histories of those who produce, transport, warehouse, and distribute prohibited commodities from the business histories of those who protect them. Hong Kong drug dealers, he shows, are far too numerous for the market they wish to supply. Because of this and other liabilities, they seek Triad protection. Reciprocally, some Triad bosses organize their own drug businesses. These convergences notwithstanding, both drug and human trafficking, two morally condemned

commodity chains commonly blamed on the Triads in public and media discourse, involve sequences that are so vast, from source to destination, that they necessarily evade the control of any single organization. At best, Chu (2000, 110–118) insists, individual Triad members seek out trafficking partners for a piece of the action.

Hill presents a similar picture for Yakuza. In Tokyo and other mega-Japanese cities, the entertainment industry in general—its bars, nightclubs, and restaurants—have long been shaped by Mafia-provided services, among them removing drunk or abusive customers, recruiting suppliers, and making emergency loans (Hill 2006, 23, 95–97). Especially pervasive is the role of protectors in the construction industry. Even under the Tokugawa shogunate (1603–1867), when Tokyo was still Edo, incipient Yakuza "families" assembled unskilled labor for large-scale building projects. When, after the Meiji Restoration of the late nineteenth century, Japan's great ports of Kobe, Yokohama, and Tokyo underwent massive expansion, these families, now mature, supplied squadrons of laborers to the right place at the right time, collecting and distributing wages and skimming a cut for themselves. Among the most telling services to the construction sector has been, in Hill's words, that of "facilitating trouble-free labor-relations." Yakuza are perceived, he writes, as a particularly "useful bulwark against . . . unpredictable and potentially dangerous day-laborers" (Hill 2006, 22–27, 95–97).

Yakuza families indulge in illegal gambling and are leading investors in, and protectors of, this industry. Cards, dice, roulette, and *pachinko* machines, clustered in casino-like parlors, are all part of the picture, as are the illegal bookmaking operations that compete with government-sanctioned lotteries on horses, cycles, and motorboats. Services extend from protecting dice games in laborers' quarters to orchestrating gambling trips to private resorts and retreats, abroad as well as at home, replete with flights, luxury accommodations, and female companions. Hill also analyzes the demand for protection in two other illicit industries: methamphetamine and the supply of foreign sex workers to "date clubs" and unlicensed street prostitution (as distinct from licensed brothels). "Denizens" of these underworld businesses cannot, in his words, squander the time and run the risk of "tracking down cheats and breaking their legs" on their own; such an effort would make their enterprises far too "costly, violent, and inefficient" (Hill 2006, 11, 97–105).

Perhaps because gambling looms so large in Yakuza history, Hill defines Mafia as "a set of firms that provide extra-state protection to consumers in primarily, but not exclusively, the illegal market sector" (Hill 2006, 10). He goes on, however, to separate the dynamics of Mafia formation from the

dynamics of trafficking—a subtlety evident in his observation that the U.S. Mafia owed its explosive growth, but not its origins, to the prohibition of alcohol in the 1920s (Hill 2006, 14). In Japan, leaders of the most renowned and powerful of the large Yakuza families, the Yamaguchi-gumi, recognize that the wider public considers drugs to be more pernicious than gambling or prostitution; they have even, at times, lent support to drug eradication efforts and expelled members for dealing (Hill 2006, 100). Several of Hill's Yakuza interviewees held drug dealers in contempt, saying they lacked both strength and brains. And, yet, from the 1930s and 1940s, when Japan outlawed drugs at home but allowed their shipment abroad, and especially in the wake of drug control laws and programs from the early 1950s, members of Yakuza groups have found it irresistible to profit—both from protecting and from investing in the drug trade (Hill 2006, 99–105).

Also influenced by Gambetta, Federico Varese was witness to Mafia formation in Perm, an industrial city in the Ural Mountains of Russia, where he lived during the height of the post–Soviet market reforms and rapid privatization of property. Businessmen, whether small shop and kiosk keepers or so-called oligarchs, felt simultaneously liberated and harassed from various quarters. Rapacious public officials such as tax collectors and health inspectors looked to them for bribes; predatory youth gangs threatened robberies, arson, hooliganism, and the wanton destruction of property (Perm's number of recorded crimes rose by over 100 percent between 1989 and 1995); and an excess of competitors wanted in. Some of these businessmen reported being "surrounded by a lot of 'envy.' " Most welcomed, even if they felt manipulated by, experienced protectors, called *krysha*, the Russian word for "roof" (Varese 2001, 80–85). One business owner engaged a *krysha* to beat up the lover of his wife (Varese 2001, 115–118). As would be true of any service industry—financial services, for example—some roofs were ineffectual, others helpful, still others, like vultures, poised to take over the protected business at the slightest provocation—a particular risk in the case of loan-sharking (Varese 2001, 110–114). The best-organized protectors belonged to Perm's Mafia, consisting of an estimated ten, for the most part territorial, families, averaging thirty to forty members each and structured into ranks. Individual members kept their own earnings, but circumstances could oblige them to contribute to a common fund (Varese 2001, 138–144).

In Perm's central market, kiosk owners who failed to pay a monthly fee to this Mafia or concealed their earnings risked being beaten or having their kiosk burned. Small shopkeepers were further constrained in their choice of suppliers and in many cases were required to put clients of the *krysha* on their payroll. Dynamics of this sort pervaded markets for clothing,

meat, and agricultural produce (Varese 2001, 130). Businesses serving illegal markets—drugs or sex, for example—sought *krysha* protection, too, not least to escape police harassment or obtain interest-bearing capital. Regarding such businesses, Varese closely follows Gambetta: Racketeering and trafficking, although mutually supportive, need to be distinguished from each other, almost as "a form of division of labor" (Varese 2001, 4–5).

Varese's eyewitness account of Mafia formation in 1990s Perm is consistent with the detailed ethnographic descriptions of anthropologists who conducted fieldwork in other Russian cities during that decade's tumultuous transition to free-market capitalism. In Vladivostock, for example, Thomas Holzlehner initially learned of roofs through the larger-than-life etchings of murdered "godfathers" on the tombstones in the local cemetery. Soon it was evident that such persons, often with backgrounds as wrestlers, boxers, and karate fighters, claimed responsibility for advancing security and order, first in their respective territories and subsequently in relation to wider economic sectors. At times they did this in competition with licensed private security companies or the police. A mix of legal and illegal businesses made up their client list: among them, gambling houses, night clubs, gas stations, car dealerships, microbus transport companies, and fisheries. Networks devoted to smuggling—whether precious metals, poached marine and land resources, ephedrine, heroin, or cars for the Russian market that were stolen in Japan—also subscribed. Demand for protection was all the more intense because of the local presence of unemployed and undisciplined youth, a gratuitous source of disorder. Such juveniles, it was said, were not content to steal your wallet; they would beat you for your fur hat unless you enjoyed the protection of *mafiosi* (Holzlehner 2007).

In the small city of Yaroslavl northeast of Moscow, Nancy Ries encountered person after person who made a distinction between "honest bandits," *banditi*, their word for Mafia-like "godfathers," and scoundrels, public drunks and addicts, perpetrators of street crime, and smugglers of national treasures. Local discourse overflowed with tales of lying, cheating, and swindling. Many (especially elderly) citizens were barely scraping by, but an ostentatious minority flaunted sudden wealth. Pyramid schemes, in which a handful of early entrants raked in windfalls at the expense of thousands who lost their life savings, dramatized the unfairness. In such a context, people welcomed the protection of a *krysha*. Businessmen (especially if they engaged in illegal transactions) depended on such roofs to collect debts, recover stolen goods, and enforce contractual arrangements; to ordinary citizens, the *banditi* (whose funerals they attended in droves) promised a social and moral order in which both unscrupulous youth and the avarice and corruption of grown-ups might be reined in. And, yet,

Ries suspected, the "demand" for protection was in part created by the protectors: "Cut me in or it will be worse for you." Murders, bombings, and assassinations, reported in newspapers with no more fanfare than car accidents, impinged on everyday experience. Not surprisingly, a "bandit" Reis befriended belonged to the *sportsmeny* (Ries 2002).

Russians who spoke with Humphrey in the early 1990s used the term "thawed-outs" to refer to youth, suddenly freed by the restructuring of the Soviet state to engage in a new level of street crime. According to one of her sources, "they operate carelessly, beat their victims, attack with knives and pistols, and threaten with words like, 'Shit, give me the money or I'll kill you' " (quoted in Humphrey 1999, 214). In the context of this emergency of public order, Mafia-like fraternal groups consolidated themselves and, building on the earlier "culture and techniques" of "honorable thieves," evolved to become powerful racketeers. That the Mafia *brigada* was appreciated for its professionalism in the use of violence—trained, targeted, and efficient rather than merely rapacious—is illustrated by Humphrey's (2004) case study of the organization of the *marshrut* system—the system of routes and itineraries of self-organized public transport—in Ulan-Ude, a city of 400,000 in south central Siberia, known for its Soviet-era prison camps.

Upon the collapse of the state-run bus service in Ulan-Ude in 1991, owners of cars and vans, otherwise unemployed or unpaid, rushed to create taxi enterprises, joined by others, also unemployed, who scrambled to borrow money and purchase retired public buses, or new microbuses. Mafia groups, consisting for the most part of former wrestlers (called *bortsy*), tamed the resulting free-for-all, claiming particular routes as "theirs," demanding tribute from drivers who used them, and punishing drivers who drank or failed to keep proper documents or maintain their vehicles. As the ranks of drivers became saturated, the amount of the tribute grew; excluded drivers, seeking to operate outside of the *marshrut* system, risked being beaten up or finding sand in their gas tanks. The result, secretly supported by the mayor and police, was superior to the state-run buses of Soviet times (Humphrey 2004).

The Cultural Assets of Mafias

Gambetta's followers pay attention to what Varese refers to as "ancestors"—fraternal-like associations among persons criminalized for breaking laws that predated the crucible of Mafia formation. Examples will be familiar: for Russia the sodality of *vory-v-zakone* (thieves with a code of honor) that crystallized among prison camp inmates in the Soviet gulag system in the 1920s and 1930s (Varese 2001, 160–161); for Japan, gangs of gamblers

(*bakuto*) and itinerant peddlers (*tekiya*) possibly dating to medieval times as well as town-based mutual aid societies (*machi yakko*) from the Tokugawa period (Hill 2006, 37). For Sicily, antecedants include nineteenth-century sects among prisoners allied with Freemasonry and another sect called the Beati Paoli, believed to have met in tunnels under Palermo in the eighteenth century. For Hong Kong, Chu (2000, 11–13) cites militarily skilled Shaolin Temple monks of the seventeenth century who, upon failing to overthrow the Qing Dynasty, went underground to found a secret society in Fujian, five lodges of which dispersed to Guangdong, Hong Kong, and overseas.

Brotherhoods such as these, hardly unique to Mafia lands, were much mythologized in the poetry, folklore, literature, and theater of their respective societies. Where Mafias eventually formed, they bequeathed esoteric customs to them—for example (depending on the instance), initiation protocols, elaborate rules of conduct, respect for discipline, a common fund controlled by leaders, secret passwords, special jargon, playful nicknames, and fictive kinship terms. The Yakuza practices of amputating the digit of a finger for disobedience; turning tattoos, once used for punishment, into badges of masculinity; and devoting extraordinary amounts of time to the cultivation of gambling skills had clear antecedents among the *bakuto*. The very word *Yakuza* references the numbers 8, 9, and 3, bad scores in a card game. Tapping into lodge mythology, modern Triads invented several ranks of hierarchy, the third of which was an "incense master," who presides over lengthy promotion and initiation ceremonies. Until recently, novices mixed the blood, drawn from the finger of each, into a common source before drinking it, "to signify blood-brotherhood" (Chu 2000, 22–25, 31–35).

Clearly, all of the historic Mafias invested in culture building, drawing on ritual and symbolic legacies, at times in the absence of any direct line of continuity with the antecedent fraternal group; in this way they reinforced solidarity among members, enabled mutual support across widely distributed "chapters," and, perhaps most important, enhanced everyone's sense of belonging to an honorable elite even as violent acts were being committed. Unfortunately, I think, Gambetta is somewhat dismissive of this process: "These expressions and symbols," he writes, "are concocted from an almost surrealist stew of bogus and genuine sources, mythical and mundane characters, fiction and reality" (Gambetta 1993, 153–154; but see Gambetta 2009, especially chapter 8 on "nicknames"). Having defined the Mafia in economistic terms, he reduces the borrowed elements to "trademarks," intended to amplify the reputations of *mafiosi* and therewith the Mafia brand, thus discouraging imposters. Consider, by way of contrast, Humphrey's thesis that culture plays a critical role in Mafia dynamism. Although *mafiosi* may have no direct connection with their forebears,

they nevertheless channel "the culture and techniques" of past criminal sodalities, transmitted over generations, into the reproduction of certain organizational features: territorial control, a verticalized structure, and discrete boundaries with requirements for entry. In effect, "outlaw" fraternal groups, often born of prison life, generated entire cultural worlds whose attention to rules and ritual, initiations, and displays of belonging and respect bequeathed to later Mafias a source of energy for continued predatory expansion (Humphrey 1999, 211–212).

The Gambetta School and the State

All of Gambetta's followers acknowledge the showy contributions that *mafiosi* make to their respective communities, investing money and prestige in folk and religious festivals and rounding up votes for favored politicians. All have something to say about the extraordinary amounts of time that *mafiosi* devote to "business meetings"—to encountering one another and outsiders in restaurants, tea houses, bars, clubs, or casinos to eat, drink, play cards, roll dice, make plans, and gossip. The Rock Crystal restaurant in Perm was, according to Varese, the "headquarters of the criminal world" (Varese 2001, 131). Nor was it only local. A police raid on the Rock Crystal birthday party of a Mafia boss in 1994 turned up 215 men suspected of nefarious dealings, among them 4 from former Soviet Republics, 7 from Urals cities near Perm, and 17 from other Russian regions. A councilor of the Regional Legislative Assembly was among those present, along with the deputy director of a mechanized bakery, the founder of another company, the director of Perm's central market, a former football player, and students from the military academy (Varese 2001).

In a chapter on the Russian Mafia as a whole, Varese describes high-level political officials using certain criminal groups as a wedge against others, thereby creating the impression of gaining control over crime, and using them, as well, in the repression of Chechen "terrorists." The latter collaboration, he writes, led "some prominent figures close to the mafia" to call for a "truce between the state and criminal structures"—in effect to legalize protection racketeering. Journalists, businessmen, officials, and politicians who supported such a truce depicted *mafiosi* as "civilized and intelligent" and the shadow economy as, in fact, "the real and powerful economy" (Varese 2001, 182). Of course, Vladimir Zhirinovsky, national leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, met and dined with several Mafia bosses and businessmen connected to them. If there was no evidence of a "general pact" between politics and crime, at least one could say, as Varese does, that communication was open enough to avoid misunderstanding.

Evoking the Italian concept "pieces of the state," Varese points to the many "tacit pacts between fragments of the political elite and segments of the criminal world" (Varese 2001, 181–184).

Yakuza families, Hill shows, protect politicians from electoral competition; grateful politicians open doors to state resources whose distribution enlarges the client base of the Yakuza. Powerful businessmen and politicians alike donate immense floral wreaths bearing their names to Yakuza succession ceremonies, weddings, and funerals and attend these when convenient (Hill 2006, 56, 78–79). Hill further mentions Yakuza members intimidating newspapers to silence scandals on behalf of politicians and politicians intervening with judges on behalf of *mafiosi*. The police, meanwhile, spend time in Yakuza spaces and collaborate with members on behalf of crime control and public safety. Although there have been periodic police crackdowns, there is also appreciation of the Yakuza role in disciplining youth gangs, whether by wielding sticks or distributing carrots. A claim of Yakuza leaders is that they provide a haven for society's outcasts; that castoffs from dysfunctional families find a home with them (Hill 2006, 58–60; see also Kaplan and Dubro 2003).

As Hill shows, the "eastern" Yakuza families, coalescing around the Inagawa-kai in Tokyo, Yokoyama, and the surrounding Kanto region, cultivated a more mellow relationship with the state than did the famed Yamaguchi-gumi coalition, whose territory embraced the cities of Kobe and Hiroshima. (The Sumiyoshi-kai of Osaka also had unique characteristics, as did many of the lesser coalitions.) Notwithstanding variations in space and time, however, Yakuza groups entwined themselves more consistently with rightist political forces than with other elements. In the early twentieth century, one found them helping to engineer "incidents" that simultaneously advanced nationalist militarism and protected opium networks in China and Manchuria (Hill 2006, 42). Following World War I, they helped rightist elements of the government, rattled by the threat of socialism, to repress trade union militancy. Amid the confusion and chaos of post–World War II defeat and occupation, Yakuza bosses not only consolidated black markets and, in Tokyo, collected taxes but also got on board with the occupiers' Cold War agenda. As documented by Kaplan and Dubro (2003), authorities on this history cited by Hill, they helped derail student demonstrations in the 1950s and, most famously, took what amounted to a government contract to secure the visit of Dwight Eisenhower in 1960 (although he never arrived) (Hill 2006, 34–55).

Italy, the source of the word *intreccio*, is widely understood to have nurtured mutually beneficial relations among its various Mafias and most, if not all, of its political parties, resulting in dense entanglements

with many parts of the state. The center-right Christian Democratic Party, which dominated coalition governments throughout the Cold War, notoriously benefitted from Mafia-mobilized electoral majorities in Southern Italy and Sicily. In his attempt to construct an elegant and abstract model of Mafia formation, however, Gambetta was so heavily guided by the market dynamics of supply and demand that he ended up marginalizing political considerations. In the words of Judith Chubb, his disinterest in politics led him to "disregard the broader structural context within which the Mafia has flourished and which until very recently guaranteed its immunity" (Chubb 1996, 280; see also Catanzaro 1993, 1994; Schneider 1994). Perhaps hearing the criticism, Gambetta added a postscript to the English translation of his book. "As of this writing (May 1993)," it says, "ex-Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti and former President of the *Corte di Cassazione* (Italy's highest court) Corrado Carnevale are both under investigation on charges of mafia conspiracy" (Gambetta 1993, 257). He continues, "The degree of collusion between public authorities and the mafia [has] shocked the country" (Gambetta 1993).

What, then, is Gambetta's theory of the state's role in the formation of the Sicilian Mafia? He argues that by the time Italy was unified in 1860 there already existed the "foundations" of a protection industry. As noted above, these date to the initial dismantling of feudalism in 1812. Not only did the new liberal state have, therefore, to "establish itself and its law . . . in a region where no such (legitimate) authority had previously existed. It also had to compete with a rival, an entrenched, if nebulous entity which had by then shaped the economic transactions as well as the skills, expectations, and norms of the native people" (Gambetta 1993, 97). Liberal policies pertaining to the continued privatization of property contributed to the disorder. So too did the expansion of the suffrage, minimal as it was. In so fledgling a democracy, this only led local factions or "parties" of elites (mainly landowners and professionals) to ally with *mafiosi*, whose private use or threat of violence could be deployed against rival factions or "parties," competing for the state's largesse (Gambetta 1993). Compounding the challenge, the new state was "confused, at odds with an eccentric reality, badly organized, and too busy elsewhere to devote much of its energy to the South." Although "neither significantly weaker nor demonstrably more repressive than any other liberal state of the period," its lacunae created an immense opportunity for the protection industry (Gambetta 1993, 98).

This depiction of the Mafia–state interaction—in which the state is unable to function and cedes ground to the Mafia—does not, in my view, do justice to the *entangled* relations between Mafia and state referred to in Gambetta's postscript and richly described by his followers. Yet they

too have accepted his theory of a state missing in action at the time of Mafia formation. Hill, for example, theorizes that the demand for extra-legal protection is predictable "where the state is unwilling or unable to provide protection to its citizens operating in legitimate markets." The conditions most likely to generate Mafias were evident in Japan during the Meiji Restoration and again, in spades, following World War II when, in Hill's words, there was both "a supply of tough and desperate men" *and* "a lack of official mechanisms for regulating (market) transactions" (Hill 2006, 44). The Yakuza's "market niche" came about as a result of the failure of the Japanese state to consolidate a system through which citizens could protect their interests, redress grievances, and feel secure in their commercial transactions (Hill 2006, 264–265).

Varese's book on the 1990s Russian Mafia begins with a summary of Gambetta's supply-and-demand history of Sicilian Mafia formation. In the midst of the abrupt "shock therapy" transition from a planned to a market economy that accompanied the fall of the Soviet Union, Russian society not only devolved into chaos but also faced the problem of "missing institutions" (Varese 2001, 80). At the same time, an abundance of violent men—the already noted *sportsmeny*—were ready to fill the vacuum. In a second book, *Mafias on the Move* (2011), Varese asks how Mafias do and do not succeed in conquering new territories. Migration, he writes, "is clearly not a cause of mafia transplantation," although it can be a precondition. "Only when migration is coupled with illegal employment and the *absence of state protection* does a demand for criminal protection emerge that can be met by a mafia." And again, "the presence of a supply of mafiosi and the *inability* of the state to govern markets are the key factors that link cases of successful transplantation" (Varese 2011, 8–11, italics added).

These and related texts point to the consistently negative vocabulary with which the Gambetta school characterizes the kind of state that produces a Mafia. Words such as *missing*, *absent*, *void* or *vacuum*, *inability*, and *failure* leap off the page. Weakness is implied, although, as Gambetta says, weakness is not the issue so much as is neglect; the states in question are otherwise preoccupied (Gambetta 1993, 97–98) and hopelessly corrupt. To Varese, corruption is the primary reason why the Russian state of the 1990s was so ineffectual in protecting its citizens. As many others have also argued (e.g., Wedel 1998, 2003; Rawlinson 1997, 2010, 2013), former *nomenklatura* and other self-serving officials bribed and strategized to acquire public resources; helped their relatives and friends acquire them; cozied up to the cliques surrounding Anatoly Chubais and the Harvard Institute of International Development, both funnels for the distribution of foreign moneys; and evaded all forms of taxation. Varese further compares

the proliferation of *state-licensed* private security companies to the proliferation of Mafia gangs and quotes the widespread perception of ordinary people that the "real mafia" is the state. Boris Yeltsin effectively said as much when he declared, in 1993, "Russia is a mafia country on a world scale" (quoted in Rawlinson 2013, 216–217).

For Gambetta and his followers, the kind of state that nurtures a Mafia becomes increasingly corrupt as time goes on. Having fostered an explosive growth of commercial transactions in the absence of usable institutions; having simultaneously uprooted waves of people from their livelihoods, churning some of them into careers of gratuitously violent crime; having allowed illegal markets to burgeon; and having yielded to *mafiosi* the prerogative of possessing and wielding weapons in the name of restoring order, the states in question found it more and more difficult to institutionalize the rule of law. Marshaling the theory of path dependency, Varese puts it this way: Privatization in the absence of appropriate regulation creates new vested interests, which in turn "block subsequent attempts at regulating markets" (Varese 2001, 29). Having substituted for proper state functions, *mafiosi* actively corrupt state officials who would challenge their power.

Alas, corruption is a slippery concept. The oldest, most generic meaning is predominantly moral, evoking notions of decay, depravity, and deviation from purity. The historically more recent and predominantly legal meaning concerns the abuse of public office for private gain or the pursuit of private gain at public expense. Implied in the modern, legal definition is a clear separation, nowhere evident in the real world, between public and private, state and society, politics and economics—a separation that is bridged through quid pro quo transactions like bribery and votes for favors. Implied, as well, is a separation between those who corrupt—the private citizens—and those who, ostensibly committed to uphold the public trust, are corrupted—corruption being the contamination, or adulteration, of the public by the private (see Bratsis 2006).

Whether in the moral or the legal sense, corruption differs according to context. High-level malfeasance involving public officials and business elites is not the same as ordinary people bribing the local police or tapping into electric lines. Public opinion often rails against the former in moral disgust while exonerating the latter, understood to be "making arrangements" as best they can. Indeed, to the extent that low-level corruption satisfies the norms of reciprocity that govern family and community life, its practitioners are often admired (Smart 1999). Whatever the level, corruption seems far too pervasive, and too widely blamed for a variety of ills, to be diagnostic of Mafia states, as distinct from states that have not fostered

Mafias. Nor are morally outraged discourses attacking corruption or the formal if episodic censure of certain practices as corrupt, absent from states with thriving Mafias. As the Notarbartolo tragedy reminds us, in these states, too, attempts at reform help constitute a standard of integrity—the promise and hopefully the *appearance* of a state that is committed to public service. In short, it is hard to conclude that the Mafia–state relation is best characterized by the Mafia filling in for and then "blocking" the state, preventing it from functioning as it should.

Mafias as Collaborators in the Chase

I now refer back to *Machiavelli's Children*, Richard Samuels's comparison of Italy and Japan—two countries that, after 1860, sought to join the league of the already established capitalist and industrial powers by exerting global influence through colonial and imperial expansion. Emergent leaders of the Meiji Restoration in Japan and the Risorgimento in Italy would, in their words, "catch up with and surpass" the hegemons of North Atlantic Europe, becoming "first-class nations." They resented the "sting of foreign condescension and scorn," of being treated as adolescents in diplomatic circles. Japan was above all humiliated by the "unequal treaties," favorable to Europe and the United States, that followed the arrival of Commodore Perry in Japanese waters in 1854; the leaders of the newly unified Italy declared that the centuries-old experience with manufacturing, shipping, and commerce of Italian cities, along with their contributions to science and art, should be internationally recognized (Samuels 2003, 12).

In hot pursuit of parity, both Italy and Japan embarked on a compressed and ambitious project that encompassed, at a minimum, capitalist industrialization; steps toward parliamentary democracy; imperial adventures; and substantial investment in armaments, shipbuilding, steel, roads, railroads, canals, improved communication, electrification, and schools. Much of this was state led and depended on the state's ability to tax economic productivity; productive enterprises in turn benefitted from the state's support, for example, in the form of tariff policies and subsidies. The presumably differentiated spheres of polity and economy, state and market, and parliamentarians and entrepreneurs in reality constituted an interwoven whole, perhaps best characterized in Gramscian terms as a "ruling bloc." In both Japan and Italy, the blocs that coalesced after 1860 bent their energies toward the rapid accumulation of national wealth and assertion of autonomous national power, binding both state and economy to the task.

Remarkably, a great deal was achieved, despite a series of interruptions and setbacks. Already before World War I, both countries could boast

of massive growth in heavy industry, steam-powered textile manufacture, infrastructure improvements, a rapidly growing population (reflecting health and nutritional improvements), and a healthy balance of exports. Italy's first industrial growth spurt, in the 1880s, saw steel production increase from 3,600 tons to 158,000 tons, an "astonishing achievement"; the ministries of the navy and war supported the continued growth of steelworks, whose development exploded after 1896. World War I further stimulated advances in engineering, metallurgy, new manufacturing technologies, and chemicals (see Clark 1984, 24–25, 119–127). Japan's industrial capacity doubled between 1890 and 1914; the number of factories went up by a factor of 3 (see Kaplan and Dubro 2003, 21). Italy, although defeated in its effort to occupy Ethiopia (the occupation would not be realized until the mid-1930s), had annexed Eritrea, Libya, and Somalia by World War I; Japan, outperforming the navies of China and Russia (defeating Russia in 1905), had annexed Korea, Formosa, and Shandong and occupied Manchuria and the Russian Far East. If we fast-forward to 1975, the time of the oil shock, we find Italy and Japan (notwithstanding their defeat in World War II) immediately included in the Group of Six, which met to strategize and plan for future challenges. Other partners were Britain, France, Germany, the United States, and one year later Canada. Almost by definition, members of this now Group of Seven (G7) ranked among the wealthiest and most developed countries on Earth—highest in gross domestic product, standard of living, exports, gold and foreign exchange reserves, and donors to the UN budget. What does it mean, one wonders, that three of the seven—the United States is the third (four if we include Canada)—nurtured the world's most potent Mafias? Or that racketeering took off in American cities just as the country, having fought its Civil War and closed its frontier, bulked up to become a great power, making an immense leap into industrialized farming, transport, and manufacture; massively recruiting labor from abroad; and staking a claim to empire through colonial and policing adventures in the Philippines, the Caribbean, and Latin America? In short, the United States shares with Italy and Japan not only a Mafia but also a phase of rapid capitalist industrialization and "catch-up" imperial ambition in which this Mafia crystallized.

Even more intriguing is Russia, invited to join the G7 in 1998, after having embraced a "shock therapy" approach to market reforms and having experienced, at the same time, a notorious round of Mafia formation. Although the Group of Eight has again become Seven with Russia's expulsion over Ukraine, and although the Russian Mafia's *intreccio* with the state has not matured under Putin, 1990s Russia nevertheless encourages the following hypothesis: For the leaders of governments and industries embarked

on closing the gap with the declared "great powers" of the nation-state system, Mafias are a significant ally, intertwined from the beginning with the project to join existing world hegemons. In these, my final remarks, I suggest three respects in which this might be so.

The first is already well covered by the Gambetta school. The project was extraordinarily disruptive. Churning rural populations off the land and/or dispossessing them of use rights, it generated banditry, animal rustling, kidnapping, theft, and related mayhem. Abruptly bringing immense, often uprooted and demographically distorted populations (many of them growing rapidly) into cities, it incubated gangsterism and urban crime. In deploying performative violence and a reputation for violence, Mafias tamed these eruptions, bringing a modicum of order to beleaguered landowners, uncertain markets, and small businesses getting off the ground. The selective initiation of unemployed street youth into Mafia families further dented the growing incidence of everyday criminality.

A second contribution that Mafias made to power blocs intent on rapid, transformative development was to lend a hand in keeping at bay anticapitalist social forces. As Samuels shows, the ruling blocs of both Italy and Japan were already deeply concerned about the specter of socialist organizing before World War I (one need only recall the repressive measures taken by the government of Francesco Crispi against the Sicilian *Fasci*, the insurgent peasant and artisan movement, in the early 1890s) and welcomed the existence of their respective Mafias as counterweights (see Samuels 2003, 105–109, 114–120, 189). This transpired not so much because Mafia leaders were ideological about capitalism and its enemies but rather because their everyday practical activities included recruiting, allocating, and disciplining labor on behalf of selected businesses and industries. The already noted role of Yakuza and the Italian Mafias in tethering their respective countries to the capitalist West during the Cold War is continuous with this trend.

Besides creating order in arenas of sudden mayhem and obstructing anticapitalist activism, there is a third respect in which a Mafia could help a ruling bloc chase great power status. *Mafiosi* hosted, and elevated, businessmen in contexts where other, more traditional fields of endeavor (like landowning, the professions, bureaucratic officialdom, religion) had a lock on prestige and where entrepreneurship lacked legitimacy. All of the Mafias discussed above historically invested in and promoted new arenas of relaxation and entertainment where men of all kinds, but businessmen in particular, could collectively enjoy taking pokes at established social norms, as happened during the banquets with which this article began. Although moralists in their respective societies looked askance at some

of the arenas—casinos, for example, which American critics labeled dens of vice and a dangerous threat to society's health and integrity—the ice breaking that went on in them normalized the marketplace, valorized profit taking, and advanced a captivating, capitalist-friendly milieu. If we disabuse ourselves of the tradition of wedding capitalist culture to a work ethic—if we imagine a play ethic to be relevant, as well—we can, perhaps, better appreciate this particular contribution that Mafias made to capitalist development, one that is widely celebrated in popular culture.

Strategic allies to power blocs in hot pursuit of industrial capitalist and imperial parity, *mafiosi* did not have to corrupt, or further corrupt, the state. Already an integral part of it, they could claim respectability and, using the "culture and techniques" of racketeering, invest in new frontiers. As industrial capitalist development unfolded, they participated in its momentous growth, achieving, in particular, a significant presence in state-led initiatives involving public works and construction. (These, by the way, were considerable in Italy's south as well as north.) And yet there is one caveat. The nation-states that hosted Mafias had to appear to be serious; their leaders, after all, measured themselves against the great powers of the nation-state system. And a serious state, by this time in history, had the power to control the means of violence within its borders. Therefore, although Mafias used or threatened violence in all of their order-making activities and in turf wars for territory among themselves, it was crucial that they accept certain limits: Occasional arrest, prosecution, and incarceration would have to be a normal part of doing Mafia business. In addition, *mafiosi* had to prevent the exercise of violence from getting out of hand or targeting state officials (as happened in Sicily with disastrous consequences when members of Mafia *cosche* began to traffic heavily in heroin). Within these parameters, however, Mafia formations could flourish. As Samuels puts it for Japan and Italy, governance was "abetted" by organized crime; *mafiosi* were "welcomed as 'in-laws' as often as they were reviled as 'outlaws' " (Samuels 2003, 189).

In conclusion, I credit Gambetta and his followers for their insistence that the word *Mafia* not be thrown around, that it be restricted to criminal organizations that are more or less territorially organized and whose main activities concern racketeering. I appreciate, as well, their analysis of abrupt and tortuous capitalist development as a context for Mafia formation. They tend, however, to frame the Mafia–state relation in terms of an initial time of the state being missing in action, followed by Mafias corrupting, or further corrupting, the state. I suggest that a model that insists on the mutual accommodation of Mafias and states, in which the former contribute to the latter's most ambitious developmental projects, better illuminates the Mafia–state *intreccio* and its effects.

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Notes

1. Andreotti was eventually acquitted of some charges and absolved of others that were covered by a statute of limitations.
2. Sociologist Marylee Reynolds has traced the word's "murky" origins. Some associated it with the loud noises of hoodlum hangouts, parties, or the Vaudeville stage; others with the rack used to inflict torturous pain but not kill the victim. Contemporary newspapers weighed in, for example, the *New York Times* of 1931, which declared that a racket "maintains itself by the industry of others," adding, a year later, that "Troy was a racket; it levied tribute on the traders of the time. The feudal system was a racket; it made the peasant pay for protection. The Mafia was a racket; it exploited the landowner and the business man. . . . Stripped of frills, the racket is nothing but extortion of a regular, fixed payment by threat of injury." According to the head of the Chicago Association of Commerce, a racket is "a conspiracy to commit extortion by intimidation, force, violence, blackmail, arson, murder" (quoted in Reynolds 1995, 103–105). Reynolds also refers to Hostetter and Beesley's 1929 book *It's a Racket*, which defined the phenomenon as a defect of capitalism that depended on political protection—a "parasitic activity in which the racketeer lives from the industry of the victim, the latter being kept in control by the use of terror, force, intimidation," and to Landesco (1929), who defined racketeering as "the exploitation for personal profit, by means of violence, of a business association or employees' organization." Racketeers rationalized their gains as due compensation for services provided (quoted in Reynolds 1995, 90, 103).

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"No Mafia Here": Crime, Race, and the Narrative of San Francisco's Italian American "Model Colony"

TOMMASO CAIAZZA

Introduction

Crime, particularly organized crime, has been one of the major stigmas applied to Southern Italian immigrants in the United States. Their frequent involvement in illegal activities and violent felonies branded their social image and was a key argument used by those who claimed the need for immigration restrictions.[1] The high rate of arrest for "major offenses" among Italian Americans during mass immigration and the interwar years, even though possibly exacerbated by discrimination in the justice system, is a "fact" that contemporary observers and recent scholars have registered (Jenks and Lauck 1912, 54–57; Moehling and Piehl 2009, 758–759). This article does not aim to offer a new interpretation for either Italian immigrants' heavy crime rate or the origin of the Sicilian American Mafia, whose sociohistorical explanations have been examined by academia in recent years (Lane 1989, 70–74; Lupo 2008). Rather, this article joins other current research that has investigated how Italian American criminal behavior came to be understood in the erudite as well as popular culture of the Progressive Era, not as a matter of social conditions or environment but as something related to their racial background. To use Thomas Guglielmo's (2003, 85) expression, Southern Italian "criminalization and racialization worked in tandem." The arrival in the United States of Italians and of other "new immigrants" from eastern and southern Europe between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries coincided with the rising of eugenics and social Darwinism. Pseudoscientific theories professing the inequality of human races and their classification in an indefinite spectrum of subdivisions spread outside universities into the wider society (Jacobson 1998, 39–90; Spickard 2007, 264–268). In the most noteworthy of the then-proposed racial schemes—William Ripley's (1899) and Madison Grant's (1916) tripartition of the European races into Nordics, Alpines, and Mediterraneans—Northern Italians fell into the second group, southerners into the third. According to its advocates, this distinction applied not only to phenotypical (especially craniometrical) features but also to psychic ones: For example, Alpines were reputed to be patient and peaceful while Mediterraneans were impulsive and excitable.[2] It was not surprising then

that Southern Italian criminal involvement was seen as inherited in their race temperament. As several scholars have noted, such speculations were not an all-American product. Transnational flows of the theories of Cesare Lombroso's school of anthropology influenced both U.S. academia and politics in distinguishing Italian northerners and southerners and in ascribing a proclivity toward crime to the latter (Deschamps 2000; D'Agostino 2002). American public opinion reflected the same ethnocentric discourses developed after Italy's unification in 1861. In the new Kingdom of Italy, the debate over the emerging "Southern question" never came to be dominated by an explicit racial discourse; nonetheless, images portraying the Mezzogiorno as the land of the "other," the "barbarian" untouched by "modern civilization," circulated in the press of Northern Italian cities, particularly in relation to "brigandage" (Teti 1993; Petraccone 2000, 54–65). The characterization of Southern Italian immigrants as "brigands," "savage," and "uncivilized" was frequent in the American press when reporting crimes (Serra 2009, 81; Iorizzo and Mondello 1980, 189).

The reactions of Italian American communities to this process of racialized criminalization of its members in the American press have varied. Sometimes, the Italian American community fragmented into a variety of subgroups blaming each other as being the cause of the problem: Northerners accused southerners, some Italian Americans distanced themselves from Sicilian Americans, and middle-class older Italian immigrants asked for restrictions against poor new Italian ones (Iorizzo and Mondello 1980, 53; Guglielmo 2003, 90; Serra 2009, 92). For the most part, however, Italian Americans coalesced defending the whole ethnic group without distinction of any kind. According to some scholars, the demonization of Italian Americans for crime and racial undesirability actually helped forge a common identity overcoming both class and regional differences (Luconi 2001, 47–49; Guglielmo 2003, 90). By promoting Italian pride, the ethnic press played a great role in this regard, reasserting "Italian worthiness as a civilized race" (Vellon 2014, 15).

The case under scrutiny here does not seem to fit this overall interpretation regarding Italian American responses to external attacks. By focusing on San Francisco's Italian American community, this article will illustrate its distinct reaction to criminalization and racial scapegoating. Two aspects justify such a "case study" analysis. First, one striking feature of San Francisco's Italian American population was its large central-northern stock, composed mainly of Tuscan, Ligurian, Lombard, and Piedmontese immigrants. Unlike those in East Coast and midwestern metropolises, these regional groups remained the majority of local Italian Americans

even after the increasing numbers of arrivals in the city of southerners, mostly Sicilians and Calabrians, from the late nineteenth century onward (Cinel 1982, 21). The second aspect considers the fact that, according to historians (Fichera 2011, 122–126; Mullen 2005, 88), the crime rate among San Francisco's Italian Americans for the period ranging from 1890 to 1940, while higher than that of non–Italian American "whites," was far below the average of their co-nationals residing in major U.S. cities. Sebastian Fichera (2011, 125–126) has pointed out that this was because of a powerful "community-building" process developed among local Italian Americans under the shared leadership of the Salesian priests and the *prominenti* whose entrepreneurial skills and philanthropy helped reduce poverty and criminality within the population.

As mentioned above, this article does not aim to discuss the reason for the high Italian immigrant crime rate; neither does it go into why the rate for San Francisco's Italian American community was lower than the national average, especially given that local contemporary observers, as we will see, did not notice such exceptionality. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that to understand why there were different rates of delinquency between San Francisco's, Chicago's, and New York's Little Italies, one should consider differences in environmental factors. Even though the Italian American experience in California should not be idealized, Italian Americans there not only found more economic prospects than in the East Coast or midwestern crowded cities but also encountered a less systemic form of racism, given the presence of a large number of Chinese immigrants attracting the most virulent discrimination.[3] If, conversely, such disproportions in crime rates are explained by the allegedly exceptional character of San Francisco's Italian American community, one risks the error of embracing, rather than deconstructing, the narrative of the "Model Colony" endorsed by the local Italian American elite. The model was constructed to prevent their own predominantly Northern Italian group from being tarred by the social stigma, such as that of the Mafia, that hung over Southern Italian enclaves in other major U.S. cities. In this article the concept of "narrative" is used to describe the Model Colony as a cultural construction forged by Italian elites by analyzing a variety of articles and publications. To deconstruct the Model Colony requires a closer examination of the rhetorical structure of these texts in order to extrapolate their historical meaning and origin. San Francisco's Italian American "exceptionalism" needs to be historicized and seen within the context of the early twentieth century, when the Italian American population of the city boomed together with social problems, crime included. The starting point will be a dramatic homicide event involving some of

Little Italy's Sicilians in 1905. It will be used as a lens through which to highlight the rising anti–Italian American prejudice in the San Francisco press that the Italian American *prominenti* challenged through their own narrative. To use Rudolph Vecoli's (1998, 19) expression, the Model Colony became a "force actively constructing social reality" in the sense that it influenced the local American audience's perception of the "exceptionality" of San Francisco's Italian American community, notwithstanding the many analogies connecting the East Coast and West Coast Italian American' experiences.

The Vilardo Case

Late on the night of April 5, 1905, a human torso, "headless, armless and legless," as described by the *San Francisco Examiner*, was found in the doorway of a house in San Francisco's Little Italy, North Beach ("Headless, Armless, Legless" 1905, 1). The murder's unquestionable brutality facilitated the quick transformation of the event into a sensational news item, occupying the front pages for several months. While awaiting identification of the victim's remains, the press made three hypotheses: The crime was the act of a maniac, the work of the Mafia, or it was related to women and honor; for example, the "revenge of a family whose daughter had been betrayed," proposed the *San Francisco Chronicle*. ("Mutilated Body" 1905, 1). The Mafia hypothesis was immediately seen as the most likely. As reported by the San Francisco Call: "Mafia is the rumor on every tongue. Mafia is the conviction of the police" ("Marks on Victim's Skull" 1905, 11). The prevalence of the Mafia hypothesis was due to two facts. First, Dr. Bacigalupi, the Italian autopsy physician who first examined the remains, did not exclude the involvement of a "dread society," the crime being evidently premeditated. According to the *Examiner*, Bacigalupi's statement was: "From the fact that spaghetti was found in the stomach, and the fact that the skin is dark, I am of the opinion that the deceased is an Italian, possibly a Sicilian or Calabrian, because of a well authenticated practice among the criminal classes of these people to use hatchets" ("Victim May Have Been a Sicilian" 1905, 4). The second reason supporting the Mafia hypothesis was the belief that San Francisco's fishermen were involved. Detectives noted that the blanket in which the torso had been found was tied with a cord whose size and texture resembled that used by fishermen. San Francisco Bay Area fishermen were mainly Italian Americans, along with a smaller percentage of Greeks and Portuguese.[4] For San Francisco public opinion, these men represented the quintessence of the Latin or southern European race ("Fishermen of San Francisco" 1896, 1):

> The San Francisco fisherman is a distinctive character among the industrial class. He is also as distinctive socially as well as by race. He belongs to the swarthy-skinned, black-eyed and mellow-tongued Latins. He hails either from the northern shores of the Mediterranean sea or from the Atlantic coast adjacent to the Pillars of Hercules.

In the Anglo-Saxon mind, the southern European race was associated with not only certain swarthy phenotypical traits but also with temperamental qualities, such as its "hot-blooded" attitude: "The inhabitants of Southern countries, such as Greece, Spain and Italy . . . are hot-blooded, quick tempered. It is a direct result of the climate in which they live," wrote a journalist ("The Stigma of the Stiletto" 1911, 10). The representation of fishermen in California's magazines and journals vividly reflected the "clash of romance and race" to use Joseph Cosco's (2003) expression in American perceptions of Italian Americans. Fishermen, their hot-bloodedness included, were seen as a picturesque remnant of an idealized past, as shown by local writer Roland Whittle's (1903, 366) description of a gathering in a humble Italian restaurant in North Beach:

> The fishermen represent the whole seaboard of Italy, for they come from Venice, from Genoa, from Sicily where the winds still whisper the story of the classic times, and the tides appear to move to the music of Virgilian hexameters. They bring with them their local prejudices and their fierce feuds, and though for the most part quiet and peaceful enough, the hot blood flares out at times, and the rich oath of the Southern sailor is sometimes answered with a sharp knife thrust.

The fishermen's connection to the murder was reinforced on April 7, when two North Beach boys, while playing at Fishermen's Wharf, discovered a sack with the missing remains of the murdered person. The press described the findings in telling detail: "The head was that of a young man. Italian to the eye in every feature. It was dark skinned, thatched with coarse black hair. A closely clipped dark mustache covered the short upper lip. The eyes, which were very dark, were partly open" ("Head and Limbs Found" 1905, 1). On April 8 the enigma was solved. A Sicilian immigrant from Cefalù identified the remains: The murdered man was his brother, Biaggio Vilardo ("Mafia's Victim Biaggio Vilardo" 1905, 1). Vilardo had arrived in San Francisco less than a year previously. Neither his brother nor Biaggio were fishermen; they were both laborers, one on the railroad, the other in a gas company. However, the fishermen-Mafia connection remained the favorite line of investigation. On the basis of vague information, detectives established that Vilardo's murder was linked to another North Beach

murder that had occurred a couple of months before in which fishermen, apparently, were also implicated ("Drunken Brawl Ends in Death" 1905, 3). San Francisco newspapers started claiming that the Mafia, or the racketeering organization the Black Hand, had arrived in their "fair city" with its "cutthroats" and "murderers" whose "savage vendettas" and "bloodthirsty plotting" smacked of the "dark ages." The *Call* expended huge amounts of ink in describing North Beach as being totally at the mercy of the Mafia's "inhuman power": "Hundreds of Latins knew the dead man. But they dared not even whisper his name. . . . The knife of a blood relation might be lifted against them if they offended the power behind the Black Hand." According to the *Call* the killer might have been hidden in "any house in the Latin quarter." ("Are Sure It Is Work of Mafia" 1905, 1). In the mounting media uproar the leading suspect became a Sicilian woman. The day after the identification of Vilardo, the police had attributed the murder to Vilardo's landlord, Pietro Torturici (some publications spell the name "Tortorici"), a twenty-six-year-old Sicilian can-maker. Despite the $500 reward offered for his capture, Torturici was never found by the police ("Murder—$500 Reward" 1905, 1). Instead, Torturici's wife, Rosa, a young lady in her early twenties, was soon arrested on suspicion of being an accomplice. The police were sure Rosa had used her "comeliness" to lure Vilardo and attract him into the apartment where the murder had been perpetrated. The press stressed Rosa's beauty by publishing portraits of her, associating her physical traits with an image of "diabolic attractiveness" ("Close on Trial of the Murderer" 1905, 17; "Believe Woman Is in Plot" 1905, 25). The description in the *Call* was, as usual, the most sensational ("Shred of Flash on Apron" 1905, 25–27):

> In face and feature she is a true daughter of Sicily, the land of the Mafia. Her wealth of hair is black, and her eyes are brown as berries. At times there is a flush in them that shows the daughter of a race that does not blanch at the sight of human blood. She would be regarded a beauty among men of the character of Vilardo . . . while the Sicilians live in a Modern American city, they are in heart and soul still Sicilians. This Torturici woman is one of that colony and knows how the women of the quarter would feel toward her if she told what she is believed to know. So she is silent or "does not understand." Her expression reads, "I will not tell."

The police tried to make Rosa confess using every means available, including psychological torture. For example, detectives violently forced a screaming and reluctant Rosa to visit the morgue in order to see her reaction in front of Vilardo's mutilated body. They were convinced that according to an "old Sicilian superstition" this tactic would have broken Rosa. However,

as reported by the *Call*, detectives "learned nothing: The woman is the daughter of a race that can keep secrets" ("Rosa Torturici Is Overcome by Horror" 1905, 1). The behavior of the police and the press's anti-Italian attitude quickly raised protests among the Italian American community. The local Italian newspaper *L'Italia* took the lead, its editor Ettore Patrizi also being a well-known community leader. The newspaper denied that the Mafia existed among Italian Americans and supported the theory of the "crime of passion" ("Le ultime fasi" 1905). *L'Italia* denounced the press's promoting of the Mafia "legend" as "ridiculous" and "dishonest," adding that it was deeply offensive to the Italian colony, especially to the southerners and the fishermen: "San Francisco's Italians—Tuscans, Neapolitans, Genoese and Sicilians—were all industrious people," claimed *L'Itali*a ("Mafia e Mano Nera" 1905). The Italian newspaper staunchly defended Rosa Torturici against the unfair treatment she was suffering ("In favore di Rosa Tortorici" 1905). Several Italian Americans sent letters to the newspapers protesting about the image of Italian immigrants appearing in the media and about Rosa's treatment at the hands of the police department ("No Mafia Here" 1905, 8; "A Son of Sunny Italy" 1905, 8; "Written Protest Comes" 1905, 2; "Says Treatment of Mrs. Tortorici" 1905, 4). However, these protests initially produced no results. As stated pithily by the *Call*: "The Italian people, the better class who voice their opinions through the Italian medium, the newspaper, *La Italia*, oppose the theory of the existence of secret organizations among their race. But the Sicilians are only kin to the Italians. The fact remains that there is a Mafia" ("Crime Planned in a Little Hut" 1905, 1). This distinction made by the *Call* between Italian Americans and Sicilian Americans is crucial. It started to feature in the newspapers immediately after the discovery of the dead body; neither was it entirely a product of the American press. The *Chronicle* ("Police Close on Trial" 1905, 16), for example, reported that the residents of Little Italy

> repudiated [the idea] that there is such a thing as organized crime among the Italians. Among the Sicilians they admit that there are feuds or vendettas, but they say Sicilians are not Italians. They assert that Sicilians are a mixture of Moorish and Spanish blood, and [that] among the lower classes there is such a thing as vendetta.

Despite the community's strong defense—via *L'Italia*—of Italian Americans as whole, southerners included, at a street level the Vilardo murder, and the police round-ups that followed, had raised the Italian American residents' anger against Sicilians. The *Chronicle* informed readers that the police, which was in search of murder suspect Torturici, had told Italian Americans that "they cannot draw a distinction as to province or city, they

cannot draw a line between Sicilian and Italian." Detectives searched for Torturici among the vegetable farms near the city. However, as the *Chronicle* reported: "Nearly every farm is in the hands of the Genoese, who are said to abhor the vendetta of the Sicilians; they say that they themselves would kill Tortorici if he sought refuge among them" ("Police Close on Trial" 1905, 16).

Pioneers and New Immigrants

As noted by Peter D'Agostino (2002, 339), "identities such as Sicilian or Calabrian were already racialized in Italian (and European) culture before migrants arrived in the Americas." It is not surprising therefore that North Beach Italian Americans, in an attempt to disassociate themselves from such a horrible crime, tried to distinguish themselves from Sicilians, embodying as they did typical racial stereotypes of "southern" savagery and backwardness that had become popular across the United States. During the decade of the Vilardo murder, San Francisco's Italian American community was undergoing major changes, transforming itself from a relatively small colony of approximately 7,000 mainly Northern Italian immigrants into a large community of more than 17,000 immigrants more balanced between north and south as a result of mass migration from Italy (U.S. Department of Commerce 1913, 825). The arrival of new immigrants, such as the Vilardo brothers, was a cause of concern for older Italian American residents. In the years 1903, 1904, and 1905 *L'Italia* hosted a public debate among California's Italian Americans, receiving letters in support or in condemnation of the flow of newcomers (Giovinco 1993, 20–24). Many readers complained about the influx, especially those defined by the Italian American daily as the "pioneers," "the colony's most influential part," that is, Italians who had arrived in the United States before mass migration and had already formed a significant middle and upper class ("Il nepotismo nella colonia" 1903). Druggist and Italian Chamber of Commerce President Giuseppe Calegaris claimed that there were not enough job opportunities for all the Italian immigrants in California ("La risposta di G. Calegaris," 1903). The same point of view was expressed by Milanese banker John Fugazi, who remarked upon the low quality of new Italian immigrants: "I nostri poveri emigrati capitali con loro non ne portano, anzi arrivano qui ignari degli usi e costumi del paese, digiuni della lingua inglese e per la maggior parte analfabeti" (our poor emigrants bring with them no capital, actually they arrive unaware of American mores and customs, as well as of the English language, and for the most part illiterate, cited in Rossi 1904, 123). (The preceding and all other translations are by the author.) Journalist

and Italian Chamber of Commerce Secretary Carlo Dondero foresaw an increase in "racial prejudice" directed against Italian Americans: "Si proclama che gli italiani non sono benveduti, desiderati. Una volta lo erano discretamente, in California; ora, sventuratamente, non più, son soltanto tollerati" (It is said that Italians are not well regarded, desired. In California, they used to be rather well welcomed here and there. But not anymore. Now, unfortunately, they are only tolerated), he commented ("Stolte accuse ai nostri connazionali" 1903). An Italian American doctor stated: "Dobbiamo ammettere—sebbene nel far ciò ci si stringa il cuore—che esiste un pregiudizio di razza riguardo agl'italiani. A che cosa questo pregiudizio è dovuto e come abbatterlo? Io posso attribuirlo soltanto a una causa: e cioè alle proporzioni dell'immigrazione italiana in questo paese negli ultimi anni." (We must admit, even if it tears our heart to do so, that a prejudice against the Italian race does exist. What is the cause for such prejudice and how to combat it? I can identify one cause only: and that is the great numbers of Italian immigrants in this country in recent years, "Un giovane italo-americano" 1903).

But who were these "pioneers"? In California, a relatively new and sparsely populous state, Northern Italians who had arrived in the early decades of its development encountered many opportunities. In spite of the failures the majority of them faced in the gold fields in the 1850s, a minority persisted and even flourished in California's harsh environment, finding a means of self-improvement through commerce, agriculture, and fishing. A survey I conducted for another study reveals that, in 1900, 13 percent of San Francisco's older Italian American residents, i.e., those who had arrived in the United States before the 1880s, held, according to the Census, jobs with a middle- or upperclass social status: commissioner merchants, import businessmen, professionals, bankers, and real estate investors.[5] This elite of the Italian American pioneers was quite well integrated within local political life. Notables of the Italian colony were members of the Republican Party. Some second-generation pioneers already held positions on the board of supervisors and the board of education.[6]

Contrary to the pioneers' attitude, *L'Italia* strongly defended Italian newcomers. Editor Patrizi wrote ("Due righe di commento" 1903):

> L'infimo emigrante d'oggi è spesso migliore, sotto ogni rapporto, di tanti famosi pionieri che vennero qui zotici, ignoranti, spilorci, e che, malgrado le migliaia di dollari accumulati, non hanno migliorato affatto moralmente e intellettualmente.
>
> Even the lowest type of the emigrant of today is often better, in every aspect, than many of the famous pioneers who came here [to California]

> boorish, ignorant, penny-pinchers, and who, despite all the dollars accumulated, did not improve either morally nor intellectually.

L'Italia's favorable attitude toward immigration matched its defense of Italian Americans in the Vilardo case. Patrizi himself was not a pioneer. He had arrived in San Francisco in 1894 to work at the Italian pavilion in the local Midwinter Fair (Troiani 1991). He had graduated in Milan as an engineer but also had journalistic skills due to his political commitment at the university there on behalf of socialist and republican groups. On his arrival in San Francisco, he was welcomed by many pioneers, and they offered him the editorship of *L'Italia*. Patrizi, for his part, respected and admired them: The year of his arrival, he wrote a sonnet celebrating the colony's prominent Italian Americans ("Saluto alla colonia" 1894). To some extent, he did share the prejudice of the older residents against Italian newcomers, southerners especially, as is evident from the description in *L'Italia* of Cesare Lombroso as "l'illustre scienziato che tutte le nazioni civili invidiano all'Italia" (the illustrious scientist who makes Italy the envy of all nations) when the Italian anthropologist visited San Francisco ("Cesare Lombroso verrà a San Francisco" 1904). However, despite the short time spent in the United States, Patrizi had quickly developed a radical nationalist consciousness in reaction to the deep anti–Italian American prejudice of the wider American society, as he later recalled in some articles (Maurizi 2007, 17–18). He indeed became an untiring promulgator of "Italianness" and a booster of the Italian quality of "grandeur." His position as both Italian American editor and ethnic leader depended on the growth of the Italian American population and on the construction of a common Italian American identity among immigrants from the peninsula.

Not all the pioneers were hostile toward new Italian immigrants. Patrizi, in his fight in favor of Italian immigration, was backed by two of the most influential of the pioneers, Andrea Sbarboro and Marco Fontana, who shared with him a role of ethnic leadership and also saw in newcomers a source of cheap labor for their entrepreneurial activities ("La nostra inchiesta sulla emigrazione" 1903; "A proposito della nostra inchiesta" 1903). Sbarboro and Fontana were Ligurians and established entrepreneurs. Although the two were involved in each other's business concerns, Sbarboro was mainly in charge of the Italian-Swiss Colony, one of California's largest wineries, while Fontana was in the fruit-canning business as superintendent general of the California Fruit Canners Association. In 1899, they together founded the Italian American Bank, to attract investments and the deposits of Italian immigrants to support their businesses. The two men were also well-known public figures in the

city of San Francisco. Fontana was appointed supervisor by Mayor James D. Phelan in 1900; Sbarboro, in the same period, was elected president of the Manufacturers and Producers' Association and of the California Promotion Committee (Sbarboro 1996–1997; Press Reference Library, 281). At the turn of the century, banking was growing within the Italian American community. Headed by Amadeo Giannini, a son of pioneers, in 1904 some Italian American bankers, real estate investors, merchants, entrepreneurs, and professionals joined together to found the Bank of Italy, whose policy was to make the Italian colony's expanding population and economic life the basis for its own profitable financial activities (Salvetti 1989; Giovinco 1968).

Despite the benefits a section of older residents received from the growth of the Italian American community, many were still hostile toward newcomers. They feared any increase in social problems, such as crime, which might damage the "Italian name" in the city. *La Voce del Popolo* expressed such anxieties after a murder in Little Italy by lamenting that "brigands" had arrived in the colony ("Briganti nella colonia" 1890):

> La Colonia Italiana di San Francisco ha goduto sin qui fama di essere il miglior nucleo d'Italiani all'Estero, e poichè, Dio mercè, la grande, l'immensa maggioranza de' suoi componenti è costituita ancora di onesti lavoratori . . . questa maggioranza è fermamente decisa a volere mantenuto questo buon nome della nostra colonia e denuncia alla esecrazione de' connazionali e additerà alle autorità locali quei miserabili, quegli esseri vilissimi che vogliono poltrire e ingrassare nel vizio gettando nel fango il nome italiano.
>
> Until now the fame of the Italian colony of San Francisco has been that of being the best element among Italians abroad and, thank God, since the great, the vast, majority of its members is still composed of honest workers . . . this majority is firmly determined to maintain the colony's good name and will denounce to their co-nationals and public authorities those miserable and cowardly men who want to loaf around and get fat in vice and thus flinging the Italian name in the mud.

The pioneers' worries were not unfounded. In fact, between 1900 and 1910, the crime rate among Italian Americans in San Francisco doubled as a consequence of the rapid increase of the Italian American population. The number of Italian American inmates at San Quentin State Prison increased from 1.6 to 2.5 percent, while at Folsom State Prison they increased from 1.8 to 3.6 percent.[7] However, the pioneers' hostility was not motivated only by statistics but also by prejudice. Among Italian newcomers there

were indeed southerners. After 1900, tensions rose between the Italian American elite and La Meridionale, a Southern Italian benevolent society. In 1903 the president of La Meridionale protested to the Italian consul because the Italian Comitato di Soccorso, a society financed by wealthy local Italians, proposed the imposition of a specific charge to his organization since Italian Americans applying for assistance were increasingly southerners. The president of La Meridionale also protested not having been invited to a community public event ("Comitato di soccorso per gli emigranti" 1903; "Lettera aperta" 1903). Despite his overall attempt to reduce tensions among Italian Americans, Patrizi sometimes gave way to more retrograde impulses, remarking on the "otherness" of southerners. In 1904, the San Francisco Board of Education discovered that some sons of Italian immigrants were exploited as peddlers by their parents, and it launched a campaign to take them off the street ("Padrone Plan Is Uncovered" 1904, 4). *L'Italia* branded the episode as a "dishonor" to the community, explicitly blaming the Sicilians ("Contro certi genitori italiani" 1904). However, since the children working as peddlers were not Sicilians, but rather Calabrians, La Meridionale protested against the Italian daily's generic anti-southern attitude ("Una riunione della Meridionale" 1904).

The Narrative of the Model Colony

For the Northern Italian middle and upperclasses, crimes such as Vilardo's murder posed a risk that their own ethnic community would be tarred by those stereotypes under which East Coast and midwestern Italian Americans were already suffering. An essay in the *Overland Monthly* of October 1905 outlines the spread among San Francisco's public opinion of the stereotype of Italian Americans as *mafiosi* in the wake of the Vilardo case. Author Charlton L. Edholm (1905, 291) explained the "race mystery" of the inhabitants of the city's Little Italy:

> [T]ake, for instance, that swarthy, well set up young man, with lips that show full and red under his mustache . . . he looks confidently, carelessly, at the world with his smiling eyes . . . and tell me, if you please, whether he is bound for the Re' d'Italia Saloon to indulge in a quiet game of dominos and red wine, or whether the Black Hand has pointed out to him a victim whom he is to slay this night, whom he is to dismember with abominable awkwardness and blood-spilling.

The Italian community's public image became more and more associated with other social problems besides crime deriving from its growth, such

as poverty and low standards of living. The board of health frequently characterized the Latin Quarter as being "filthy" and representing an "evil almost as gross as that of Chinatown" (San Francisco Board of Supervisors 1898, 196). The Latin Quarter was frequently subject to purges because of the spread of infectious diseases. In 1900 the *Chronicle* reported: "To-day the Health gang will descend with the force of inspectors upon the Latin Quarter. The Italian and Mexican residents of the city have been placed in the same unclean category as the Chinese" ("Little Italy Comes Next" 1900, 5). In 1911, the San Francisco Housing Association (1911, 20–22) found that the Latin Quarter was the city's most crowded district and stated that it was as congested as the worst tenement neighborhoods of Boston or New York. The use of the term *Latin Quarter*, both by local American institutions and the press, reflected the perception of Italian Americans as a racial element distinct from other of the city's European populations. Since Mexican immigrants also lived in the Latin Quarter, this area became in the eyes of Anglo public opinion not only an Italian district but a Mexican-Italian one (Spadoni 1904, 12). Italian Americans and Mexican Americans were compared in terms of alien and disreputable behaviors: "The Mexicans in this district are poorer than the Italians, but not so addicted to tenement habit," wrote a social reformer ("The Poor among Us" 1895, 1). Italian Americans, as well as other southern European immigrants, were frequently denigrated through association with Mexicans whose racial status, as highlighted by Tomàs Almaguer (1994, 45–46) was ambiguous in nineteenth-century California because they could not claim a "pure" European ancestry. In 1893, for example, the *Chronicle* described the San Francisco heterogeneous population thus ("Here All Races Meet" 1893, 1).

> There is no doubt about the cosmopolitan character of San Francisco. . . . There are the Chinese, whom, like the poor, we have always with us . . . and then there are those whom the heedless small boys and some of his elders who ought to know better lump together under the comprehensive term "Dagoes"—Italian, Spaniard, Mexican, Portuguese, Chileno.

However, as Ilaria Serra (2009, 38–41) has noted, the San Francisco press's anti–Italian American attitude never reached East Coast levels. This was mainly for two reasons evident in the reactions to the Vilardo case. The first has to do with the presence in San Francisco of a large Asian population, mostly Chinese and Japanese, attracting the worst of discriminations. After the murder of Vilardo, the Methodist newspaper the *Christian Advocate* attacked the *Chronicle*, stating that the daily was too indulgent toward Italians ("Japanese Immigrants" 1905, 6):

> If the one such horrible crime had been committed among the Japanese as was recently committed in the Italian quarter of San Francisco, the "San Francisco Chronicle" would have gone into a succession of anti-Japanese spasms hitherto unknown, but this awful Mafia spirit, that chops human beings into mincemeat, is passed by unrebuked, all because it "assimilates" so nicely with American ideals. Sixty thousand Italian laborers living on garlic and sour wine, densely ignorant, swarm into California, and only because they can vote not a word is said against them.

Certainly, the *Christian Advocate*'s critique was exaggerated to the point of bigotry. Italian Americans had been targeted for weeks, also by the *Chronicle*. Nonetheless, the Methodist newspaper latched on to a crucial aspect: the power of Italian Americans deriving from their legal status as "whites." The second reason for the San Francisco press's softer attitude toward Italian Americans has to do with the influence of the Northern Italian elite in local society. At the end of 1905, the *Call*, which had been the most virulent anti–Italian American daily during the Vilardo case, published an article apologizing for the treatment reserved for local Italian Americans ("Our Italian Colony" 1905, 8). It praised Italian Americans for their part in California's rural development and business enterprises and remarked on their integration into the city's public life. The *Call*'s excuses, however, were directed only to *a part* of the Italian colony. It stressed that San Francisco's Italian colony should not be judged on the basis of a "minority of criminal individuals" because "perhaps a majority of them [Italians]" were "Piedmontese, the people of the Valley of the Po, the countrymen and compatriots of Cavour, the statesman who created 'modern Italy.'" Furthermore, the article concluded by drawing a distinction between local Italians and their co-nationals living elsewhere: "We desire to say for them [Italians] that no such charge can lie against them as is made in other of our large cities," where Southern Italians prevailed, we may add. By distinguishing between California's Italian Americans and "other" Italian Americans, the *Call* echoed a long-standing piece of propaganda by the local Italian American elite. Since the Gold Rush, prominent Italian Americans had promulgated the idea that the Italian immigration experience in California was exceptional in terms of success and prosperity. Businessman, journalist, and Sardinian Consul Secretary Federico Biesta in 1856 asserted that the "Italian population" was one of the "best, most active and hard-working in California" and that "whether in San Francisco or the interior, the Italians thrive[d] and prosper[d]" (cited in Rolle 1999, 255). In 1868, *La Voce del Popolo* described California's Italian Americans as "courageous, industrious, and enterprising" while it denigrated New

York's for being a "legion" of "organ grinders," residing together with their monkeys in the shallows of local Little Italy ("Corrispondenza" 1868, 1). In 1888, the almanac of the same newspaper asserted that California's Italian Americans were "one of the most important foreign colonies of Italy" and remarked on their possessing an "immense capital" ("Pacific Coast Italians" 1888, 6). In 1903, wine entrepreneur Pietro Rossi, attending the international agricultural conference in Rome, presented California's Italian Americans as "one of the best in the United States both from a socio-economic perspective, and a moral one" ("Un discorso di P.C. Rossi" 1903). The Italian American elite usually freed its own community of those stigmas ascribed to Italian Americans nationwide. According to an Italian American druggist, California's Italian Americans were exempt from the transient migration that so alarmed American public opinion. He stated to the *Chronicle*: "In some parts of the East the Italians work eight months in the year and spend the four coldest months in Italy, but here in California the Italians come to stay. The climate is more congenial, and so, too, are the occupations" ("They Come to Stay" 1893, 38). Actually, there were transient Italian migrants also on the Pacific Coast (Sensi Isolani 1990); however, this fact was downplayed by relying on what Simone Cinotto (2012, 37) has called the "cultural construct" of California as the "Italy of America," i.e., the nineteenth-century popular literary representation of California as being environmentally strikingly similar to the Mediterranean region. The *prominenti* used such a popular image to persuade American public opinion that California's Italian immigration was more stable than that of the East Coast. To quote a "prominent Italian" interviewed by the *Chronicle*: "Like no other part of America, California reminds us of our former Mediterranean home. That's why when we come here, we come to stay" ("Important Role in Up Building" 1920, 82). Italian American notables in self-celebrating publications always remarked that California's Italian Americans were "respected and honored" and enjoyed a "better reputation" than their New York co-nationals (Frangini 1917, 28–29; Baroni, Brogelli, and Tuoni 1928). Sometimes even Italian consuls participated in distinguishing between West Coast and East Coast Italians: "San Francisco has the best of the Italian population that has migrated," Vittore Siciliani told the Examiner in 1923, "those with less money, less education and less ambition probably stopped when they reached the eastern coast" (Willson, Hodel, and Hodel 1951, 24).

Ettore Patrizi contributed significantly to the shaping of this propaganda over the "exceptionalism" of California's Italian Americans by turning it into a systematic discourse, which we may call "the narrative of the Model Colony." On the occasion of the 1911 Turin International

exposition, he prepared a monograph about Italian Americans in California for the pavilion dedicated to Italian colonies abroad. The beginning is emblematic (Patrizi 1911, 1):

> The Italian who goes to North America for the first time with the intention of finding work and fortune . . . has hardly arrived in New York and spoken with some of his countrymen [before] . . . he is shocked to hear very few happy and pleasant things about that colony. . . . But hardly does he make it known to his informers that he plans to go to California [when] he hears without fail "You're going to California? What an excellent colony you will find in San Francisco! Yes, that is truly the Model [Italian] Colony."

Without such a polarity, the Model Colony would have been inconceivable. Crime was a crucial feature of the narrative. Patrizi (1911, 1) remarked that California's Italian Americans

> rarely participate in those crimes involving knives, guns and bombs, in which regard there are unfortunately many dreadful examples in some of our communities in the East Coast, especially in New York; here continuous crimes among our co-nationals—crimes of every kind and sometimes monstrous—are terrorizing the local population and are creating hostility towards the Italian community.

Patrizi depicted California's Italian Americans as being free from all of those stigmas applied to Italian Americans nationwide, such as residential segregation. He stated in the monograph that San Francisco's Italian Americans did not live in "special overcrowded districts, as in most major U.S. cities, called . . . 'Little Italy,' or 'Dago Town' . . . the hated and vulgar word used to identify Italians. . . . No: Italians in San Francisco are spread all over the City, their points of concentration being various" (Patrizi 1911, 18).

The task here is not so much to unmask the falsity or fabrication of the Model Colony, the pretentious nature of which is clear; rather, it is to highlight its historicity, its being grounded in both class and racialized regional tensions within San Francisco's Italian American population in the early twentieth century. As noted already by other scholars, the image of the Model Colony implied Northern Italians' feeling of superiority to southern newcomers residing in California or on the East Coast (Cinel 1982, 19; Cinotto 2012, 195). Ettore Patrizi, in the monograph quoted above, paid tribute to his Northern Italian elite circle by remarking that Americans distinguished between "our immigrants from the North and from the South" because the former were "more educated" and "able to

assimilate," while the latter had a tendency to live "too much below the American working class standard of living" (Patrizi 1911, 20). Nonetheless, it should not be overlooked that the Model Colony narrative actually downplayed the northerners vs. southerners dichotomy by turning it into a more implicit and vague distinction between East Coast and West Coast Italians. His aim being the creation of a national Italian American community, Patrizi had indeed no interest in fueling racialized regional contrapositions among Italian Americans. This is why he explicitly included southerners in the myth of the exceptional immigration experience of California's Italian Americans (Patrizi 1911, 2):

> But—some could ask—who are they and where do they come from, these Italians of California with such noble virtues that they differentiate themselves from their brothers of other localities? Are they a special class, a selected stock of the motherland? . . . No: They are Italians like any others; they come from the North and from the South of our beautiful Peninsula.

The narrative of the Model Colony had a significant impact in the San Francisco press. In 1913 both the *Call* and the *Chronicle* reviewed Patrizi's monograph stressing the editor's definition of local Italian Americans as "the model of the Italian colonies in the United States" ("Italians' Share in State Growth" 1913, 5; "Italian Progress Told in New Book" 1913, 53). In 1914, a journalist of the *Chronicle* wrote: "The Italians of San Francisco have formed a model colony within a city, a model city within the city, and have become a part, a great part, of the official, business and financial life of the great western metropolis" ("Italian Colony" 1914, 22). Some years later, another reporter of the same newspaper repeated one of the leitmotifs underlying the Model Colony narrative: "If one were to look for the Italian quarter in San Francisco in the sense in which one looks for Chinatown or an Old World Ghetto, one would be disappointed . . . [they] have mingled with their American-born comrades and are scattered throughout the city" ("Many of California's Best Citizens" 1921, A56). More generally, local public opinion often echoed the propaganda of Northern Italian elites about the distinction between California Italian Americans and East Coast Italians: "In the East the retail vending of fruits was an ignoble calling," noted a West Coast writer (Jones 1927, 155), "but in California it took on a romantic aspect . . . the trade gave rise to not grimy hucksters or the pallid warehousemen of London's Soho, but a group of curiously intelligent and enterprising merchants like Sbarboro, the banker Fugazi, F.N. Belgrano and the scholarly Marco Fontana." The narrative of the Model Colony, therefore, preserved the image of local Italian Americans despite those social problems emerging within the immigrant group in the early

twentieth century with its rapid expansion; on the other hand, it also reinforced the stigmatization of East Coast Southern Italians. A San Francisco tourist guide stated (Dunn 1912, 47–48):

> There is no Mafia here, the Mano Nera has never shown the menace of its imprints. Perhaps because these sons of Italy are of a different type from the peanut seller, banana huckster, street laborer, "Ginny" of Castle Garden Entrance.[8]

Conclusion

As Fred Gardaphé (2010) has noted, Italian Americans became "visible" more through the stereotypical images the media branded them with rather than through the efforts they showed to endorse their own heritage and culture. This article has illustrated how San Francisco's Italian American elite dealt with the problem of the "quality" of its own ethnic group's visibility. On one hand, the narrative of the Model Colony forged by Italian American notables represented a successful attempt to control and determine Americans' perception; negative stereotypical images were challenged through the diffusion of a counterstereotypical image of local Italian Americans, based on the assumption of their own "exceptional" character. On the other hand, the cultural construction of the Model Colony, by reproducing distinctions among Italian Americans, ended up corroborating anti-Italian prejudices; it exempted San Francisco's Italian Americans from those stigmas, such as crime, ascribed to Italian Americans nationwide by limiting them to the East Coast Italian American communities. The polarity between San Francisco's Italian Americans and New York's Italian Americans informing the narrative masked the polarity between Northern and Southern Italians. With their propaganda concerning San Francisco's Italian American exceptionalism, Italian American notables pandered to the feelings of Northern Italian residents of superiority while avoiding fueling racialized regional distinctions within the wider Italian community. However, in the eyes of San Francisco public opinion, the distinctive element favoring the acceptance of local Italian Americans remained the fact that they were mostly northerners, this corroborating the implicit antisouthern content of the Model Colony narrative.

Notes

1. For a general overview, see Lupo (2002) and Iorizzo (2000).
2. There were differences between Ripley and Grant's studies. As Gossett (1997, 355) wrote: "Ripley had argued that each of the three European races had mental and temperamental traits peculiar to it, but it urged caution in the description of these inward characteristics. Grant, however, assigned all traits dogmatically."
3. Among historians, two major lines of interpretation have arisen as to the Italian American experience in California. The first one is Rolle's (1968) description of California as a sort of "Italy in America," a place providing Italian Americans with job opportunities suited for their skills and with a less structured society, factors apparently favoring a higher degree of both social and economic success than that achieved by Italian Americans on the East Coast. Rolle's early idyllic interpretation, however, was later revised by other scholars who furnished a "more balanced view" by bringing into light also darker aspects of California's Italian American experience, such as poverty, discrimination, and exploitation (Sensi Isolani and Martinelli 1993). A synthesis of the debate on the Italian American experience in California is offered by Canepa (1994).
4. On Italian fishermen, see Gumina (1978, 79). The Chinese also were engaged in fishing. However, their immigration restricted since 1882, their presence in the fishing industry steadily declined.
5. The survey will appear in its entire version in my Ph.D. dissertation. Using the 1900 Census, I collected data on occupations of more than 500 heads of households of San Francisco's Italians who had arrived in the United States before the year 1880.
6. Columbus Bank's founder Francesco Arata was a Republican ("Death of a Leader" 1901, 7) as well as bankers Joseph Cuneo and Egisto Palmieri ("Italian American Republican Club" 1896, 14). See also "Death of Giosuè Rottanzi" (1899, 10) and "Alfred Roncovieri" (1915, 127).
7. Percentages are from California State, Board of Prison Directors (1900, 63, 120; 1910, 67, 182)
8. "Ginny" is derived from the epithet "guinea."

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Early Representations of Organized Crime and Issues of Identity in the Italian American Press (1890–1910)

MARINA CACIOPPO

The image of the Mafia that has become commonplace in U.S. popular culture is the one popularized by *The Godfather*, in which, according to Thomas Ferraro, "blood and marketplace," family and economy, Italian ethnicity, and American capitalism combine in a domesticated, romanticized, and Americanized version of organized crime in which "ethnic tribalism" is moderated by the "all-American pursuit of wealth and power" (Ferraro 1989, 177). This idea is a recent invention, a product of the recognition of just how successfully Italians have integrated within American society. As "Italian Americans no longer differ in education or socioeconomic status from other urban Americans of European descent" (Gabaccia 2010, 33), Italian American culture has become embedded firmly within the American mainstream culture to the point that many of its elements (food, film, music, etc.) are indistinguishable from American culture in general. "Italianness" in the contemporary moment is increasingly symbolic (Gans 1979), rooted in invented traditions (see Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Sollors 1989), a subjective and volitional process of self-affiliation (Waters 1990) based on a "feeling" of ethnic identity (Ferraro 2005).

However, it was not always so easy to take this "fit" for granted. In fact, much early discourse on Italian immigration insists on the impossibility of such integration due to certain "inherent" racial and/or cultural qualities that rendered them incompatible with American values and practices. The heaviest shadow hanging over Italian immigrants was certainly their widely alleged "natural" tendency to crime, which came to dominate early representations of Italian immigrants in the American mainstream press. This study argues that, while from the 1890s Italian immigrants were systematically (and almost exclusively) represented in relation to the Italian Mafias by the American mainstream press, a counternarrative was put forward by Italian-language newspapers. Indeed, the Americanness of Italian Americans that is taken for granted today was the product of a long discursive struggle carried out, in this early stage, primarily in the Italian American press as it sought to construct counterdiscourses of identity to combat the sinister, racialized representations of the mainstream press of the day.

Little attention has been given to these early representations in which Mafia and racial issues are heavily intertwined and still less to the Italian

American press of the period. Whether this is ascribable to what Edvige Giunta and Kathleen McCormick have termed "historical amnesia" about the real situation of Italian Americans in the early period, scarce access to source materials in archives, or language issues, a substantial and important part of Italian American culture—one that shows a "clear picture of the entanglement of Italian Americans in American racial issues"—has remained understudied (Giunta and McCormick 2010, 17). The fact that a rough beginning marked by discrimination on the basis of race does not fit with the traditional model of straight-line assimilation or with the notion of the inclusivity of the American nation that dominated conventional history may have delayed the recognition of the role of race in Italian American history.

In the wake of scholarly debate over how Europeans became racialized in the United States (see, for example, Noel Ignatiev's *How the Irish Became White*, 1995), contemporary historians such as Matthew Frye Jacobson (1998), David R. Roediger (2005), David A. J. Richards (1999), Jennifer Guglielmo and Salvatore Salerno (2003), Thomas Guglielmo (2003), and Peter Vellon (2014) have directly addressed the question of whiteness in their discussions of European and Italian ethnicity, acknowledging that, during the period of mass immigration, European immigrants became diversified and mapped onto a hierarchy of "white" races according to their sociopolitical status as well as their perceived proximity to whiteness. Whereas documentary histories of Italian American discrimination since the 1970s, for example, Richard Gambino (1996, 1998), Salvatore J. LaGumina (1999), and, more recently, Joseph P. Cosco (2003), have focused on the American perception of Italians and have looked at external representations and stereotyping (including the association of Italian Americans with the Mafia and organized crime) in the mainstream American press, official government documents (such as the *Congressional Record*), and literature (Cosco 2003), the relentless work of self-representation that characterized early Italian American cultural production has been mostly neglected. While scholars such as Francesco Durante (2001, 2005) and, to some extent, Martino Marazzi (2004) have unearthed and made available from archives a wealth of literary and cultural texts (often using the Italian American press as sources) from the early phase of the Italian American experience, these texts have not been explored in depth in relation to Italian American self-representation.

Previous work (Cacioppo 2005) analyzed Italian American autobiographies and popular detective fiction as sites in which a self-conscious ethnic identity is constructed and negotiated. In particular, it focused on phenomena such as the myth of the Italian American detective (e.g., Joseph

Petrosino and Michael Fiaschetti of the New York Police Department's "Italian Squad") as constituting counternarratives to mainstream representation of Italians as criminals. The present work maintains a similar emphasis on the internal perspective of the Italian American community and continues to focus on issues of self-representation, but it shifts the objective of its analysis from works of fiction and autobiography to the news and the Italian American press, which played a vital role as a site of dialog with mainstream representations. While the importance of the Italian American press has always been acknowledged, from Robert E. Park (1922) to Rudolph Vecoli (1998), the first in-depth study came in 2014 with Vellon's broad work on representation of race, class, and identity in the early Italian-language press. The present article adds to the existing literature on the Italian-language press, representations of Mafia, and the construction of Italian American identity by looking at the Mafia stereotype as a manifestation of the "precarious racial position" (Vellon 2014, 2) of Italians in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century, with the press functioning as a crucial point of intersection between discourses of racialization and identity construction.

The debate over the emergence and the nature of the Mafia in the United States became an important arena in which the struggle of Italian immigrants to define themselves and their place in American society took place. As Italians were represented almost exclusively in the context of criminality, it was in this discursive field that many immigrant writers sought to construct their own representations. An analysis that focuses specifically on representations of organized crime and law enforcement, in both the mainstream and Italian American press and the popular culture, enables us to use the discourse of Italian criminality as a lens through which to look at the wider processes of the negotiation and construction of Italian American identity. On the one hand, representations of Italian criminality in news coverage in the yellow press, feature articles on Mafia, Camorra, and Black Hand in mainstream papers and illustrated magazines, and popular detective libraries (inspired by real Black Hand crime stories) rested on underlying eugenicist assumptions that Italians were, by nature, criminally inclined and therefore incompatible with American law, unable to successfully integrate and participate in American civil society; on the other hand, counterrepresentations in Italian-language newspapers and serialized detective fiction (for example, Bernardino Ciambelli's works; see Cacioppo 2005) focused on making distinctions between the law-abiding majority and the criminal minority within the Italian community, deploying discourses of victimization in which the community was victimized not only by organized crime but also by the neglect of public institutions such as the police.

In my broad but still incomplete research on the press of this period—conducted while on a Fulbright at the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute (Queens College, CUNY)—I have looked at specific Mafia/criminality-related events in a "horizontal" perspective, examining various sources that describe and discuss these events contemporaneously, in order to foreground the debate among them regarding issues of race, criminality, and identity in relation to both mainstream and side-stream sources. I have identified a series of symbolic violent incidents around which there was intense and prolific discursive production as various positions strove to use the events to further particular political and/or ideological ends. This work will discuss two early nodal events around which representations of the relation between Italian immigrants and organized crime clustered: the New Orleans massacre of March 14, 1891[1] and the "barrel murder" in New York on April 14, 1903.[2] These events shocked public opinion and ignited debates over the relationship between Italianness and criminality that intersected with discourses of racial difference, immigration restriction, and the capability of Italians to assimilate. Around those dates, these issues filled the pages of both American mainstream and Italian papers, which engaged in an active dialog with each other (they actually translated, quoted, and commented on large chunks of each other's editorials) and even entered into popular fiction.

Beginning from the early days of mass migration in the 1890s, Italian immigrants were continually and increasingly depicted in association with crime, especially organized crime, in both the mainstream and popular press of the period. The virulence and sensationalism of these representations were particularly strong in the new popular press, the so-called yellow papers (such as Bennett's *Herald*, Hearst's *New York Journal*, and Pulitzer's *World*) and magazines (such as *Puck*, *Judge*, *Munsey's*, *McClure's*, *Collier's*, and *Pearson's Magazine*), which capitalized upon the wave of xenophobia that followed the mass migration from southern and eastern Europe in order to appeal to a wide readership.

Scenes like the one shown in Figure 1 became important means for including a rapidly growing public in political debate, crystallizing what became perceived as the menace of unrestricted immigration within powerful images (Conboy 2002, 57–60). In this scene, an impassive Uncle Sam observes the landing—"direct from the slums of Europe daily"—of a horde of immigrants, depicted as rats with the heads of men brandishing knives and pistols, with the words *Mafia*, *anarchist*, *Socialist*, and *assassination* written on their heads. Their southern and eastern European origins are clearly indicated by their clothing and their distinctive physical traits: dark skin and hair, snub and hooked noses. One man in particular, wearing a

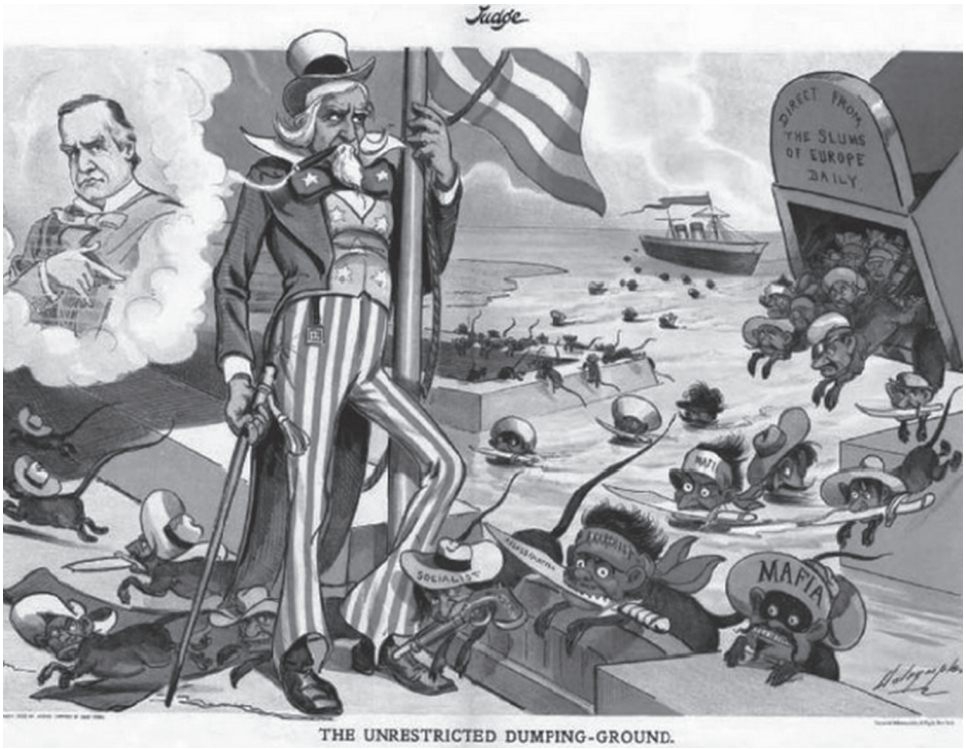

Figure 1. Cover of Judge*, June 6, 1903: "The Unrestricted Dumping Ground."*

tricolore bandana with "Mafia" written on it and carrying a stiletto between his teeth, leaves no doubt as to the nationality he is supposed to represent. In the upper-left corner there is the image of President William McKinley, assassinated in 1901 by the Polish anarchist Leon Czolgosz, providing a sort of concreteness to the menace to American institutions and security—and thus to American democracy itself—posed by this influx of foreigners.

Fueled by nativist views of immigrants as a threat to American safety, character, and morality, these first images of the newcomers became increasingly popular as the new century progressed, taking shape in the minds of Americans and becoming the predominant representations of Italian immigrants. Over time, the public perception of the phenomena of the Mafia and the Black Hand that emerged in the early days of Italian immigration shaped the way America came to see Italian immigrants and resulted in the formation of long-lasting stereotypes. What was at stake was the ability of Italians to successfully become Americans: In early representations, their ability to assimilate was not taken for granted; instead, crime was linked to race and used to represent Italian immigrants as innately criminal and thus unfit for citizenship or incapable of being "true" Americans.

The New Orleans massacre marks a paradigm shift in the public perception of Italians, forever changing the way they were represented, as the rustic image of the organ grinder (LaGumina 1999, 54), with its stereotypes of pauperism, ignorance, and stupidity, gave way to representations characterized by much more violent and criminal attributes and that constructed Italians as fundamentally—and racially—Other (Webb 2008, 181).

As Jacobson (1998, 56) has put it, in New Orleans, "racial distinctness became deadly." After the acquittal of six Italians on trial for the assassination of New Orleans Chief of Police David Hennessy, a brutal reprisal occurred, and eleven Italians were murdered in the streets by a city mob. This was not simply a murder, but rather a lynching, of a piece with other racially motivated instances of this particular brand of violence. Indeed, in the newspaper coverage of the event and its aftermath, discourses of racial difference came to the fore and became the central ground upon which the legitimacy of the massacre was debated.

In mainstream newspapers such as *The New York Times*, Italians at the time were characterized as innately criminal and therefore guilty, even though they had been acquitted by a jury ("The New Orleans Affair" 1891, 4):

> sneaking and cowardly . . . the descendants of bandits and assassins, who have transported to this country the lawless passions, the cut-throat practices and the oath-bound societies of their native country. . . . Our own rattlesnakes are as good citizens as they.

The *Baltimore News* (cited in Panek 1990, 44) commented that

> [t]he Italian immigrant would be no more objectionable than some others were it not for his singularly blood-thirsty disposition and frightful temper and vindictiveness.

Here the implication is that criminal tendencies are hereditary. With implicit reference to theories of eugenics of that period, the association between crime and the Italian "race" is presented as natural and inevitable. The reference to the rattlesnake, an animal that is considered aggressive by nature, clearly indicates the threat that Italians were thought to represent to American society and their incompatibility with the values and rules of American citizenship. In contrast, the *Times* ("To Hunt the Assassins" 1890, 1) presents Chief of Police Hennessy as the

> victim of Sicilian vengeance, wreaked upon him as the chief representative of law and order in this community, because he was seeking by the power of our American law to break the foreign vendettas that have so often filled our streets with blood.

At the level of language, these passages can be interpreted as relying on a series of binary oppositions—American citizens/Italian immigrants, community/oath-bound societies, law and order/lawless practices, and unlawful vendetta/rightful vengeance—which show the process of racial "Othering" at work. Italians are linked to the second half of each of these oppositions, and the figure of Hennessy is positioned along the first half; thus, Hennessy becomes personified as American law, and the Italian community in New Orleans is equated with the Mafia. The proof of their guilt was in their "disposition" and the criminal qualities inherited from their ancestors, "bandits and assassins," rather than that determined by a court of law.

The legitimacy of this racial discourse was taken for granted; even the Italian American newspapers that contested these nasty representations primarily made racialized counterclaims rather than delegitimizing the idea of a racial argument. We see this, for example, in this article titled "Un'opuscolo. Are Italians a Menace to the United States?" from the *L'Eco d'Italia* (1890, 1), one of the most popular Italian American papers in New York City,[3] which argues:

> Una razza come la nostra . . . tra le più esemplari per sobrietà, tenacia nel lavoro e relativa moralità . . . daranno alla popolazione una razza sana vigorosa, donde usciranno buoni artigiani, perché malgrado i loro difetti un caso è certo: che il loro sangue è puro e forte come i vini che producono le loro fertili terre. . . . Non è da questi che viene il pericolo ma dai nemici del lavoro, da chi compra e vende il voto degli stranieri.
>
> A race like ours . . . among the most exemplary for sobriety, hard work, and morality . . . give the people a healthy, vigorous stock from which come good artisans because, despite their defects, one thing is sure: that their blood is pure and strong like the vines that are produced by their fertile land. . . . The threat does not come from this but from the enemies of work, from those who buy and sell the votes of foreigners. (This and all other translations by author.)

L'Eco d'Italia here appeals to the strength and purity of Italian blood, "puro e forte come i vini che producono le loro fertili terre," and asserts the positive qualities of sobriety, hard work, and morality inherent in the Italian race, attributing any threat to America to the corruption and exploitation of immigrant workers by the political machine and the *padrone* system.

The *Cristoforo Colombo*[4] went even further, mobilizing an inverted rhetoric of barbarism versus civilization in which Italians are civilized Europeans who respect institutions and Americans are ruled by the impulse

to blood vengeance. In the illustration shown in Figure 2, titled "Dopo la tragedia di New Orleans" (After the tragedy in New Orleans), by G. Nasi, the victims of the lynching are not only those who had lost their lives and their families but also the very ideas of *giustizia* (justice) and *civiltà* (civility). Next to the images showing the dignified and restrained pain of the families and the children "in attesa del babbo che non tornerà mai più" (waiting for their father who will never return again) is the symbolic representation of the broken scales and the violence represented by daggers, emphasizing how the ideals of justice and civilization had been shattered ("Dopo la tragedia di New Orleans" 1891, 1).

Such an interpretation of the New Orleans massacre had already been articulated a few days earlier in an editorial titled "New Orleans, un paese di barbari" (1891), in which the "blood-thirsty" and "ferocious" population of New Orleans is depicted as behaving in a way that would be expected from savage Native Americans, "pelli rossa," [red skins] rather than people of "European stock." Even cannibals, it claims, would never go so far as to deprive law of its authority and "rispetterebbero chi alla giustizia è stato affidato, e non massacrerebbero chi dalla giustizia fosse stato assolto" (would respect the decisions of justice and not massacre someone found not guilty).[5] One thing is clear for the editorialist (probably the novelist Bernardino Ciambelli): The Italians in New Orleans were "innocenti vittime

Figure 2. Cristoforo Colombo, *March 17, 1891: After the massacre, the victims are not only the families of those massacred but also "Giustizia e civiltà."*

dell'odio selvaggio di razza" (innocent victims of savage racial hatred), showing that he had understood that public debate over the lynching was going to be framed in racial terms and carefully constructed his argument to invert the anticipated framing ("New Orleans, un paese di barbari" 1891, 1).

Thus, Mafia and race were bound together, with the former presented as the "natural" expression of the latter. The association of Mafia and race lasted because it was supported by the authority of the mainstream press, which made the stereotype seem real: In article after article, their guilt was simply assumed, inferred from the fact that they were Italian and therefore criminal in nature. The newspapers produced what Patrick Champagne calls "reality effects" by "creating a media-oriented vision of reality that contributes to creating the reality it claims to describe" (Champagne 1999, 56). Once established and legitimized by the press, such racialized discourse quickly spread to other contexts as a fact that could be taken for granted.

In a fictional account of the events leading up to Hennessy's murder and the ensuing lynching titled "The New Orleans Mafia," published only a month after the event in *The New York Detective Library*, the racialized discourse of Mafia is already established and underlies the whole narrative (Police Captain Howard 1891). The descriptions of Italians are clearly marked by nonwhite racial features, "a swarthy complexion" and the "snakiest of black eyes," which gleam from the black half-masks of the Mafias (Police Captain Howard 1891, 3). The adjective *snakiest* leaves no doubt that these men are meant to be associated with evil and treachery. Moreover, Sicilians are called "the most bloody-minded and revengeful of the Mediterranean races. These traits were probably owing to their Saracen origin, murder and intrigue being natural with them" (Police Captain Howard 1891, 10). The power and reach of this racial discourse are further demonstrated by the way that, in 1911, the Dillingham Commission, appointed by the U.S. government to investigate the correlation between crime and the new immigrants, reported as a fact that "certain kinds of criminality are inherent in the Italian race" (U.S. Immigration Commission 1911, 209).

As Jacobson (1998) has noted, racialized discourse became the basis for arguments about restricting Italian immigration. The mass migration from Europe prompted new racialist revisions of whiteness that placed the new immigrants in a "racial middle ground." Since the convergence of race and "fitness for self-government" was deeply embedded in American political culture (all the way back to 1790, when citizenship was restricted to "free white persons"), racial difference became an argument used to support immigration restriction.

The tendency to form secret societies like the Mafia was presented as part of Southern Italians' innate racial qualities that therefore could be extended to the whole population (sometimes the terms *Italians* and *Mafias* were used as synonyms), thus establishing a ground for their wholesale exclusion. The danger of the Mafia lay in its inherently conspiratorial and anti-institutional character, which threatened the very fabric of American civil society. For example, according to an article in *Harper's Weekly*, what made the Hennessy assassination such an extraordinary event that justified recourse to violence was the fact that it was carried out by "a conspiracy of foreign criminals," which had "so completely overwhelmed and paralyzed society in New Orleans that the city could be saved to order and law only by a temporary resort to barbarism" ("The Mafia" 1891, 218).

Italian papers understood the ideological purchase of such language and that what was at stake was their assimilability and fitness for citizenship. They developed two primary strategies to combat such discourse. The first was to ridicule it by showing up its overblown claims. One article points out the ludicrous proposition in the *Evening Sun* that one of those arrested for killing Hennessy had a detailed plan for the assassination of *every* police chief in the entire country who fought against Mafias ("L'Assassinio di New Orleans" 1890, 1). The other strategy was to create a counterdiscourse emphasizing Italian participation in the construction of American institutions. For example, in a public speech, Bernardino Ciambelli underlined how Italians came to the United States seeking to earn money and, in return, built the infrastructure that not only enriched the nation but allowed it to progress as well ("Il Mass-Meeting di New Haven" 1891, 2):

> Siamo venuti in queste terre attirati dal miraggio dell'oro, ma in compenso del prezioso metallo noi diamo agli americani le opere più grandiose, essi ci danno l'oro, noi restituiamo lunghe, interminabili guide di ferro dove corre veloce la vaporiera, apportatrice di ricchezza, di progresso, di civiltà. Ci danno oro e i figli d'Italia forano i monti, riempiono i laghi . . . fabbricano palazzi monumentali . . . ci danno oro e noi diamo le nostre forze, la nostra intelligenza. Siamo pari.
>
> We came to this land drawn by the mirage of gold, but in exchange for this precious metal we give the Americans the grandest works; they give us gold, we give them back long, endless iron railways where steam engines race, carrying wealth, progress, civilization. They give us gold and the sons of Italy tunnel under the mountains, fill their lakes . . . build monumental buildings . . . they give us gold and we give them our strength, our intelligence. We are even.

To adopt Werner Sollors's terminology, it can be said that Ciambelli, emphasizing the role of Italians in the literal "making of America," substitutes a rhetoric of "consent" for that of "descent," invoking the myth of American inclusivity to contest arguments about racial exclusivity (Sollors 1986).

After the events of New Orleans, which established the stereotype of all Italians as *mafiosi*, in 1903 a new terrifying event confirmed America's fears about Italians and that the scope of the threat was not localized to New Orleans: Indeed, there was a national conspiracy, called the Black Hand, whose tentacles reached wherever Italians had settled. A man was found dead in a barrel on the corner of Avenue D and East 11th Street in New York, and the police had no leads other than the crucifix around the victim's neck and a piece of paper that pointed to the Italians, that is, the Mafia/Black Hand. The journalist F.M. White later observed that this was "the first of the tragedies of the Black Hand to demonstrate . . . that the Medieval criminals of the Mafia . . . are able to slay with impunity in the secret places of the Italian settlements throughout the country" (White 1916, 312). The event filled the pages of national as well as local papers and made such an impression that it became a central trope, the starting point of every discussion about the Mafia for years to come.

The first articles reported in shocked tones the discovery of the body and the gruesome details of the "atrocious murder"—eighteen knife wounds to the neck that almost severed the head from the body—and established the connection between such unusual, primitive, and beastly cruelty and Italians ("Murdered Man's Body" 1903, 1); within two weeks of the murder, however, interest had shifted to the Mafia in general and its origins in Sicily and Southern Italy, often implying some kind of connection between the murder and the Mafia in Italy, as can be seen in articles such as "The Mafia in America" published in *Collier's Weekly* (Sangree 1903). Many articles followed the same format: They described the barrel murder (in all its cruelty), something the reader would be familiar with, and then went on to trace the origins of the Mafia and Camorra in Italy, and finally complained about how scores of these medieval criminals landed daily upon American shores. The image from *Judge* (Figure 1) published on June 6, 1903, shortly after the barrel murder, is perhaps the most emblematic figuration of the rising tide of fear of the Mafia peril in the wake of this event.

With a synecdochal procedure typical of stereotyping, the barrel murder became a trope used to exemplify the Mafia, and the word *Mafia* became interchangeable with the word *Italians*. Knowledge of the Mafia and its internal rules was then constructed as the key to understanding what really went on in those "secret places of the Italian settlement" (White 1916, 312). Such descriptions created fascination with "how the other half really

lived," with knowing the secret rituals and customs, the sordid details of how "the most secret and terrible organization in the world" operated (Dash 2009, 89). The exotic and threatening representations of Italian Americans as Mafia, which emphasized their backwardness, ignorance, and clannishness (in a word, their Otherness), dovetailed with broader middle-class interest in the lives of those who were different from them—the poor, the foreign—cultivated by the work of Jacob Riis (and, later, the muckrakers), who provided an alleged insider's perspective on those who seemed impenetrable from the outside. One investigative journalist, Broughton Brandenberg, went so far as to go to Italy, disguise himself as an immigrant, and immigrate to New York for the sake of writing a book on his "insider" experience (Brandenberg 1904).

In article after article, in newspapers as well as magazines (such as *Collier's*, which pioneered investigative journalism and had a circulation of 500,000 copies), we find more or less imaginative explanations of Mafia seen as a way of life—its origins, internal rules, secret signs and rituals, and how it arrives in America and operates there. For example, the decision of "who shall put a man to death" is made by the tossing of cards (Sangree 1903, 8):

> The elect sit about a table, the cards are shuffled, and one starts to deal. Ace of diamond is the fatal card, and the man to whom it is dealt is given a certain time within which to accomplish his mission.

The construction of Mafia as a system, as a centralized organization with precisely codified rules that spanned the Atlantic Ocean, strengthened the hypothesis of a grand Italian conspiracy involving all Italians. Mafia origins and habits in Italy become a template for interpreting the way of life of Italian communities in America ("Immigration from Sicily" 1903, 5):

> In Sicily the women and children will work hard in the fields and the man will strut around with a gun over his shoulder. When they come here the women and children work hard in the sweatshop and the men hang around street corners or play cards in the cafes, pretty well dressed, smoking, idling and enjoying themselves. How do they do it? Blackmail is one answer, shoving the queer is another.[6]

The images evoked here of Italian men hanging around on street corners directly echoes the characteristics of Lombroso's "born criminal" type, with his "strong love for gambling alcohol and complete idleness" (Lombroso 1895, 38). Lombroso's ideas were already in circulation in the United States in this period, and they certainly influenced the criminal and Mafia stereotypes of Southern Italian immigrants. However, whereas in Italy the work

of Lombroso and other criminal anthropologists evolved within a political context open to scientific reformism to ameliorate social and economic problems, in the United States these ideas were selectively used to lend "scientific" authority to racial hierarchies and discriminatory policies (see D'Agostino 2002). The yellow press, which knew full well that "xenophobia was a popular and therefore profitable pursuit" (Conboy 2002, 57), tended to magnify the pervasiveness of the threat of these criminals, exploiting the broad popular appeal that this sense of urgency and danger implied. Headlines in the *Herald* (April 26, 1903) such as "Scores of New York Businessmen Pay Blackmail to Mafia" or "Immigration from Sicily: America's Great Problem," conveyed the idea that the moral corruption of the capitalistic system came from a foreign element and was not intrinsic to the system, supporting the argument that it would be enough to stop Italian immigration to restore its proper, lawful, and fair functioning.

In the article from the *Herald* in Figure 3, all of the elements come together to give the sense of an emergency caused by the danger of migration from Sicily and Southern Italy: the alarming statistics showing a threefold increase in the number of Italian immigrants over a ten-year period, and the map that cuts Europe in two, indicating Southern Italy as the source of the "worst" of European migration, are accompanied by an illustration of a sinister, scowling individual as a "typical" Southern


FIFTH SECTION. NEW YORK HERALD, SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 1903. 5

"The Boot" Unloads Its Criminals Upon the United States.

Italian Tenements, Elizabeth St. bet Hopkins & Prince Sts.

Italians in the detention pen, Ellis Island.

A Sicilian in Native Costume.

Immigration from Sicily America's Great Problem

Statistics Prove That the Scum of Southern Europe Is Dumped at the Nation's Door in Rapacious, Conscienceless, Lawbreaking Hordes.

COME TO PREY ON STRANGERS AND EACH OTHER

Corrupt Politicians Looking for Dishonest Votes Give Objectionable Newcomers Special Privileges That Make Them an Element of Great Danger to Society.

CLOSE on the heels of the discussion of the prevalence of what have been termed "Mafia murders" comes the question why these are increasing in frequency. The figures compiled by the statistical department of the Immigration Bureau afford a partial answer by showing the tremendous influx of

1899 1900 1902 1903

72,000 100,000 128,000 223,000

Diagram showing gradual increase of Italian immigrants landed in the United States during the past 10 years.

GERMANY FRANCE AUSTRIA HUNGARY SPAIN MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Map of Europe. North of Line Immigration to America has decreased in the last 10 Years. South of Line Immigration has increased. Black portion shows where the Worst Italian elements come from

Figure 3. New York Herald, *April 26, 1903.*

Italian—the same look that can be found in the picture next to it of Italians in the waiting room of Ellis Island. The article's subtitle leaves no doubt as to the interpretation of these images and statistics:

> Statistics Prove That the Scum of Southern Europe Is Dumped at the Nation's Door in Rapacious, Conscienceless, Lawbreaking Hordes.
>
> COME TO PREY ON STRANGERS AND EACH OTHER
>
> Corrupt Politicians Looking for Dishonest Votes Give Objectionable Newcomers Special Privileges That Make Them an Element of Great Danger to Society.

The dangers for the system were thus not the corrupt politicians but the moral degradation of Southern Italians.

Another central element of stories about the Mafia was the inherent danger for American institutions posed by the practice of *omertà*, or "the conspiracy of silence," as it was termed by F. M. White (1907, 308). *Omertà* was described as "the Sicilian code of ethics enjoining silence concerning any knowledge of an illegal act performed," which bound criminals and victims together and was built on abject fear, (as Broughton Brandenberg (1906, 7) wrote in the *Tribune*). It is argued that *omertà* obstructed the work of the police and the justice system, summing up their record of success for the period between September 1904 and March 1906 as "forty Black Hand crimes to one arrest and eleven arrests to one conviction." Indeed, the barrel murder case ended with no convictions. Italians were thus a threat to the functioning of American institutions and a justice system that depended upon cooperative witnesses to achieve convictions. As the article puts it, "pursuing Italian criminal methods under an American police system is about as safe as kite-flying" (Brandenberg 1906, 7). With both Italian criminals and the community portrayed as, effectively, working hand in hand to thwart the justice system, it was easy to take the argument one step further to claim that their massive continuing influx would "lower our standards of living and civilization" ("Immigration from Sicily" 1903, 5) and eventually threaten the fabric of American democracy itself—which pointed to only one solution: immigration restriction.

Italian American papers protested such gross distortions regarding the nature, organization, and spread of the Mafia and the involvement of the whole community. They tried to expose the reasons for the pervasiveness of this debate in the American press while also providing alternative interpretations of Italian crime to reassure their Italian readers as well as the American public about their place in and contribution to America. Between the end of April and the middle of May 1903, *L'Araldo Italiano* and

Il Telegrafo engaged in a concerted campaign to counter the yellow press's distortions about the barrel murder and the Mafia in general.[7] The intent to protest against the American press is clear in the mocking tone in an article in *Il Telegrafo*[8] ("La Mafia e la polizia" 1903, 3):

> I nostri confratelli americani dacché il mistero del barile occupa e appassiona l'opinione pubblica ne sono pieni fino alla nausea, e spropositando allegramente, urlano mattina e sera contro la tenebrosa sanguinaria associazione in cui vedono e amano vedere implicati tutti gli italiani. Contro questa convinzione diffusissima nel pubblico americano occorre protestare energicamente.
>
> Since the barrel mystery has occupied and inflamed public opinion, our American brothers have filled their newspapers to the point of nausea and, happily spouting nonsense, scream morning and night against the shadowy, blood-thirsty association in which they see, and like to see, all Italians implicated. We must protest forcefully against this widespread belief of the American public.

The editorialist Alfonso Arbib-Costa (1903), in his article "La leggenda del cattivo italiano" (The legend of the bad Italian), takes an even more polemical tone in predicting how the American press would exploit and manipulate the barrel murder for a long time to create a "bogey man," a supervillain from a romance by Ponson du Terrail, guilty of every imaginable crime, with the intent of feeding a "spicy dish" to their readers. This shows that Arbib-Costa clearly understood that the objective of the American press is the sensationalization of the Mafia to excite readers' passions and drive sales.

The theory of an international conspiracy with tentacles reaching as far as the Italian communities of Tunis and Algiers and involving all Italians, a theory like the one propagated in the *New York Tribune* ("'Lupo the Wolf'" 1912, A4), was dismissed by *Il Telegrafo* as an overblown hoax exploited by the yellow press to sell papers. Instead it offered the theory of "qualche piccola e sporadica banda di malfattori" (small, sporadic criminal bands), neither specific to the Italian community nor any more organized than other criminal gangs ("Gli Italiani giudicati" 1903, 3). Italian editorialists seemed to clearly understand the power of the press to construct Italians as the "enemy within" and the implications that this characterization would have on their acceptance as part of American society. So, they set out to demolish these stereotypes, including reaching out beyond the Italian community. An article published in the mainstream *North American Review* by the former president of the United Italian Societies, provided an

official version for the Italian community. Titled "The Black Hand Myth," it refuted, point by point, all the misconceptions by which the American press had led the public to believe in the existence of an organization in Italy called "the Black Hand Society" that had "the purpose of plundering the United States." Moreover, the piece argued that the press was constructing a myth that actually assisted criminals by making their threats more effective (D'Amato 1908, 543).

Italian papers interpreted the Black Hand on a much smaller scale: They are only "una lega di malfattori che minaccia e terrorizza l'intera comunità italiana" (a gang of malefactors which terrorizes the entire community) ("Gli Italiani giudicati" 1903, 3), which is the victim not only of crime but of corrupt police and neglect by American institutions. One editorial ascribes the singling out of Italians as the main source of crime to inequalities of power in the capitalist system, which makes them easy targets for scapegoating. Other ethnic groups also have criminal gangs, it argued, but their entire communities are not tarred with the brush of criminality and seen as un-American. Without greater success in business, finance, and politics, Italians would remain on the bottom rung of social groups and be subject to misrepresentation and maltreatment ("La mafia e la delinquenza italiana" 1903, 3).

Another way the Italian press countered stereotypes and misrepresentations was to provide positive images of the community and engage in a rhetoric of Americanization ("Gli Italiani giudicati" 1903, 3):

> Come razza gli italiani in America sono sobri, frugali industriosi. . . . I poveri lavoratori in questa terra rammentano le sofferenze passate, constatano il miglioramento delle loro condizioni, e la loro maggiore ambizione è quella di stabilirsi in America in una casa di loro proprietà e di conseguire l'agiatezza, la prosperità e l'istruzione per i loro figli, perché la famiglia viva e si perpetui rispettabile e rispettata.
>
> As a race, Italians in America are sober, frugal, and industrious. . . . The poor workers in this land remember the past sufferings, acknowledge the improvements of their conditions, and their greatest ambition is to settle in America in their own home, to achieve comfort, prosperity, and education for their children, to allow their family to continue to be respectable and respected.

Italians are portrayed as "sober," "frugal," and "industrious" in keeping with the original values of American capitalism. Their goal was to achieve prosperity, respectability, property ownership, and education for their children—in short, the "American Dream."

Over time similar counterdiscourses spilled over from the news and editorials into serialized fiction published in these same types of newspapers, above all with the figure of Lieutenant Joe Petrosino, the head of the Italian Squad of the New York Police Department, who appeared frequently both in the news and in the pages of novels by the journalist Bernardino Ciambelli.[9] The positive image of a criminal-catching detective (see Figure 4), who had played such an important role in the solution of the barrel murder case, was set against the negative ones of the Mafia. The myth of the strong, honest, and upright policeman, with 700 arrests in 1904 alone, a self-made man and a representative of the law who acts on behalf of the community to eradicate crime, was lionized and held up as an emblem of how Italians shared mainstream values and wanted to achieve success through hard work. Above all, this myth showed that Italian Americans were not incompatible with American institutions and law and order (Cacioppo 2005). At times the character himself gives voice

Figure 4. Il Progresso Italoamericano, *April 26, 1903.*

to the counternarratives of these newspapers, in one instance proclaiming (Ciambelli 1908, chapter 48):

> Questo [*sic*] non appartengono alla Mano Nera, ma alla legione degli uomini dalle mani callose, alla squadra dei martiri del lavoro. Il suo grido non sarebbe stato udito, perché si usa far clamore tutte le volte che un italiano commette un delitto, ma si tace quando centinaia e centinaia cadono vittime del dovere.
>
> They did not belong to the Black Hand, but to the legion of men with calluses on their hands, to the squad of the martyrs of work. His cry would not be heard, as a clamor was only made every time an Italian committed a crime, while there was silence when hundreds fell victim in the line of duty.

What emerges clearly from the analysis of the coverage of these events is the important function of the press in the processes of the formation of Italian American ethnic identity. Newspapers and magazines were the site in which identity was negotiated and in which discourses on immigration, xenophobia, race, criminality, and the possibility of assimilation intersected and conflicted. On the one side, there was the power of the American press, precisely at the moment in which it was becoming a mass phenomenon, to construct enduring images that crystallized into stereotypes; on the other there was the awareness of these processes, as well as of the consequences that they could have on the status of Italians in America, that the Italian American community expressed through its press. The Italian American press became the primary space in which to rectify the image of Italians in the American press and thus provide a new and diverse internal perspective on the processes of adaptation and assimilation that the Italians were undergoing in America.

Rather than interpret the counterrepresentations of the Italian American press as a misguided defense of Italian criminality, as Marazzi (2000, 283) has suggested, we can instead read them as some of the earliest examples of self-representation and of an emerging Italian American identity that was forming in opposition to prevailing racial stereotypes. What needs to be emphasized in looking at this early period is the fact that the status of Italians in America could not be taken for granted given that the assimilation process in this early phase was not smooth and linear, but rather difficult and tentative, obstructed by their "precarious racial position" (Vellon 2014, 2). As we reconstruct the history of Italian American identity from a historical moment in which they are one of the, if not the, most successful ethnic immigrant groups, the underlying uncertainty must not be overlooked. Remembering these origins is especially vital from an

Italian perspective as, in the current moment, we find ourselves in the role of being an immigrant destination, and this same kind of Othering process is happening to new groups of immigrants in our public discourse and popular culture.

Notes

1. A group of Sicilians were believed to be responsible for the murder of the New Orleans chief of police on October 15, 1890. However, they were acquitted at trial, provoking the anger of the local community, which took to the streets calling for the deaths of the suspects. On March 14, 1891, an enraged crowd of 20,000 people forcibly removed eleven Sicilians from the jail and lynched them.
2. The horribly disfigured body of Benedetto Madonia was found sealed in a barrel abandoned in the street. Lieutenant Joe Petrosino, head of the Italian Squad, a special detail of the New York Police Department that focused on Italian crime, solved the case. Petrosino recognized a mixture of sugar, sawdust of the sort used on tavern floors, and Toscano cigar butts at the bottom of the barrel. The barrel was stamped W&T 233, which led the investigators to the Wallace & Thompson grocery store, where it was discovered that they had only one Italian client, Pietro Inzerillo, owner of a café at 226 Elizabeth Street. Petrosino determined that this restaurant was a front for a band of counterfeiters and extortionists headed by Giuseppe Morello (called "the Clutch Hand" due to a deformity) and that the man in the barrel had been murdered in the back of the store. He was able to give a name to the body, Benedetto Madonia, a businessman from Buffalo who had come to New York to do a favor for his brother-in-law Giuseppe Di Primo, a counterfeiter incarcerated at Sing Sing Prison. Madonia was sent to ask his brother-in-law's ex–gang associates for a share of the take in order to pay for his defense. In the end, notwithstanding the numerous arrests among those associated with Morello's gang, no one confessed, and the case was closed without any convictions (see Dash 2009).
3. *L'Eco d'Italia* was the first Italian-language newspaper in New York City. Founded as a weekly in 1848 by Giovanni Francesco Secchi de Casali, a Mazzinian exile, and Felice Tocci, a banker, it became a daily in March 1881 (Vecoli 1998, 20; Durante 2005, 82). Although in the early days it devoted little space to events and news from the local Italian communities, with its focus being mainly Italian affairs, at the time of the New Orleans massacre the events and ensuing debates were covered in detail, and its editor-in-chief, Edoardo Michelangeli, was the promoter of the famous mass meeting that took place at Cooper Union on March 20.
4. *Cristoforo Colombo* started in 1887 and was run by Vincenzo Polidori. The writer and journalist Bernardino Ciambelli was the editor at the time of the New Orleans massacre. He was "one of the most popular colonial journalists" (Bosi 1921, 408) and had been defined by the *New York Herald* as "one of the most rabid writers of the local Italian press during the Mafia excitement" ("And He Denounced Americans" 1891, 5). From November 1897, *Cristoforo Colombo* merged with the more successful *Progresso Italoamericano*.
5. A similar rhetoric of barbarism versus civilization can also be found in an editorial in *Progresso Italoamericano* titled "Altre Considerazioni sulla strage degli XI Siciliani di New Orleans" (1891), where the fashionable, civilized white citizens of New Orleans are said to be worse than Indians for the savagery of their acts.
6. "Shoving the queer" is a slang expression for "distributing counterfeit money."
7. See "La Mafia e la polizia" 1903, "Gli Italiani giudicati" 1903, "La mafia e la delinquenza italiana" 1903, Arbib-Costa 1903, and Casabona 1903, to mention only the most significant.

8. *Il Telegrafo* started in 1900 as the evening edition of *L'Araldo Italiano*, estabilished by Vincenzo Polidori and Giovanni Vicario in 1889. Directed by Agostino De Biasi with his brother Pasquale as editor-in-chief, the paper enjoyed the frequent collaboration of the by-then very popular writer Bernardino Ciambelli.
9. Lieutenant Joe Petrosino appears as a character in several novels by Bernardino Ciambelli: *I misteri di Bleecker Street, romanzo contemporaneo* (1899) and *Il delitto di Coney Island ovvero la vendetta della zingara* and *I misteri di Harlem, ovvero la bella di Elizabeth Street*, serialized in *La Follia di New York* in 1906–1908 and 1910–1911, respectively (see Cacioppo 2005).

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An Examination of Mafia Spectatorship Phenomena from a Psychological Perspective

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People often experience strong visceral reactions to the mention of crime and criminals. Even though they claim to deplore the idea of transgressing social mores and aggressive behavior, nonetheless even respectable people have complex emotions about these things; typically, there is excitement associated with violence. Whether the voyeuristic titillation of witnessing an automobile accident or refusing to leave one's seat with the promise of a bench-clearing brawl during a baseball game, everyday citizens are regularly stimulated by violence, intentional or otherwise.

This phenomenon can be seen in the complex reaction people have toward organized crime, specifically the Italian American Mafia. Though most people vilify these criminals, nevertheless there are those who exhibit a subtle or overt affinity for *mafiosi*. This fascination is nothing new and clearly evident in the popularity of Mafia characters on television and in film. Organized-crime fictional characters seem to possess in the public imagination some variety of social gravitas not typically attributed to other perpetrators of crime. This social status can be said in a sense to trump the dangerous, furtive nature of the Mafia livelihood and lifestyle.

The psychological underpinnings of this attraction have not been well examined. Whereas on an individual basis these psychological phenomena have received attention by Frosh (2009) and Gabbard (2002), nonetheless, psychological examinations of societal fascinations with the Mafia have been conspicuously absent. This article explores via film and TV analysis the characteristics of the Mafia structure and the prominent Italian American Mafia-related features that elicit strong fascination and appeal. Given the existence of a robust literature utilizing psychological (Fleming and Manvell 1985; Wedding, Boyd, and Niemiec 2010; Wedding and Niemiec 2003; Zimmerman 2003) and psychoanalytic (Gabbard 2001; Gabbard and Gabbard 1999; Hauke 2014; Sabbadini 2014) theories for film analysis, it seemed apt to apply this methodology to the enduring phenomena of Mafia spectatorship.

The Mafia movies included in this article are Martin Scorsese's *Goodfellas* (1990) and *Casino* (1995) and Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather* and *The Godfather II* (1972 and 1974); David Chase's *The Sopranos* (1999–2007) will represent TV series. I choose these works because of their continued

popularity as well as because they are instructive in terms of spectatorship phenomena. The psychological concepts discussed in this article are narcissism and omnipotence, rules and structure, familial connectedness, and gender roles. These concepts and experiences, pervasive within Mafia portrayals, exist also in noncriminal frameworks, though often on an unconscious level, making viewing such phenomena on the big or little screen illustrative of the appeal of the Mafia and *mafiosi*.

Narcissism and Omnipotence

The 2013 *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disoders-5* (*DSM-5*, the latest installment of the prominent psychiatric classification system) describes narcissistic personality disorder as marked by an exaggerated self-appraisal, an overinflated sense of self, grandiosity, and a compromised ability to empathize with others (American Psychiatric Association 2013). However, the DSM and other classification systems commonly fall short of bringing the nuances of mental disorders to light (Greenberg 2013; Frances 2013; Tasso 2013). On a more experiential level, narcissism and narcissistic styles can range from personal preoccupation and social savvy to more pathological qualities like destructiveness and identity confusion (PDM Task Force 2006). Psychoanalyst Otto Kernberg (1984, 1992) examines the concept of the more destructive, hostile, or malignant narcissist. With an assumed etiological explanation that such personalities are born out of a predisposition toward aggressivity, early trauma, and pathological early attachment relationships, these individuals are the essence of destructiveness. They have a tendency to convert personal psychological pain into the infliction of pain onto others. Possessing both a functional paranoia and a comfort with aggression, they often use violence to settle differences. Consumed by envy, these severe narcissists desire to spoil things they covet and often idealize those objects of envy; they both envy and admire powerful people. The combination of this idealization of power along with aggression manifests as what Kernberg (1998) refers to as "justified indignation," or rationalized violence. This personality subtype goes through life treating others as means to an end, taking things from them for their personal consumption through ruthless exploitation and systematic violence. This extreme narcissist can have a sense of loyalty and abide by certain sets of rules and mores, though they may be more countercultural and counterproductive than the norm. This kind of personality thrives on a feeling of omnipotence.

A malignant narcissist, while not quite taking part in full-fledged antisocial or categorical psychopathic lawlessness, subscribes to the ethos of

aggressiveness and persecution—idealizing power and operating with an overinflated sense of self. Initially it might appear that *mafiosi* would fall more into the antisocial than the narcissist camp, given the abundance of violence and destruction linked to them. The two disorders are quite similar, sharing many overlapping characteristics, although persons with antisocial personality disorder are at the more destructive, dangerous end of this spectrum. Upon close examination, however, it appears that narcissism may be the more fitting diagnosis for most *mafiosi*, given narcissists' capacity for connectedness and emphasis on the well-known protocol of the underworld. Schimmenti et al. (2014) empirically demonstrate that *mafiosi* in prison exhibited greater emotional connectedness to others than non-Mafia inmates despite their significant prevalence of antisocial tendencies, thus lending recent scientific support for the narcissism rather than the antisocial categorization.

How does the pervasiveness of destructive narcissism relate to Mafia spectator appeal? Even some law-abiding citizens have fantasies of domination and power over others. Common watercooler talk following broadcast of episodes of the hit HBO series *The Sopranos* readily opened this window of appeal. Frosch (2009) and Gabbard (2002) explored the allure of viewing such willful, yet controlled destructiveness. Italian American Mafia film and TV viewers are able to indulge in the fantasy of controlled dominance. They are able to put themselves in the place of omnipotent Mafia figures—to protect and avenge their honor and impose their will with minimal resistance; to command servility even from law enforcement and politicians; to hedonistically indulge in essentially all that one desires (e.g., food, material things, sex). The fact that most people would not engage in hostile, destructive actions like these does not mean that they do not want to. In fact, such feelings are universal, though most people proactively modulate these dark and private inner experiences. However, with film and television, the viewer is able to identify with such brute force by identifying with the characters. The spectator never needs to passively accept perceived injustices, nor fear victimization, despite the fact that these figures they admire are in fact more vulnerable to violence than law-abiding citizens are. Now it is the spectator who is the aggrandized person regularly imposing his or her personal will and no longer subjected to derision or secondary stature.

We see many examples of this displaced revenge in Mafia films and TV shows. In *Godfather II*, a young Vito Corleone returns to his homeland of Sicily to avenge his father's murder by killing the aging Mafia don who took his father's life many years earlier. *Goodfellas*'s main female character, Karen Hill, is assaulted by a next-door neighbor attempting sexual advances. Several scenes later her beau, Henry Hill, viciously

assaults the neighbor, humiliating him in the presence of peers who are paralyzed with fear, while Karen looks on excitedly, the voice-over indicating that it "turned her on." A *Sopranos* episode in which Dr. Jennifer Melfi is brutally raped ("Employee of the Month") brilliantly captures the desire for power and vengeance vis-à-vis the experience of the powerless. Subsequent to the assault we view the perceived inability of Dr. Melfi's ex-husband Richard LaPenna to avenge his ex-wife, alongside her symbolic dream of Tony Soprano's ability to inflict severe punishment on the rapist. Here we witness the juxtaposition of upstanding citizens and the Mafia—the symbolic impotence of living within the confines of the law vis-à-vis the perceived power of the *mafiosi* to make the offender the fearful and suffering one.

Although examples are plentiful in *The Sopranos*, one in particular possibly has a unique appeal to the everyday spectator. In "Boca" (1999), Tony Soprano and his Mafia associates discover not only that their beloved girls' high school soccer coach Don Hauser is planning on leaving the school but also that he was sexually involved with one of their daughters' teammates. The guys actively consider sanctioning a hit on the coach, though eventually Tony calls a halt to the plan. Ironically, here we have the criminals considering partaking in vigilantism putatively for the "greater good" of society by contemplating "eliminating" the child predator. An interesting twist is that the viewer is left unsure of whether they would have considered such actions had the winning coach not decided to leave their team, a slight to the overly invested *mafiosi*.

In each of the aforementioned examples, the viewer experiences a character contemplating or exacting revenge—ostensibly stemming from a slight or injury—that results in an affliction of pain and suffering or even death. The viewer is invited to identify with the omnipotent one, the fearless, dominant character with the power to destroy.

Rules, Order, Boundaries, and Structure

Although a salient theme of the Mafia is the systematic breach of societal laws, this breach has a different aspect than in the cases of other brutally destructive characters and gang subsets because of the Mafia's emphasis on boundaries, order, and perceived predictability. Psychologically, a lack of structure and order is exceedingly daunting and begets dread and fear, providing fertile ground for severe psychiatric disturbance. The young child who protests against parentally imposed limits unconsciously feels comforted and protected by such restrictions. When a severely emotionally compromised patient in a psychiatric clinic begins to psychologically

decompensate, the first line of intervention (even prior to psychotherapeutic or psychopharmacological treatments) is assisting the patient to a "quiet room," one with minimal stimulation and maximal structure.

The delineated boundaries and order of the Italian American Mafia have significant viewer appeal. Historically, the popular perception has been that the Mafia does not target innocent civilians. The world of the Mafia is bound by rules and laws from which "upstanding" *mafiosi* and associates do not stray. In other words, there is a Mafia morality code. According to some mediated depictions, breaking the law and committing violent acts are actions perpetrated solely against others in the criminal world. Murders have to be properly vetted and sanctioned, and attacks on personal family and associates are discouraged.

Why do these parameters exert a powerful allure among law-abiding citizens? Knowledge of these rules allows one to indulge in a fantasy of omnipotence and aggressiveness, and yet perceived parameters facilitate the belief in safety and predictability. Whereas random acts of violence perpetrated by those not affiliated with any criminal group or organization ostensibly lack such guidelines (and therefore imply greater threat and increased vulnerability), allowing oneself to psychologically step into the world of the Mafia entails a sense of dominance concurrent with the illusion of security.

In *The Sopranos*, for example, when Dr. Melfi queries Tony Soprano about possible guilt over his lifestyle, he defensively asserts that he and his associates are soldiers and merely following a code of ethics. Tony and others regularly commiserate about "old school" Mafia values and wax nostalgic for the "better days" of when people followed rules. Problematic mobsters (those who do not follow the rules) cause disorder and are subsequently deemed "bad guys," even among fellow *mafiosi*, often failing to garner viewers' support. *Goodfellas* Tommy DeVito, the volatile sociopath, regularly evoked fear even among his criminal cohort in part due to his maverick approach to the underworld. Richie Aprile of *The Sopranos* also failed to gain viewer support partly because of his unwillingness to follow gangster protocol. These characters illustrate the power of structure and order in the Mafia spectator appeal.

Family and Nonfamily Connectedness

The rules and orders of Italian American organized crime bring us to a different set of psychologically appealing concepts: family, community, and connectedness. Much has been written about the centrality of the family to Italian and Italian Americans (Giordano, McGoldrick, and Guarino Klages

2005; McAuliffe and Associates 2008; Tasso, Kaspereen-Guidicipietro, and Tursi 2013), and Mafia life, too, centers on social connectedness. Family is prioritized, albeit sometimes with less than traditional (and more sinister) values. Holidays, meetings, and dining among TV and film *mafiosi* are communal, elaborate, and worthy of considerable time and devotion. Non–Italian American organized criminals make little reference to the sacrosanctity of the family, suggesting that this is not a primary value. Though including more than typical marital and familial arrangements (see below), the explicit inclusion of family structure is very appealing to audiences. How does the focus on the family affect the Mafia's appeal? The viewer gets to step into a fantasy of vengeance and omnipotence but with the comfort of rules and orderliness and within the perceived structure of a solid nuclear family.

In can be argued that a key component of the appeal of *The Godfather* series is the intrafamilial dynamics. Family life is capable of humanizing even the sociopathic. In Scorsese's 1970s Las Vegas film *Casino*, the most renegade and vicious of mob associates, Nicky Santoro, who transgressed the laws of both society and the underworld, is "anchored" to humanity based on his purported loving attachment to his young son. (We achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the significance of familial connectedness when that connectedness is absent. In *The Sopranos*, Corrado "Junior" Soprano is portrayed as a protracted adolescent despite being a mob boss figurehead in large part due to his family-less status, as is Paulie Gualtieri.)

Gender and Gender Roles

At first glance conceptualizing gender roles within the Italian American Mafia seems rather simple: Men are dominant and autocratic; women are passive and acquiescent. In film and television, *mafiosi* ostensibly adhere to very narrowly confined ideals of what it means to be a man (e.g., unemotional, brave, homophobic, hyperaggressive, and derisive of "feminine" feelings), while wives of *mafiosi* appear reflexively servile, lacking fortitude, unquestioning of patriarchy, and missing a personal identity other than overseeing progeny and preparing meals for their spouses. The ferocity with which TV and film Mafia men go about their daily lives intimates that such dominance would easily transfer to home life and with their wives. There is evidence of such, with extramarital affairs the status quo along with wives' tacit acceptance. These relationships, however, are riddled with conflict and duality.

It is no coincidence that the examination of Italian American Mafia gender roles has been a clear topic of literary attention (Cavallero 2011;

DeStefano 2006; Gabbard 2002; Gardaphé 2006; Lavery 2006). In mediated depictions, Italian American Mafia men greet one another with the physical affection of hugs and kisses on the cheek. Mafia men prefer to socialize with other men, actively engage in homosocial bonding, feel more intimate in the presence of other men, and connect with men more than their wives, children, mistresses, and prostitutes.

Parker (2008) discusses how Mafia-related male bonding centers around eating. Food, a common starting point for social connectedness for people of all cultural and religious backgrounds, holds a famously central place within Italian and Italian American culture. The combination of male connectedness and community among *mafiosi* represents a striking dichotomy—hypermasculinity and homophobia coupled with a homosocial environment far exceeding male-to-male interactions seen in other criminal and noncriminal groups. As Parker (2008) aptly notes, mealtimes are when men are the source and target of intimacy—complimentary of food, discussing business—all with open displays of physical closeness and vulnerability. For those with more power, such as Peter Clemenza in *The Godfather*, or *capos* on *The Sopranos*, cooking for others is not a demeaning, menial task but rather an exalted honor. Such male bonding, commonplace in Mafia movies and television, transcends the homophobic and stunted emotionality of nearly all other depictions of Mafia life and all other criminal subsets.

Women's roles in the Italian American Mafia on screen are also noteworthy and demonstrate a unique presence in the nuclear family and criminal business at large. Women of the Mafia come complete with their own sense of power and agency, armed with the potential to subvert the entire Mafia enterprise in a way even gun-toting mobsters are unable to accomplish. Near the end of *Goodfellas*, when Karen and Henry meet with federal agents to discuss the possibility of entering the witness protection program, the law enforcement agent expresses disbelief at Karen's profession of ignorance about her husband's criminal activities, saying, "Don't give me the babe of the woods routine."

The Sopranos gives viewers numerous examples of powerful and destructive women within the lives of *mafiosi*. McCabe and Akass (2006) address the complex, multilayered aspects of Carmela Soprano, illustrating how she exhibits a sly power, intimidating a Georgetown University associate to support her daughter's application or leaning on her son's school principal to force teachers to give the boy preferential treatment. Carmela has even been able to overpower her husband, Tony, when she strong-armed him into bankrolling her several-hundred-thousand-dollar housing project by making their marital reconciliation contingent upon the

financing. Janice Soprano is an even more pronounced example of female conniving and destructiveness (see Palmer-Mehta 2006). We witness Janice regularly usurping her brother Tony despite his most stringent attempts to contain her. She also successfully manipulates romantic partners (e.g., Ralph, Richie, Bobby) and was the puppet master in her fiancé Richie Aprile's attempt to gain power by killing Tony.

However significant Janice and Carmela are in *The Sopranos*, they are far from the most powerful or destructive of the Soprano women. In fact, a premise of the entire series is the omnipresent influence of Tony's mother, Livia Soprano, who exudes a more potent presence than any *mafiosi*. Livia is a primary reason Tony, the feared mob boss, is in treatment for panic attacks. In this relationship, which is revisited throughout the series, we see that even posthumously Livia infiltrates Tony's psyche. In life, she repeatedly torments her daughter-in-law, Carmela, and was the Svengali behind her brother-in-law Junior's botched attempt to kill Tony. In several brilliant psychotherapy scenes, Dr. Melfi accurately identifies ways in which even Tony's father, another rough gangster, cowered from Livia's wrath.

Male–female relationships within the Mafia also illustrate how men leave themselves vulnerable in ways atypical to their business-as-usual approach. In *Casino*, such depictions translate to non–Italian American gangsters: Sammy "Ace" Rothstein, the levelheaded gangster associate overseeing a Mafia-controlled Las Vegas casino, "takes a gamble" and marries working girl Ginger, who becomes central to the demise of the Mafia's control of the casino business. Johnny "Sack" Sacrimoni, the highly controlled cerebral underboss of the New York family in *The Sopranos*, experiences an out-of-character, affect-laden, professionally counterproductive moment when he assaults a mob associate following awareness that other *mafiosi* were mocking his wife's obesity—an attack that almost results in his murder. In a more subtle moment highlighting the difficulty of straying from stereotypical gender roles, Johnny Sack cries at his daughter's wedding as he is being taken back to prison, at which point his gangster associates decide that his emotional expressiveness is a sign of weakness, a determination that subsequently costs Johnny his credibility.

What is the connection between the mother–son relationship and later male aggressiveness that potentially undergirds Mafia spectator appeal? Stuart Twemlow (2000) writes about the early developmental antecedents of aggressive propensities, homing in on the early mother–son relationship. Specifically, Twemlow asserts that hostile tendencies emerge via (a) unconscious rage due to the need to jettison merger fantasies with one's mother, (b) anxieties about being able to forgo such connectedness due to the aggrandized image of the mother, and (c) the fantasy of revenge, symbolically

targeting authority representations due to the mother's perceived power and the feeling that one is abandoned by the mother. Key to Twemlow's theorizing is the impact of mother–son symbiosis on later male aggression. Fred Gardaphé (2006) applies Christina Wieland's (2000) theory to Italian American *mafiosi*, further suggesting that the symbolic power of the mother over the son and his perceived heightened relationship with the mother begets hostility. More recently (Tasso, Kaspereen-Guidicipietro, and Tursi 2013), Twemlow's mother–son aggressivity theory was applied to Italian American domestically violent relationships. Specifically, we lean on Twemlow's work to conceptualize Italian American male aggressiveness by suggesting that the Italian American mother–son closeness is a possible backdrop for later male-initiated intimate partner violence.

When we examine this aspect of the mother–son relationship in representations in film and television, a number of interesting examples emerge. The mother figure in the entire *Godfather* series is worth noting. Whereas it has been argued that this character is subject to diminution given her minimal stature, accentuated by the fact that she lacks even an official name (see Messenger 2002), it can be argued that she is an angelic woman of few words, clearly revered by her entire extended family, and, though mostly voiceless, a prominent presence. This perhaps is not more evident than in *Godfather II*. When Michael Corleone is becoming increasingly aware that his grip on his family is slipping, he consults his mother. During this emotional scene, dimly lit and with an economical use of words (spoken in Italian), this nameless figure is his *consigliere*, the wise and powerful figure, not other male *mafiosi* colleagues.

Goodfellas offers a multilayered mother–son relationship that is ripe for analysis. In a lighthearted though psychologically rich scene, Tommy DeVito and friends stop by his mother's home (she is played by Catherine Scorsese, the real-life mother of director Martin Scorsese). As they engage in a hefty, impromptu late-night meal prepared by his mother, she begins to probe her adult son about his single status. When she asks, "Why don't you get yourself a nice girl and settle down?" Tommy responds by stating, "I get a nice one almost every night, and in the morning I'm free again—I have you" (kissing his mother on the cheek). This comical part of the film is psychologically revealing and parallels the aforementioned viewpoints (Gardaphé 2006; Tasso, Kaspereen-Guidicipietro, and Tursi 2013; Twemlow 2000; Wieland 2000) on the developmental factors of aggressive penchants. In this scene, we see the prominence of the mother—the erotized mother–son relationship openly precluding the adult son from seeking longer-term romantic partners. Here we witness this most dangerous of cinematic Mafia characters articulating the experience of divided loyalty—to choose

a romantic partner with whom to have both an emotional and sexual relationship or to bifurcate a relationship with one's mother and pursue meaningless sexual encounters with random women.

How do these complex gender roles and relationships influence spectator appeal? The women of the mediated Mafia represent a "break" from overt criminality and thus provide a gender-specific unconscious identification with the complex, nonlinear aspects of relationships and gender roles. Women can be powerful, while men can jettison the aggressiveness, at least temporarily. This allows for a loosening of the straight-jacket nature of stringent gender roles.

Conclusion

This article explored Mafia spectatorship from a psychological perspective and specifically homed in on several distinct but interrelated concepts accounting for a large faction of society's affinity with the Mafia. One example explored was the roles narcissism and omnipotent fantasies play—how via the psychologically and societally safe vehicle of television or film viewers can identify with destructive, narcissistically centered activities while remaining in the personally and legally safe confines of their viewing spaces. This article also endeavored to illuminate how the voyeuristic engagement with individuals prone to sociopathic actions facilitates the psychological bifurcation of desire for societal standards while tapping into one's intense aggressive, dark, hostile urges. Furthermore, the Mafia's mandate on rules, order, and structure with an overarching theme of the sacrosanct family in concert with complex gender roles and relationships also contribute to the appeal—the perceived sense of belonging and family parenthetic with gross disregard for societal boundaries further stimulates intrapsychic conflict, touching on yet another component of the fascination with Mafia ethos and the allure of Italian American–related organized crime.

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Revisiting the Link between Italian Americans and Organized Crime: The Italian Americans and Polish Americans in the Community Context

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Since the turn of the last century, the concepts of organized crime and Italians in American society have been linked. This affinity has raised necessary questions regarding the "realities and representations of organized crime."[1] One of the most basic questions asks how Italian Americans, in particular, have come to dominate organized crime for the greater part of the last century. While no one ethnic group has had an exclusive control over these organized criminal operations, Italian Americans, nevertheless, have achieved "unprecedented criminal powers" in the American context (Reuter 1994, 109). This article asks how are we to make sense of this link without resorting to time-worn stereotypes that relate this involvement to the abnormal personality traits of Mafia leaders, the historical legacy of the Southern Italian peasantry, or the affinity of the Italian culture to the operations of a criminal enterprise—in other words, how do we explain this connection without dropping back to the essentialist or predetermined conclusion that there was something inherent in Italian Americans or the Italian way of life that could have predicted this involvement?

We explore this question with a particular focus on the branch of Chicago organized crime known as the Chicago Outfit. More precisely, we examine the Chicago Heights crew—a critical component of the Outfit for much of the twentieth century. We place the Heights crew in the community context by examining its connections to the relatively large Italian American population in Chicago Heights, a suburb thirty miles south of Chicago. We ask what the unique social and economic conditions were in this particular setting that brought about the emergence of an Italian American–led organized crime operation. For comparison's sake, we also include a discussion of the Polish American experience in Chicago Heights. In many ways, the Polish Americans were exposed to the same social and economic disparagements as the Italian Americans. Yet, the Polish Americans have historically had a much more limited involvement in organized crime than their Italian American counterparts. By comparing these two groups, we discover necessary clues as to how organized crime and ethnicity are coupled in a nondeterminative, nonessentialist fashion. We begin, however, with a review of the more

traditional explanations of this historical linkage of Italian Americans and organized crime.

The Public and Academic Context

In law enforcement agencies, public opinion, and academic circles, many have assumed, in Max Weber's terms, an "inner relationship" (1975, 192) between Italian Americans and a Mafia-style criminal behavior. The U.S. Immigration Commission of 1911, in its reports, conducted an exhaustive review of the foreign born and criminality. Perhaps foretelling its own conclusions, the commission began with a "dictionary of races" wherein Southern Italians were defined as "given to brigandry and poverty" (Handlin 1948, 107). Though the commission found that prior conditions in Italy had had a good deal to do with Italian criminality, it nevertheless argued for "the not unfounded belief that certain kinds of criminality are inherent in the Italian race" (U.S. Immigration Commission 1911, 209). Over half a century later, the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, in their report titled *The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society* (1967), ignored much of its own evidence regarding the multiethnic character of organized crime and virtually defined organized crime as an Italian American invention and preoccupation. In particular, organized crime was said to consist of a nationwide alliance of twenty-four Mafia families composed of Sicilians or people of Sicilian descent.

This association of Italian Americans with criminality has also found its way into the general public opinion. Thus, the leading mass periodicals at the beginning of the last century (e.g., *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, *Scribner's*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *North American Review*, *McClure*, and *Forum*) often maligned Italian Americans for their low intelligence, animalistic nature, and propensity to engage in crime. For instance, Arthur Sweeney, the often-quoted and well-regarded psychology expert, ranked Italian Americans at the bottom on a test for mental intelligence and concluded "we have no place in this country for the man with the hoe . . . guided by a mind scarcely superior to the ox whose brother he is" (Sweeney 1922, 611). In the same influential article (included in its entirety as an appendix to the report of Congress's 1923 immigration hearings), Sweeney placed Italian Americans squarely within the degenerate horde "who think with the spinal cord rather than the brain" (Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, 1923, 592).

Beginning in the 1930s, public opinion polling became a more scientific mechanism for gauging general beliefs toward Italian Americans and criminality. While the polling results were less inflammatory, they conveyed

similar stereotypical sentiments. As Gay Talese suggests, "in opinion polls reflecting native-born American preferences in new neighbors, Italians ranked near the bottom. They were seen as clannish, uncouth, instinctively criminal" (Talese 1993, 462). In more recent times, a substantial number of people in the American population still hold to the belief that an "Italianness" and organized crime overlap. Thus, a 1990 national survey found that 74 percent of Americans believe that Italian Americans "are into a lot of the organized crime in this country" (Commission for Social Justice 1991, 5), and a national poll of teenagers by Zogby International (2001) revealed that 44 percent thought that "crime boss" was the most typical characteristic of Italian Americans.

Over the years, the sociological literature has also contributed, sometimes subtly and sometimes not, to this constitutional linking of Italian Americans and organized crime. Influenced by the ongoing debates on eugenics, a number of American sociologists offered a harsh condemnation of Italian Americans. Richard Mayo-Smith, Columbia College sociologist, characterized Italian Americans as "ignorant, criminal, and vicious, eating food we would not give to dogs" (Mayo-Smith 1908, 133). Edward Ross, the otherwise liberal reformer and one of America's first sociologists, echoed the general sentiments of early-twentieth-century America by situating Italian Americans at the bottom of a hierarchy of biologically based superiorities and inferiorities. In particular, Ross speculated about the strong ties between Italian Americans and organized crime. He held that the Italian connection with organized crime was all but inherent in the Italian race, especially Southern Italian Americans, who "lie more easily than North Europeans" (Ross 1914, 117), who are "ready with the knife" (118), and who commit "ferocious crimes that go with the primitive stages of civilization" (98–99).

Around the same time, however, other sociological explanations attempted to rise above these racial classifications and instead to tie an involvement with organized crime to the consequences of the social organization and disorganization in the neighborhood environment. John Landesco's firsthand study of gangs in Chicago in the 1920s concluded that gangsters are most likely to emerge from neighborhoods where the "gang tradition is old" (Landesco 1968, 207). In such "criminogenic" locales, individuals in adverse socioeconomic situations are susceptible to the role models, traditions, and subcultural values that present a gangster lifestyle as a viable and realistic option for economic success. In this way, Landesco could argue that, even though there was substantial involvement of Italian Americans in organized gang activity, this was a consequence of the unfavorable economic status of immigrant Italian Americans who were

attracted to the low-rent areas where the "whole social life and organization of the community" acted as a lure to organized crime (1968, 268).

With few exceptions, the sociological study of organized crime remained fairly subdued, if not muted, over the next several decades, especially in light of the chilling effect of the Kefauver and McClellan congressional committee investigations. The Kefauver Committee concluded, with little substantive evidence, that organized crime in American society was largely imported from Italy and was led by a sinister group of criminals known as the Mafia. The McClellan Committee, based primarily upon the testimony of organized crime insider Joe Valachi, concluded that this confederation of criminals was indeed in the hands of people with Italian nativity or lineage.

It was largely in response to the Kefauver Committee that Daniel Bell published his classic essay "Crime as an American Way of Life" (1962, 127–150). Here, Bell brought new information to bear on ethnicity as a predominant influence in an individual's involvement with organized crime. Shed of its biological underpinnings and determinism, ethnicity was viewed as an adaptive mechanism formed in response to the strains of a society that produced unequal access to the legitimate opportunities for social mobility. Thus, excluded from more traditional routes of economic success, one ethnic group after another carved a niche for itself in various sectors of the economy through a reactive series of ethnic alliances, connections, and favoritisms. Italian immigrants, however, came after the influx of Jews, Irish, and other Eastern European immigrants and found "the more obvious big-city paths from rags to riches pre-empted" (Bell 1962, 142). This put the Italian Americans at a distinct disadvantage. Faced with these social and economic realities and having become "wise in the ways of the urban slums" (Bell 1962, 142), Italian Americans turned to an involvement in organized crime as a step up on the "queer ladder of social mobility."[2]

In subsequent years, Bell's explanation was taken up and extended by Francis Ianni (1974). Based upon his own ethnographic research, Ianni concluded that the Mafia in America started out as a secret society based on traditional clan or kinship ties and a set of cultural values emphasizing a strong family, a distrust of social institutions outside the family, and an abiding sense of honor over and above the rule of law. These cultural forces were strategically suited to the development of a criminal underworld and a climb up the illicit ladder of success. Because these Italian Americans "managed to cling to their familialism more tenaciously than any other ethnic group," their ascent up this ladder lasted for decades (Ianni 1971, 89).[3]

The studies by Landesco, Bell, Ianni, and others did a great deal to advance the sociological explanation of organized crime. Such studies provided critical counterpoints to the popular, academic, and law enforcement

accounts that relegated involvement to instinctive antisocial personalities or sinister criminal tendencies of the Italian population. However, these explanations, albeit to varying degrees, still tied this involvement to marginalized life-worlds. That is, participation in organized crime was best explained if not by a unique racial aptitude and morality, then by a "criminogenic" neighborhood, a "queer" experience of social strain, or the machinations of a "secret society." In effect, these scholars held that Italian Americans were socially and culturally culpable for their criminality, not as Italian Americans per se, but as ethnic groups out of step with the larger social patterns in American society. As Reynolds has argued, such explanations assumed "the offender and the offended were from two different social worlds. Criminals had qualities which made them different from conventional folk" (Reynolds 1995, 151). In more muted tones, Italian Americans were not different or defective in a genetic sense but different and substantively defective along cultural and structural lines.

These explanations did not go unchallenged. Dwight Smith's spectrum-based theory of enterprise presented one of the most incisive critiques of this "view of organized crime as a class apart" (1980, 371). Smith argued that, at its core, organized crime is not fundamentally different from business enterprises, for both are concerned with the provision of goods and services in the pursuit of profit, and both must organize and run their operations to satisfy an array of suppliers, customers, regulators, and competitors. In fact, Smith contends that the most salient difference between organized crime and legal businesses is their *degree of legitimacy*—in other words, few are entirely illicit and few are entirely legitimate.

Alan Block also draws a tight connection between organized crime and legitimate society, insisting that organized crime is not a "peripheral institution" but enmeshed in the political economy of American cities (1991, 1). Specifically, Block and Chambliss (1981) extend the boundaries of organized crime to include not only members of a criminal syndicate per se but also those who initiate and profit from illicit vice operations, such as law enforcement officials, politicians, businesspersons, and economic elites. It is this more-encompassing criminal network that is at the heart of organized crime in a city. Nevertheless, Block and Chambliss contend that this larger network is ignored as the analytic and law enforcement focus has shifted to an examination of the more stereotyped organized crime figures. Specifically, this has led to a concerted attempt to identify the special characteristics that predispose Italian Americans to criminal activities while ignoring the motives and involvement of the more respectable, non-Italian members of this criminal network. "It is not an accident," Block and Chambliss state, "that organized crime is inevitably seen as consisting

of an organization of criminals with names like Valachi, Genovese, and Bonanno" (1981, 113).

From a quite different starting point, this line of thinking has been extended in recent years by a group of scholars who stress the more active, rational calculations involved in the commitment to a life of organized crime. Characterized as rational choice theorists, these scholars offer explanations of involvement and commitment to organized crime in terms of the individual's prosaic assessments of costs and benefits. These theorists see little, if any, psychological or cultural differences between organized crime figures and conventional folk. At best, these differences are of secondary importance; at worst, they are figments derived from prejudices found in popular culture. As Diego Gambetta suggests, "Ultimately, one wonders whether scholars have not been unduly influenced by stereotypes well established in fiction, in which criminals are portrayed as altogether different from ordinary people, either evil creatures of supreme intelligence or shortsighted brutes" (1993, 102). On the contrary, rational choice theorists argue that the decision to participate in organized crime is made according to the universalistic intention of maximizing profits and minimizing costs. In short, a guiding principle of this rational choice perspective is that "crime can be understood as if people choose to offend by using the same principles of cost-benefit analysis they use when selecting legal behavior" (McCarthy 2002, 422).

These more recent explanations argue, therefore, that the distinction between organized crime figures and respectable members of society is not as clear as we have been led to believe. However, in driving the analysis away from a specific focus upon Italian Americans (or any other ethnic group), these enterprise and rational choice perspectives run the risk of offering an overly disembodied view regarding the emergence of these criminal activities. Specifically, these approaches have difficulty explaining how Italian Americans, in particular, became involved in organized crime to such a great extent, how they achieved these "unprecedented criminal powers." Were Italian Americans more successful simply because they were better rational choice actors or more rational in their assessment that the American value system provided perverse opportunities "to take 'suckers' and seek easy money" (Lupsha 1981, 22)? Or were Italian Americans simply better businessmen or more entrepreneurial, morals aside, than other ethnic groups placed in similar disadvantaged situations? To put it differently, while Block and Chambliss (1981) were correct to argue that Italian Americans have been unfairly singled out for their participation in organized crime, nonetheless it is still the case that people with "names like Valachi, Genovese, and Bonanno" did find their way into these organized crime ventures.

With this in mind, the challenge is to bring Italian Americans back into the discussion, to acknowledge the links to organized crime but to do so in a manner that avoids the overly deterministic personal, cultural, or structural explanations of the past. In doing so, we have benefitted greatly from contemporary scholarship on organized crime both in Italy and in America. Specifically, Jane Schneider and Peter Schneider (2005) go to the heart of the matter with a focus upon the origins of the Mafia in Sicily. Yet, instead of accepting the prevailing view that the Mafia emerged out of a totalizing Sicilian culture of backwardness and pessimism, they suggest that the dysfunctions of the Italian state and the collusion of various political parties created conditions in Southern Italy that tolerated and, more insidiously, united the various Mafia families and made substantively more relevant the traditional Sicilian values of honor, respect, and localism. More generally, Schneider and Schneider present a culturally pluralistic description of Sicily or one that acknowledges the emergence of criminal organizations but that also recognizes that contrasting values and practices facilitated the emergence of an artisan culture, a socialist presence, as well as a number of anti-Mafia groups. All told, Schneider and Schneider suggest we should resist explaining the Sicilian Mafia by resorting to a mythical "Sicilian essence" (2005, 505) and instead should look more closely at the unique cultural and social processes connecting Italian Americans to organized crime.

Letizia Paoli takes this line of reasoning further. While rejecting the ideologically based cultural theories of the past, she argues that the illegal enterprise and rational choice models have gone too far in attempting to "eradicate the ethnic stereotypes of crime" (Paoli 2003, 223). These "minimalist" explanations have not adequately explored the traditional ethnic codes and local alliances that created bonds of trust and solidarity within Mafia networks and led to the success, and limitations, of these criminal operations. Yet Paoli is well aware that the Italian style of organized crime cannot be reduced to these traditional ethnic associations and cultural rituals. Organized crime is also a product of modern, *gemeinschaft* forces that transcend ethnic and communal social relationships. "Membership in a mafia group," Paoli writes, "is, hence, typified by a crisscrossing of instrumentality and solidarity . . . anyone giving weight to only one side of this opposition fails to understand the deeper meaning, as well as the strength and resilience, of this relationship" (2003, 90).

This more nuanced understanding has also been undertaken by Italian historian Salvatore Lupo (2001, 2015). Drawing upon the works of other scholars as well as original research, Lupo challenges the assumption that the connection between Italian Americans and organized crime is a bygone

product of an "Old World" culture dominated by provincialism, clannism, and ritual ties or that the emergence of the Mafia can be reduced to the "context of Mediterranean anthropology" (2001, 22). He calls into question the belief that those who were engulfed by these archaic values and associations were out of step with the modern world and would therefore be lured to organized crime as an alternative path to mobility, honor, respect, or justice. More generally, he objects to the linear narrative that views modernity—with its emphasis upon industrialization, education, and universalism—as the constitutional enemy of Italian American organized crime: "that the Mafia would vanish once the sound of locomotive whistles echoed through the villages of the desolate Sicilian hinterland" (Lupo 2001, 10). Instead, Lupo holds that the long-term success of the Mafia has been built upon a strategic use of traditional values and associations but also upon the skills Mafia members exhibited in adapting to the complexities and opportunities of the modern world. Organized crime succeeds when it occupies the hazy spaces between these two worlds, when it extracts itself at least in part from "the system of godfathers and clients exercising favors" and engages the "notables, professional politicians, policemen, and judges" (Lupo 2001, 21) in the outside world. As Lupo suggests, "Palermo and New York . . . were metaphorically represented as two worlds: the old one and the new one. But in reality, they coexisted at the same time, and in the same space created by migration itself" (2015, 33). This was the genius, criminal as it was, of the Mafia leaders. These were the connections and spaces that they mined to create their dominance of organized crime in the United States and Italy.

The Chicago Heights Context

To pursue these connections and spaces more fully, I undertook a study of organized crime in the Chicago Heights context. Specifically, by drawing upon census materials, oral histories, personal interviews, FBI documents, and other historical materials (personal letters, naturalization petitions, and newspaper archives), I sought to characterize the social and economic conditions for both the Italian and Polish immigrants in Chicago Heights from the early years of the twentieth century to the decades immediately after World War II. At the same time, having grown up in Chicago Heights in this postwar period and having family members and friends connected to the Chicago Heights crew in various capacities, I was able to gain access to and knowledge of the Italian connection to organized crime in the city.[4]

Because of these quantitative and qualitative sources of information, I was able to draw a picture of both the Italian and Polish experience and the conditions leading to the emergence of organized crime in the Chicago

Heights context. Following Bernstein's suggestion that "gangsters . . . surely tell us something about the communities from which they emerge" (2002, 23), it seems reasonable to conclude that what they tell us is that these community contexts are complex and that to suggest that organized crime emerged simply out of an alien culture or that Italian Americans in particular came to this country socially and culturally predisposed to a criminal involvement does not capture this complexity. Instead, these community dynamics reveal a more contingent process whereby social inequalities in this larger society made it most difficult for Italian Americans to achieve a measure of social and economic advancement in society. As such, a segment of the Italian American population pursued a range of nontraditional, unconventional strategies for mobility—labor organizing, mutual aid societies, ethnic businesses, and organized crime.[5] Italian Americans were variously successful in these ventures because these social inequalities produced (or prioritized) a set of social, structural, and cultural strategies that functioned as social resources for mobility. Specifically, processes of prejudice, discrimination, and segregation helped formulate various mechanisms of social capital—for example, social networks, a communal identity, an ethnic identification—which Italian Americans drew upon to overcome these structural disadvantages and create their own paths to mobility.

To examine these community dynamics in greater detail, I explore one segment of the Chicago Outfit—the Chicago Heights crew. At its zenith, the Chicago Outfit covered a vast geographic area and had an extensive organizational structure. One critical component of the Outfit was the Chicago Heights crew or what came to be known as the Chicago Heights "boys." From the slot machine trusts in the early 1900s to the takeover of the local stills by Al Capone in the 1920s and 1930s to the prosecution of city officials for racketeering in the 1990s, organized crime found a home in the social and political structures of this suburb. No less a figure than Eliot Ness cut his teeth in the crime-fighting field with an early exposure to the Chicago Heights bootlegger operation. According to Ness, the Chicago Heights operation was "the pickup depot for most of the illicit alcohol trade in the entire Middle West" (Ness with Fraley 1957, 61). Schoenberg argued that in the 1920s "conditions in Chicago Heights had become scandalous beyond bearing, even in Cook County" (1992, 232). Years later federal authorities in their prosecution of the Chicago Heights mayor and police chief for extortion and racketeering described the Chicago Heights setting as an "unholy alliance of mobsters, politicians, and police" (O'Brien 1992, 6).

As I have suggested, Chicago Heights draws our interest because of its long history of organized crime. At the same time, Italian Americans have constituted a sizable percentage of city residents ever since the "second

wave" of immigration ran its course in the period from 1890 onward; in 1930, 10.1 percent of the city's 22,321 citizens were "foreign-born" Italians (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1932, 640). As the sons and daughters of these Italian immigrants started their own families and as third-generation Italian Americans began theirs, the presence of Chicago Heights citizens with Italian roots increased. Dominic Candeloro estimated that by 1970 roughly 40–50 percent of the Chicago Heights population had an Italian lineage (1981, 182).

As in most other cities during the twentieth century, the Italian Americans of Chicago Heights faced a number of hurdles in attempting to achieve a measure of social and economic advancement. Their own lack of marketable skills, especially in language and literacy, added significantly to this struggle. However, the cultural, political, and economic constraints in the larger society were also highly restrictive and consequential. Culturally, Italian Americans were excluded from the mainstream clubs and organizations and were treated as second-class citizens in the schools and churches. This cultural opprobrium even extended to an abiding geographical exclusion. As one Italian American resident put it, "[We were discouraged from setting foot in] the whole west part of town, starting from the railroad tracks, the CNI railroad tracks moving west. We hit the downtown area and then beyond that you couldn't even go . . . cause they just wouldn't allow you, think you would be stealing" (Zaranti 1980). Politically, Italian Americans were excluded from holding elected office in Chicago Heights for decades. Thus, in the aftermath of World War I and with the rising anti-immigrant sentiment, the voters in Chicago Heights approved an at-large (as opposed to by-ward) method of city elections, a method that resulted in the near elimination of Italian Americans in electoral office for over thirty years. In addition, economically, Italian Americans were at the bottom of the occupational structure: "The Italians, being mostly unskilled laborers, were the first to be affected and thrown out of employment as a result of the depression, and with the exception of comparatively few, they have not returned to work since " (DeLuca 1936, 5).

The Italian Americans were not alone in facing these exclusionary processes. Black migrants from the rural south and Mexican laborers from Mexico also experienced these discouraging conditions (Garcia 1976). However, both of these groups constituted relatively small segments of the Chicago Heights population in the early part of the last century. The one "second-wave" immigrant group that did have a sizable presence in Chicago Heights was the Polish Americans. In 1930, 3.2 percent of the city's population were "foreign-born" Poles (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1932, 640). If we include the second generation, another 6.1 percent had a Polish ancestry.

Like their Italian American neighbors, the Polish Americans faced a most disheartening social, economic, and political environment in the Heights. At a meeting in 1914 attended by a large contingent of Polish, Lithuanian, and Slavic residents the president of the East Side Civic League stated, "There's a natural division here which works great hardship on us. We have all the foreign population and all the manufacturing plants. The west side gets all the improvements, while our children sicken and die through the wretchedly insanitary [*sic*] conditions which have obtained on our side of town" ("Woman Leads Aliens' Fight" 1914, 3). In the following decades, the economic plight of the typical Polish family did not see dramatic improvements, especially with the onset of the Depression. Many Polish men lost their factory jobs and spent their days gathering coal that had fallen off passing trains or scouring the neighborhoods for discards that could be sold to the junk man. As John Wozny writes, "The young children were not aware of any hardships. The Polish Americans were a frugal and conservative people, so they were not used to lavishing many extravagances on their children. As a result the youngsters did not see any dire changes in their economic situation. Being poor or poorer was the same" (1993b, 33). Politically, after some early successes, the Polish Americans were also thwarted with the advent of the commission (and election-by-ward) form of government. Wozny concludes, "This was a big blow to 'ethnic' politicians" (1993b, 105).

Like their Italian counterparts, many Polish Americans in Chicago Heights sought to address these social mobility challenges by pursuing nontraditional strategies. They drew upon their ethnic alliances in the community and joined labor unions, especially in the steel plants of Chicago Heights. Yet, despite a good deal of activism, they faced strong management opposition and more subtle attempts to undermine their ethnic loyalties.[6] At the same time, they formed a large number of mutual aid societies and social clubs as mechanisms, at least in part, of social support and advancements. Foremost among these were the Polish American Citizens Club, the Polish Falcons, the Polish National Alliance, the Polish Political Club, the Casimir Society, and the Polish Veterans Alliance. They also set about the task of establishing ethnic businesses that catered to the needs of the Polish enclave. These included Polish taverns, corner groceries, candy stores, drug stores, funeral homes, and plumbing and construction companies.

They did not establish, however, an ongoing, systematic organized crime presence in the Heights. While youth or street gangs populated the streets[7] and many Polish "soft drink" parlors supplied the neighborhood with the illegal "hooch" during the years of Prohibition, there is little evidence of a sustained Polish criminal organization. Involvement of

Polish Americans in organized crime appears to have been more sporadic or at the peripheries of the criminal power structure. For example, one Polish resident commented, "I had relatives who were Mafia cohorts. They were Polish-Americans, however, they grew up in the Italian section of Chicago Heights, Illinois. . . . My uncles were involved in collections, either 'insurance' or gambling money, as well as robbery. My cousins were paid a few bucks to have holes dug in the yard . . . for safes, not bodies" (Regionpolski 2009, 7). This uncertain connection between Polish Americans and organized crime was apparently not confined to Chicago Heights, for John Radzilowski states more generally, "Why Polonia did not spawn more high-level gangsters is unknown" (2011, 64).

Problematic and ideological answers to that question are not difficult to find. Again, at the turn of the last century stereotypes found in both the popular press and academic circles provided readily available explanations as to why Polonia did not create a sophisticated criminal organization. In particular, the physicality associated with Polish Americans (sometimes disparagingly called "Hunkies") led to a widely held belief that they were undisciplined, mentally insufficient, and incapable of functioning in higher-level organizational contexts, legal or otherwise. At the same time, the 1911 U.S. Immigration Commission's characterization of Polish Americans as of "limited mental capacity" could easily lend itself to the idea that the Polish Americans did not possess the rational choice awareness necessary for a sustained involvement in organized crime. Edward Ross, again, lent some credibility to such an interpretation in criticizing Southern Italian Americans because they "lack the conveniences for thinking," thereby suggesting that the Polish Americans were only marginally more advanced (1914, 114). In a more positive sense, organized crime was viewed as inimical to Polish Americans because of their "law abiding" cultural character. As Karel Bicha states, "The Slavs had no penchant for serious criminality" (1982, 32). In particular, Bicha argues that Slavic Americans possessed a morality that, while allowing for episodes of public drunkenness and petty thievery, drew the line at those criminal activities that involved stealth and planning or "sex crimes, organized prostitution, and economic offenses" (Bicha 1982, 32).

Climbing the "Queer" Ladder: Italian Americans and Polish Americans in Chicago Heights

As I have suggested, Bell (1962) argued that organized crime takes place because ethnic communities often find few traditional routes to advancement open. For this reason, some segments of this population pursue alternative routes to success, whether this involves ethnic businesses,

labor organizing, mutual aid societies, or organized crime. However, it is important to extend this analysis with an examination of the concomitant processes of social capital. Blocked opportunities may create the need to adopt a nontraditional ladder of mobility. However, this need is not sufficient to predict whether or not a particular ethnic group will have the connections, the degree of trust, the effective norms, and the entrepreneurial vision to be successful. This is especially relevant when it comes to organized crime, for such ventures are plagued by a number of obstacles—especially given the challenges posed by law enforcement and other illegal competitors.[8]

Therefore, a reservoir of social capital would seem essential to the ongoing success of these illegal operations. Social capital, in this context, means the social networks and relationships called upon as a resource in accomplishing one's objectives. For example, the dense communal ties often associated with ethnic groups provided a rich source of trusted workers, a supply of secretive information, and an acceptance of a benign attitude toward the clandestine criminal operations in the neighborhood. Ronald Burt (2007) refers to these types of social capital resources as "closed networks." At the same time, Burt also speaks of social capital in terms of "brokerage." By this, Burt means a structural positioning between different clusters of otherwise unconnected or marginally connected people or groups. By occupying a position in a social network that spans this structural hole, one has the capacity to detect opportunities not generally available to one who is embedded or engulfed by the tight, redundant relationships of closed networks. As Burt suggests, occupying a structural hole provides a vision advantage in terms of being exposed to new ideas, anticipating potential problems, and brokering relationships between other groups. In the end, Burt holds that those groups or individuals who have access to both types of social capital—closed networks and brokerage—are more likely to succeed: "Brokerage is about seeing variation by escaping the constraint of one group. Closure is about subjecting a person to control to lower the risk of trusting the person" (Burt 2007, 108).

It is within this larger framework, then, that we can compare the organized crime trajectories of the Italian Americans and Polish Americans in Chicago Heights. We begin this analysis with the knowledge that the Italian Americans created a powerful, long-running crime operation in the Heights. We also know that while the Polish Americans had a degree of involvement in organized crime, they did not create the "high-level" organizational enterprise found in the Italian American community. To begin to unravel these differences, we examine the ways the Italian Americans and Polish Americans compared in terms of the climb up the mobility ladder.

We have given indications of this previously. Both Italian Americans and Polish Americans found themselves on the bottom rung in terms of their social, economic, and political standing. More systematic data seem to confirm this conclusion. In 1930, the adult Italian males in Chicago Heights occupied a disproportionate share of the lowest occupational rankings in the city. Seventy-one percent (n = 1,613) were located in either the semiskilled or unskilled categories.[9] These jobs provided bare subsistence-level wages for a noxious, degrading work environment. As one worker commented (La Morticella 1979, 2):

> They worked under brutalizing conditions. . . . Every place was a place of heat, grime, dirt, dust, stench, harsh glares, overtime, piecework, pollution, no safety gadgets, sweat, etc. The workers were, as the Italians called them, "Bestie Da Soma," beasts of burden. Emphysema, stomach ailments, heart ailments were common.

The Polish Americans did not do much better. Though they had a slight advantage over the Italian immigrants because of their work experiences in the factories and foundries in Poland, they were similar to the Italian Americans in terms of low occupational standings: In 1930, 67 percent of Polish adult males (n = 517) self-identified as semiskilled or unskilled workers, and within this grouping the vast majority occupied the lowest ranking.[10]

The patterns of housing for both the Italian Americans and Polish Americans also stand as indicators of diminished social and economic well-being. In Chicago Heights, the Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad lines constituted an observable division between the more prosperous west side of the city and the more industrial East Side. As we learned previously, the East Side was beset by "wretchedly insanitary conditions" as the chemical plants, steel factories, and railroad switching yards competed with substandard housing for the available land. Living on the East Side, while providing the advantages of being close to work and in close contact with fellow ethnics, still meant that one, as well as one's children, was exposed on a near daily basis to foul odors, white ash falling from chemical plants, railroad soot, the clanging of heavy machinery, as well as a host of other "objectionable features" (*Chicago Heights Star* 1921, 9). Notions of clannishness aside, it would seem that residence on the east side of town as opposed to the nearby "scenic west side of Chicago Heights" (*Chicago Heights Star* 1921, 9) would not be the preferred residential locations for most immigrants.

Despite these highly unfavorable living conditions, the Italian Americans and Polish Americans were overwhelmingly located on the east side of town. Over 88 percent of Italian Americans lived there in 1930. A more

refined measure of residential segregation is the index of dissimilarity, a measure that gives evidence of the degree to which minority and majority groups in a city are evenly spread out or conversely segregated in residential neighborhoods. Specifically, the index can vary between 0.00 (no measured segregation) and 1 (a complete or total residential segregation between one group and another). In most instances, a measured index of 0.60 and above is seen as evidence of substantial segregation. For Italian Americans in Chicago Heights the index of dissimilarity was 0.775, numbers comparable to African American patterns of residential housing segregation today. The patterns for the Polish Americans were quite similar. Eighty-six percent of Polish Americans lived on the east side of the city with a dissimilarity index of 0.710.[11] Therefore, both groups were at or near the bottom of the occupational mobility ladder and both groups experienced high degrees of residential segregation. Along with the more encompassing cultural, political, and social discriminations discussed previously, it is reasonable to suggest that both Italian Americans and Polish Americans were motivated to find nontraditional paths of ascent up this ladder.

Blocked opportunities are not sufficient to explain the development of an organized crime enterprise. This requires, at least in the long term, a bountiful supply of social capital—in particular, dense, closed networks of people who can be trusted. Specifically, placing stills in people's homes or sheds, running gambling operations in the back of a tavern, and organizing a prostitution ring depend upon a stable of workers who can be trusted with large sums of money, who will not skim profits off the top, or who will not engage in loose talk. Recruiting workers who can be counted on in this manner would be incredibly difficult if not for the advantages of social capital. Intimate networks provide cheap, detailed, insider information and a mechanism of social control. The social capital ties among co-ethnics, often stretching back into previous generations, provide the "organizational suture that tightens coordination" (Burt 2007, 164).

A look into the Chicago Heights context reveals once again a great deal of similarity regarding the closed networks of Italian Americans and Polish Americans. Both groups exhibited a dizzying connection of overlapping social ties and relations within their ethnic boundaries. The Italian Americans belonged to a large number of mutual aid societies, fraternal organizations, athletic associations, political clubs, sewing groups, and other communal solidarities. Domenic Candeloro describes one such group, the Marchegiani Society: "Fish fries on Friday, family dances on Saturday, and dramatic performances on Sunday right there in the neighborhood helped keep the Marchegiani in close touch with one another" (2002). Another person spoke of the communal ties that accompanied most any event or

rite of passage—for example, building a house, celebrating a wedding, or participating in a religious festival. "It was a community event," long-time, Chicago Heights resident Ida Marks said (Newquest 1988, 3). These closed networks provided a rich series of social ties that the Chicago Heights crew could call upon to advance their criminal operations. At least in part this may help to explain their long-lived success: One FBI informant claimed that of all the Chicago Outfit crews, the Chicago Heights members were the "tightest group in the Chicago area (U.S. Department of Justice 1961, 90).

The Polish Americans in Chicago Heights were not to be outdone when it came to developing an embedded set of social ties in the community. The patterns of residential segregation placed nearly every Polish person in the community within a few blocks of one another. This created ample opportunity for the Polish residents to meet at the myriad social clubs, political organizations, parish fests, and neighborhood grocery stores. One resident describes the network building processes (Wozny 1993a, 143):

> Stores were usually operated by the mother and the children, while the father worked in one of the factories where he could bring home a steady paycheck. . . . The women who operated these stores found their work satisfying. Most of the customers were women, so a visit to the store, turned into a social call. They could keep up with the neighborhood scandal and gossip.

Another strong source of closed social capital resources was Saint Joseph Church, the local Polish church. As Wozny suggests, the daily, rhythmic sound of the church bells symbolized the Polish unity and collective identity—the common "devotion to their religion, devotion to their community, devotion to their family" (1993b, iv). The church was especially adept at cementing the tight bonds of trust and coordination among the Polish residents through the creation of common rituals such as spiritual retreats (the *Rekolekcje*) or the Christmas Midnight Mass (the *Pasterka*), where after a long procession through the city streets "worshippers started converging on the church from the west side, the east side, the north side, and the south side"—in other words from the entire neighborhood (Wozny 1993b, 63). In a structural sense, the church provided for a rich supply of overlapping social ties by establishing parish committees, auxiliary groups, and sodality associations such as the Alter and Rosary Society, the Apostleship of Prayer, the Third Order of Saint Francis, and the Men's Rosary Sodality. All told, the church, as in many other Polish neighborhoods, was a central unifying force. As the classic study of the Polish community in Chicago by William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki concluded, the Polish parish performed as both church and village (1920, 41–51).

Up to this point, the Italian Americans and the Polish Americans in Chicago Heights were quite similar. Both groups found themselves at the lower end of the social and economic ladder, and both groups were awash in social capital—at least in terms of strong, inward-focused network ties: There is little to suggest in a structural sense why Italian Americans developed a formidable organized crime operation and Polish Americans did not. Yet, before we examine the third comparative component—namely, the social capital of brokerage—it will be worthwhile to look at the ideas of Herbert Gans and Mark Granovetter regarding the contrasting functions of these closed social capital ties within the Italian American community.

One of the classic studies of Italian Americans was Herbert Gans's *Urban Villagers* (1982). This study of Boston's West End details the difficulties and ultimate failures of the Italian American community to halt the urban renewal in the neighborhood, this *despite* the strong cohesiveness in the neighborhood. The standard interpretation of this anomaly—that is, strong network ties and unity but little objective success—runs toward personality or cultural factors. Gans held that the Italian American working-class subculture and its provincialism nullified the advantages of being a cohesive, close-knit community. Mark Granovetter (1973), however, offers a different interpretation. He suggests that it may very well have been the cohesiveness of the community itself that undercut the efforts of the West End Italian Americans. In particular, the strong ties within the community did not make way for the fruitful "bridging ties" to the clusters of potentially favorable groups outside the neighborhood. This is Granovetter's well-known "strength of weak ties" argument.

The development of organized crime in Chicago Heights cannot be compared in a direct sense with the efforts of Boston West End residents to thwart urban renewal in their neighborhood. Still, we may be able to glean some important lessons from Granovetter's analysis. Perhaps of greatest importance is the difference in brokerage or bridging social capital found among Italian and Polish residents in Chicago Heights. Chicago Heights Italian Americans had a lot of it; Chicago Heights Polish Americans not so much. For the Italian Americans, these weak ties extended in several critical directions. Most prominently, they extended to the larger components of the Chicago Outfit in Chicago, especially Johnny Torrio and Al Capone early on and other Chicago Outfit leaders in subsequent years. In the early part of the century, the Chicago Heights vice operations were run by a local resident, Antonio Sanfilippo. Sanfilippo ran a bootlegging operation in the Heights in large part nurtured by his political connections and ties to respectable west side Chicago Heights leaders, connections formed when Sanfilippo himself served for a short time as a city commissioner. However,

Sanfilippo may have been done in by the closed network of workers he used to carry out his vice operations. In particular, as Prohibition took hold, Sanfilippo seemed reluctant to extend his criminal operations outside the local Chicago Heights market. In the words of Burt, the closed networks of the Sanfilippo crew may have been valuable in creating organizational efficiencies and coordination but they did not, however, "provide a vision of options otherwise unseen" (2007, 59). This was left to another group of Chicago Heights Italian American men (Domenico Roberto, Jimmy Emery, and Frank Laporte) who had brokerage relations with Torrio and Capone. Occupying positions on the other side of the structural hole from the closed Chicago Heights community, these men saw the potential in expanding the vice operations both in terms of geography and criminal activities. Thus, with Torrio and Capone's willingness to expand their own operations, with the firepower and muscle provided by Capone, and with the "vision advantage" gained from establishing network ties with people outside the closed Chicago Heights community, Roberto, Emery, and Laporte saw an opportunity to establish a more sophisticated criminal empire. In a short time, Sanfilippo was eliminated with four shots to the back of his head, and the Chicago Heights boys established a criminal operation that was to last for over seventy years.

The Polish Americans in Chicago Heights, however, were not accorded the social capital advantages of brokerage. In the early years, the Polish Americans had an incipient criminal organization in the Heights. Vice operations were run out of a number of Polish taverns and brothels. Informal moonshine operations spread throughout the east side enclave. As Wozny suggests, "For a modest fee, the 'soft-drink' parlor owners would supply their neighbors with the prohibited libations. This generosity proved quite profitable" (1993b, 157). However, these operations never spawned "more high-level gangsters." There may be a number of reasons for this, and the disadvantages of closed networks or social capital may be especially useful in explaining this retarded development. In particular, the strong communal identity and ties found within the Polish community in Chicago Heights may have hindered the emergence of weak ties outside the community and, specifically, the opportunity to detect and mine these external relationships. These closed networks dominated the Polish experience in Chicago Heights. For example, Candeloro and Paul said the Polish Americans "had their own stores, taverns, businesses of all sorts, completely isolated from the establishment's downtown stores" (Candeloro and Paul 2004, 101). Another observer pointed out that the social, religious, and economic isolation in the neighborhoods "helped to enforce the ethnic identification that was so strong in the area" (Kozdras

1977, 15). Still another said the Polish Americans lived in a concentrated area with "strong ethnic ties to bind them" and as a result "did not need to rely on outside help" (Wozny 1993b, 89). Finally, a study of Polish immigrants on the south side of Chicago in the early decades of the century concluded (Pacyga 1991, 125–126):

> The realities of life in industrial Chicago faced the Poles as they settled in Chicago. Their initial response was a communal one. Instead of attempting the impossible task of melting into the dominant society, they strove to build their separate community and continued to preserve or adapt their culture. Polish Chicagoans developed an intricate communal system based on primary relations.

In short, the Polish Americans may have had the incentives and the necessary closed network ties to run a sophisticated criminal organization, much like their Italian counterparts. However, without a rich supply of open networks—networks that tied the Polish Americans to local politicians, to regional suppliers, to other Polish criminal organizations outside their separate communities—these criminal organizations would remain disorganized and sporadic. Thus, as the Polish Americans perfected the ability "to live amongst others" (Pacyga 1996, 55) while still maintaining a social segregation and separateness from these others, they made the development of a criminal empire most unlikely.

Conclusion

We began this discussion with a question regarding the connection between organized crime and Italian Americans. Italian Americans dominated the organized crime enterprise for decades. Yet how do we explain this social fact without falling into the trap of finding something essentially criminal or inferior about Italian Americans themselves—their genetic makeup, their culture, their structural position in society? Some scholars have argued that this connection could be explained as a result of a "few bad apples." Italian American criminals were decidedly different from most Italian Americans. It is, of course, true that the majority of Italian Americans were not involved in organized crime. However, a good deal of research has demonstrated that organized crime ran deeper and was more embedded in Italian American communities than many believe. In this sense, organized crime cannot be dismissed so easily as a parasitic imposition upon the Italian American community or an alien group within an alien community.

However, if it grew out of the community—as other nontraditional routes to social mobility such as labor organizing, ethnic businesses, and

mutual aid societies also developed—how might we explain this without resorting to special theories about criminals and their motives or to an ideological and stereotyped view of Italian Americans? In this article, I have attempted to provide an alternative explanation by suggesting that the Italian experience in America, at least in one community, was fraught with a host of discriminatory practices along cultural, political, and social lines. These practices led to a geographic and social isolation of Italian Americans in the urban environment that, in turn, prioritized or created a number of social capital resources—the most important of which being a closed social network of trusted friends, workers, co-ethnics. As many Italian Americans struggled to achieve a social mobility against the obstacles posed by these discriminatory practices, they turned to these social capital resources to gain an advantage in their quest to establish a labor union, an ethnic business, a mutual aid society, or an organized crime operation.

However, closed social networks carry a cost. Over a period of time, these networks did not allow for the flexibility or an adaptive response to the vagaries and changing character of outside markets, competitors, and new realities. In Burt's (2007) terms, they did not allow for the "vision advantage." Thus, they must be joined to more open networks where additional resources, new alliances, and different sources of information can be called upon to further the goals of the organization. Our examination of the Polish Americans in Chicago Heights points in this direction. While the Polish Americans experienced discrimination comparable to that of Italian Americans at the beginning of the last century and created great social capital resources within the community, they did not develop an organized crime enterprise similar to that of Italian Americans. In large measure, they did not develop a criminal empire because their closed networks were so strong. They were unable to span the structural holes essential to put them at a higher risk of success in the field of organized crime. Salvatore Lupo (2015) is right: Organized crime succeeds when it navigates the spaces between the two worlds—one inside and one outside, one closed and one open.

Notes

1. This was the organizing theme and general question for the John D. Calandra Institute conference "MAFIAS: Realities and Representations of Organized Crime," held on April 25–26, 2014.
2. Bell's use of the term *queer* predates the more contemporary association with a sexual or gender orientation. Instead, Bell uses the term to denote an alternative, nontraditional, and somewhat suspicious form of thought and behavior with respect to social mobility.
3. For an Italian version of these illegal mobility ladders, see the discussion of the "violent middle class" by Pezzino (1993) and Pizzorno (1987).

4. For a more detailed explanation of these methods and personal connections, see Corsino (2014).
5. For a broad discussion of the various collective strategies used by Italian Americans to pursue social mobility, see Haller (1971).
6. For a more general discussion of these processes, see Cohen (1990, 159–211).
7. For example, Devatenos (1924, 29) writes, "The Polish and Lithuanian people seem not to be so strict in the matter of obedience . . . we find many delinquent cases among these people."
8. Of course, the resort to force or violence is a critical element of organized crime. We do not wish to understate its significance. However, violence jeopardizes the long-term success of organized crime by decreasing organizational loyalties, diminishing the quasi-public legitimacy of many vice operations, and encouraging a more active role on the part of law enforcement. So while force or the threat of force is always present, the aphorism "you can't shoot everyone" is also relevant.
9. These percentages were compiled based upon the identification and analysis of the occupations of Italian men over fourteen years old as reported in the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1932).
10. These percentages were compiled based upon the identification and analysis of the occupations of Polish men over fourteen years old as reported in the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1932).
11. The dissimilarity indices were compiled by using the 1930 Census and basing the calculations on city wards. We derived indices for "foreign stock" Italian Americans in Chicago Heights as distinct from native whites of native parentage, this latter grouping a rough approximation of the more-established residents in the city or those farthest removed historically from their immigrant roots. We followed the same procedures for the residential patterns of "foreign stock" Polish Americans in Chicago Heights.

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Havana, Cuba: Contraband Capitalism and Criminal Organization in North America

PETER SCHNEIDER

Introduction

It is widely accepted that the Eighteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and its enabling Volstead Act of 1919 prohibiting the production, sale, and transport of "intoxicating liquors" created the decisive conditions for the expansion of local Mafia groups of Sicilian provenience and their integration into a nationwide criminal phenomenon.[1] Prohibition led these groups to communicate—and conflict—more intensely than before as members, sometimes in collaboration with Jewish American, Irish American, and other gangsters, organized the supply of foreign and locally produced spirits and beer and "bootlegged" this contraband to an ever-expanding market. It also coincided with infrastructural developments in truck, rail, and ship transportation and "improvements" in the technology and availability of firearms, all to the bootleggers' advantage.

It goes without saying that Prohibition transformed America's Mafia "families," whose members had earlier specialized in racketeering and extortion within their respective territories, into something more complex. The question is, how? An easy answer is to represent the transformation as a "scaling up," in which the various groups, scattered throughout the United States, achieved national integration, coordinated through a governing body or "commission" with a New York center of gravity. So straightforward an evolutionary account not only overconjures the specter of a frightening alien conspiracy, as many critics have claimed, but also fails to appreciate the particular organizational, practical, and cultural requirements of so-called traffickers. An overview of what might be called "contraband capitalism" brings these requirements into focus. Following a brief sketch of Mafia formation in the United States, I present such an overview. The main purpose of this article is to explore how Cuba, and most particularly its capital city, Havana, provided a nourishing haven—an incubator of sorts—for U.S.-based *mafiosi* involved in contraband capitalism.

To summarize my argument briefly: Until the Cuban Revolution, Havana enabled contraband capitalists to invest and launder the substantial profits accumulated during the Prohibition era in casino gambling and associated establishments for entertainment and recreation. It shielded the investors from the intense and continued surveillance of U.S. law enforce-

ment that, despite the end of Prohibition, continued to target so-called vice—specifically prostitution, gambling, and, increasingly, drugs. Havana allowed for the production of cultural norms and practices that legitimized these forms of so-called vice, rendering them exciting and glamorous to, among others, well-heeled tourists who came on cruise ships and then airplanes, seeking forbidden thrills. In conclusion, I ask readers to imagine what might have happened to the American Mafia, and even to American history, had the Cuban revolutionary government not shut it all down after 1959.

U.S. Mafia Formation

Salvatore Lupo's *Quando la Mafia trovò l'America* traces the early links between Sicilian criminal organizations and their counterparts in many American cities where, thanks to the dislocations of rapid capitalist development affecting Jewish and Irish as well as Italian newcomers, they found fertile soil in which to grow (Lupo 2008; English translation 2015). These early groups specialized in extortion, illegal gambling services in immigrant and poor communities, robberies, and political mediation. By the early twentieth century there were Sicilian American Mafia families in diaspora communities from New York to California, including such metropolises as Chicago, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, New Orleans, and Kansas City. Each group was oriented toward a particular city or, in the case of New York, which had multiple families, a particular neighborhood. Uniting these separate groups was a shared consciousness of belonging to a special category—"men of honor"—and adherence to shared behavioral etiquettes, rules of association, and rites of initiation. Members frequently intermarried, served as godparents to one another's children, and made efforts to mediate conflict, overseen by an admittedly intermittent but overarching commission or council. Imagine, Lupo suggests, a fraternal organization similar to Freemasonry, with "chapters" in Sicily and many American locales, whose members share a strong sense of identity and commensality. Actually, the analogy is not simply hypothetical; historical evidence demonstrates that a secretive fraternal Freemason order influenced Mafia formation in nineteenth-century Sicily (see Lupo 1993, 182; Pezzino 1992, 47–58; 1995, 5–7, 71–72; Recupero 1987, 313–314).

A further contribution of Lupo's work lies in his attention to the transatlantic comings and goings between *mafiosi* in Sicily and in the United States, complemented by an exchange of merchandise in both directions. The initial, pre–World War I migration included figures like Nicola Gentile, who, in 1903, migrated from Siculiana in the province of Agrigento to Brooklyn and from there to Pittsburgh and successively to

Chicago, Cleveland, and Kansas City, back home for a time in Siculiana, then back to America to continue his peregrinations as a rising *capo-mafioso*. Gentile's far-flung itinerary was recorded in his remarkable autobiography (published in Italy in 1963), but there is no reason to think his story was unique. Also telling were the movements that resulted from state repression, whether in Italy or America—in particular the substantial clandestine migration from Sicily during Fascism and the occasional deportation from America back to Italy of *mafiosi* deemed "undesirable."

In addition to envisioning the American Mafia as a localized fraternal organization renewed through a continued back and forth with Sicily, it is important to consider the operative networks through which American *mafiosi* realized projects in association, as well as in competition, with criminals of non-Sicilian origin. In a way this evokes what Alan Block designated as the tension in Mafia organizations between the territorial "power syndicate" and the far-flung "enterprise syndicate," engaged in translocal economic functions (such as bootlegging alcohol) that are capable of spanning oceans as well as ethnicities (Block 1980, 1994). Lupo insists that both kinds of organization have existed, and have had to coexist, from the outset—and in both Sicily and the United States (see Lupo 1993, 81–85, 2008; Schneider and Schneider 2003, 38–39).

For example, after World War II, Sicilian American *mafiosi* cultivated immigrant networks, dense as they were with ties of kinship and friendship, as conduits for heroin traffic, as they did the businesses that exported olive oil, cheese, sardines, anchovies, and fruit. *Mafiosi* from towns on or near Sicily's western coast—Castellammare, Terrasini, Salemi, Alcamo, Partinico, and Cinisi, as well as Palermo—participated disproportionately in the linkages, both because they were places where these exports were processed and packed and because they had launched the clandestine immigration of *mafiosi* to the United States under Fascism (Lupo 1993, 190–197, 212; see also Pezzino 1995, 219). Even before World War I, Nick Gentile had trafficked in drugs, among his many other activities. In other words, although the American Mafia, like its counterpart in Sicily, conformed to the power syndicate model, it was also and at the same time harboring enterprise syndicates among its members. Prohibitionist law, first exemplified by the Eighteenth Amendment, caused the latter to flourish—to become, in effect, building blocks of contraband capitalism.

Contraband Capitalism

Like industrial or finance capitalism, contraband capitalism implies a very high potential for capital accumulation, in which leading entrepreneurs join

already existing elites in the acquisition of wealth and power. Like these systems, contraband capitalism depends, from the outset, on state-made law, in this case prohibitionist law that creates a substantial black market for desirable goods and services by making them difficult to obtain. Whereas laws that sanctioned and protected private property framed industrialism and laws that deregulated banks opened the door for accumulation through finance, contraband capitalism rests on legislation that would eliminate, or erect fortresslike barriers around, those goods and services for which there is both a vibrant demand and intense moral controversy.

Although far from unique, the United States has been a pioneer of prohibitionist law, for reasons not unrelated to its particular ethnic and racial history. As historians of drug and alcohol prohibitionism have shown, the moral anxiety surrounding vice focuses on not only commodities perceived to be dangerous because they are morally degenerative but also the social groups that consume these commodities or consume them in new ways. Beginning with the emancipation of slaves after the Civil War and accelerating with the arrival of millions of new immigrants from eastern and southern Europe and from China, white Anglo-Saxon Protestant Americans felt threatened by "others" believed to enjoy psychoactive stimulants and experiences more frequently, or differently, than they did. Feeling exposed to moral peril, the more so if they lived in middle-sized towns and cities in the nation's heartland away from the coasts, they energized the social activism that produced laws—up to and including a constitutional amendment—prohibiting alcohol and drugs, prostitution, and gambling (see especially Blocker 1988; Clark 1976; Gilfoyle 1992; Kerr 1985; Musto 1987; Rumbarger 1989). The United States also became, over the course of the twentieth century, an imperial powerhouse, in a position to internationalize prohibitionist law across much of the globe (e.g., Gootenberg 2005, 189–245; Nadelmann 2008). Alcohol and drug prohibition regimes constitute paradigmatic instances of the legal context for contraband capitalism, supplemented by barriers to other morally contested commodities, such as gambling, sex work, arms and munitions, and, more recently, endangered species and body parts.

Accumulating profit from *illegal* markets, contraband capitalists deploy their own coercive muscle in order to regulate competition, collect debts, adjudicate disputes, enforce rules, police against theft, expand into new territory, and so on. They cannot always count on the state's judiciary, military, and police forces for these tasks, even while they surely corrupt these institutions to their own purposes—hence the frequency with which weapons and ammunition are smuggled together with, or in exchange for, other prohibited commodities. Additional assets, crucial to the success of

entrepreneurs of contraband, are means of transportation (from aircraft to the human carriers); access to flexible transit routes and hiding places (tunnels and warehouses, for example); and a labor force familiar, or eager to become familiar, with violence. Demobilized soldiers, militias, and paramilitaries have contributed hugely to the "rise" of contraband capitalism—so too have already existing Mafias.

Most cross-border and cross-boundary transactions—yesterday and today—are socially acceptable and therefore licit, evoking little if any moral controversy, let alone prohibitionist law. The result is, in the words of Willem van Schendel and Abraham Itty, "a qualitative difference of scale and intent" between the structural logic and unified purpose of trafficking enterprises and the scores of everyday micropractices of "armpit smugglers" and "ant traders." Although the latter may handle immense amounts of contraband, they are not tied in to potentially expanding mass illegal markets and do not approach the "scalar threshold" of contraband capitalism (van Schendel and Itty 2005, 2–9). Nor, precisely because they enjoy a fairly high level of moral consensus, do small-scale smugglers generate renewed episodes of moral panic, resulting in law enforcement crackdowns. The targets of these crackdowns are not only the prohibited commodities and those who consume them, but especially the "moral deficiency" of those who make them available. There is no greater example of this dynamic than the morally laced demonization of the Mafia in the United States, a process of criminalization that certainly contributed to the attraction of a Latin enclave in Cuba.

Michael Woodiwiss's book of 2001, *Organized Crime and American Power*, reconstructs Americans' emergent preoccupation with the sinister and polluting "alien conspiracy" known as "La Cosa Nostra" or "The Mafia." Early harbingers of this trope followed the murder of the New Orleans Chief of Police David Hennessey in 1890 and of New York police detective Joseph Petrosino in 1909. The idea that *mafiosi* had crossed the Atlantic to contaminate "American values" did not, however, flourish until Prohibition; that it took off then is ironic, given that bootlegging entrepreneurs were in no way mainly Italian American but came from any and every ethnic background, including white Anglo-Saxon Protestants.

In the 1930s, New York's politically ambitious prosecutor Thomas Dewey took aim at the "mobster" Charles "Lucky" Luciano, whom he was finally able to convict for organizing prostitution, drawing the attention of a fearful public to the foreign origin of the accused. In 1946, a *Herald-Tribune* reporter named Joseph Driscoll characterized the arrest of six drug couriers by the Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN) as follows: "Throughout the United States the largest dealers in narcotic drugs are . . . members of

the Mafia . . . a very dangerous criminal organization that is being used to undermine the principles of . . . law enforcement. . . . [It is] national in scope . . . [its] leaders meet annually, usually in Florida, and they agree upon policies for the control and correlation of their various criminal enterprises" (quoted in Woodiwiss 2001, 243–244).

Woodiwiss writes a compelling account of the 1950s when a mythic Mafia, foreign, conspiratorial, and terrorist, loomed with new force alongside the emergent Communist menace of the high Cold War. The story begins with the contributions of journalists Jack Lait and Lee Mortimer, whose sensational book of 1948, *New York Confidential*, was followed by sequels on *Chicago* (1950), *Washington* (1951), and the *USA* (1952), all of them best sellers. In their account, a secret criminal brotherhood with roots in feudal Sicily had entered the United States through the slums of New Orleans, crowded with "the lower layers of brawling, boozing, fornicating laborers, and loafers and illiterate Negroes, who flocked there for the fleshpots." From here the brotherhood had spread to other urban slums, for example, Bronzeville Chicago, home to "drinking and doping (and) reefer parties with their dark, crowded rooms where the mixed sexes reached orgiastic stimulation" (quoted in Woodiwiss 2001, 102).

According to Woodiwiss, Senator Estes Kefauver read *Chicago Confidential* while preparing for his 1950–1951 "special committee" investigation of "crime in interstate commerce." As is well known, this committee's televised hearings focused predominantly on Italian American racketeering and narcotics rings in large and small cities, and its reports and conclusions were, like the *Confidential* books, full of hand-wringing about vice. An alien, conspiratorial Mafia, enlarged since Prohibition, continued to grow rich from "narcotics, pinball machines, slot machines, gambling in every form," not to mention "every racket promising easy money" (quoted in Woodiwiss 2001, 245).

Some of Kefauver's quite minimal, and often unreliable, evidence came from the FBN, headed by Harry J. Anslinger, appointed in 1930 as its first commissioner, a position he held until 1962. Anslinger saw the Mafia and Communism as twin perils; each was a centrally organized foreign conspiracy, bent on causing the moral degeneration of America. Meanwhile, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was surprisingly uninvolved in the Kefauver investigation. Its head, J. Edgar Hoover, was far more interested in policing Communism and in any case believed that the policing of racketeering and vice came under state and local, not federal, jurisdiction.

In 1957, however, after New York State Police stumbled upon a gathering of *mafiosi* at the country estate of Joseph Barbara in Apalachin, New York, Hoover's FBI weighed in with a hefty report analyzing the Mafia's (Sicilian

and American) history, structure, and activities. Books with attention-grabbing titles—for example, *Brotherhood of Evil*, by Frederic Sondern (1959) and *The Enemy Within*, by Robert F. Kennedy (1960)—compounded the emerging image of a purposeful and coherent danger targeting the integrity of America. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the FBI stepped up surveillance through wiretaps and bugs and by "turning" a low-level "soldier" of the Genovese crime family (formerly the family of Luciano), Joe Valachi, into a government witness. Still to come was Valachi's spectacular testimony of 1963 before Senator John McClellan's investigative committee, broadcast on radio and TV and well covered in the press.[2]

The combined effect of the demonization of the Sicilian American Mafia and increased efforts at law enforcement even in the early 1950s enhanced the appeal of Havana as a surveillance-free "Mafia haven." As discussed below, Cuba's capital city was this and much more.

Havana Background

From the early sixteenth century, Havana, on the northwest coast of Cuba, was a key trading port and center of New World commerce with Spain. An important shipyard for repairing and provisioning vessels of the Spanish fleet was located in its harbor, as were the warehouses that supported its role as a break-of-bulk point for precious metals, Cuban sugar, and all manner of other products as well as human slaves in the notorious triangular trade between Europe, the Caribbean, and North America. Thus it should be no surprise that by the end of the nineteenth century this "Paris of the Antilles" was a flourishing cosmopolitan city, as large as New York, with burgeoning architecture, music, dance, theater, and, of course, gambling parlors and brothels—the many pleasures that could respond to the voracious appetites of the local bourgeoisie, plus the thousands of seamen, merchants, adventurers, bureaucrats, and other visitors who flooded the city every year.

As Alejandro de la Fuente points out in *Havana and the Atlantic in the Sixteenth Century*, the composition and structure of Havana were also affected by the role Cuba played in successive imperialist regimes: Spanish, British, and finally American (de la Fuente 2008). Even after the U.S. occupation ended in 1902, Cuba remained a crucial node of geopolitical strategy and a central arena of U.S. Caribbean imperialism (Cirules 2003; Sáenz Rovner 2008). In consequence, North American governmental, commercial, and financial institutions participated in the economic and political development of Cuba and in the notoriously corrupt regimes that governed it (see Kinzer 2013, 284–286). Politicians, officials, bankers, and

entrepreneurs, Cuban and American alike, turned the early decades of the twentieth century into, as one source puts it, "heady times for Cuba. The fortunes of landowners, sugar mill owners, bankers, railroad magnates and American companies like the United Fruit Co., American Sugar Refining Co., John Deere, and International Harvester grew at such dizzying rates that the epoch came to be known as *la danza de los milliones*" (Lowinger and Fox 2005, 27; see also Cirules 2003).

American *Mafiosi* in Havana

Along with a multitude of other "liquor tourists," U.S. *mafiosi* were frequent visitors to Havana during Prohibition; they came not only for the city's good times but also to engage in the business of bootlegging (Deitch 2007, 61). By the early 1930s, "Anglo" organized crime figures had also taken an active interest in the city's gambling scene. In a way this built upon an earlier cultural exchange. In the late 1800s, Cuban migrants to the tobacco industry in Tampa, Florida's, historic neighborhood of Ybor City brought with them their favorite numbers game, *la bolita*, which was later controlled by Tampa's famed Mafia boss Santo Trafficante, Sr., followed by his son, Santo, Jr. (Deitch 2007, 61; Sàenz Rovner 2008, 85).

The two Trafficantes from Tampa were among the most noteworthy American *mafiosi* to invest in Cuba once Prohibition ended in 1933. Trafficante senior, whose ties dated back to the Prohibition era traffic in rum, sugar, and molasses, was fluent in Italian and Spanish as well as English and groomed his son, Santo, Jr., to look after the family businesses by sending him "on trips across the country to 'learn the ropes' from mafiosi in different cities, as well as to Cuba, Europe, and Central America" (Deitch 2007, 24, 9–10, 61; Sàenz Rovner 2008, 85). After World War II, father and son together acquired large stakes in at least five Havana casinos, nightclubs, and hotels (Ragano and Raab 1994, 17); on the father's death in 1954, the son inherited some of these properties. By 1958, he owned or had a substantial investment in the Sans Souci Casino, the Deauville Hotel and casino, the Havana Hilton, El Comodoro, and the Capri nightclub, where actor George Raft was the official greeter (Ragano and Raab 1994, 39).

Another major player was Meyer Lansky, the Jewish American ally of Luciano and other key American *mafiosi*. Lansky either owned, managed, or invested in the following: a casino in the renowned Hotel Naçional, the Montmartre Club, the Monseigneur, a gambling casino at the racetrack, and later the Havana Riviera Hotel, which he built in 1957–1958. After Fulgencio Batista's first term as president of Cuba ended in 1944 and before he began his second term at the head of a military coup in 1952, he took up residence

in the United States, near the Florida home of Meyer Lansky. During that interregnum, Lansky left his Havana casino operations under the care of the Tampa/Havana *mafioso* Santo Trafficante, Sr. (Deitch 2007, 61).

An interesting wrinkle to this history is that Lansky's gaming tables were not only legal under Cuban law but they were honest in the sense that the casino operators did not take "unfair" advantage of those who came to play—odds would, of course, favor the house, but there was no additional trickery to separate the gamblers from their stakes. Indeed, "For the winter season of 1953–54—and for an annual retainer, according to Meyer's lawyer . . . in the region of $25,000—President Batista invited Meyer Lansky to become his advisor on gambling reform" (Lacey 1991, 285). According to Lacey, "When asked why the presence of American gangsters was tolerated in Cuba, the U.S. ambassador, Earl Smith, replied candidly, 'It's strange, but it seems to be the only way to get honest casinos' " (Lacey 1991, 297; see also Sáenz-Rovner 2008, 91). Reflected here is Lansky's exceptional expertise as an entrepreneur of gaming in the United States. Besides his Havana interests, he was, like many American *mafiosi*, a longtime investor in numbers rackets and slot machines in working-class communities, in bookmaking, and in the casinos and river boats that blossomed, at least in the south and in Nevada, at the end of Prohibition (see Reppetto 2004, 154–161).

According to T. J. English, in 1933 Luciano met with a number of other Mafia *capi* in his Waldorf Astoria lodging in Manhattan to propose Havana as a likely place to channel bootlegging profits. In contrast to sites in the United States (which, as noted above, would also be developed), an offshore island meant protection from prohibitionist law enforcement. English quotes Luciano as saying, "We gotta expand someplace and we need a place to send our dough where it'll keep making money and also get those guys from Washington off our backs. Meyer's been down to Havana and he's made some good contacts" (English 2007, 15). The words are attributed to Gosch and Hammer's much disputed "autobiography" of Luciano (1974; for an interesting summary and analysis of the dispute, see Warner 2012). As much as it supports my thesis, one would still have to take it with a grain of salt. Another source, Thomas Reppetto, places the meeting in the spring of 1934 and notes that Lansky was among those present (Reppetto 2004, 151).

Luciano, of course, was soon to be imprisoned by Thomas E. Dewey. It is telling that he only perfunctorily satisfied the condition of his 1946 release, which was that he would reside in Italy. Briefly setting foot in Rome and then Naples, he soon slipped back to Cuba where, as will be noted below, he was roundly celebrated. Anslinger and the FBN, having

defined him as a preeminent drug dealer, pressured Cuba to return him to Italy, but not before he was able to realize the contraband capitalist project of investing mob money in the gambling haven of Havana.

So it was that Luciano, Lansky, and the Trafficantes (father and son) came to operate not only fabulous gambling casinos but also hotels and restaurants in Havana. Like so many other visitors and investors from the north (including a Mafia family of Montreal), they found in Havana a most congenial place to work and play. Moreover, rising indigenous entrepreneurs, most prominently Amleto Battisti and Amadeo Barletta Barletta, were eager to partner with them. So was Martine Fox. He had been a *guajiro* (peasant) who found work as a machinist in one of the sugar *centrals*—the industrial mills installed in the early twentieth century in the richest cane-growing regions of the island. After injuring his hand in the machinery and leaving the *central*, he became first a bookie, then a "banker," in the *bolita*, the same informal lottery that had migrated to Tampa. Fox was such a brilliant gambler and so well networked into gambling life that in 1939 he was able to move his operation to Havana where in 1943 he took over and embellished the fabulous Tropicana Club (Lowinger and Fox 2005, 27–44). By the early 1950s, Fox's world was, of course, intertwined with that of the American crime figures active in Havana. Lansky and Luciano arranged for their associate Wilbur "Lefty" Clark to function as credit manager of the Tropicana Club. The casino also "hired a succession of other figures with 'unsavory' connections. One of these was Dino Cellini, a close associate of Lansky, who ran the croupier school at the Hotel Riviera and later, after the Cuban revolution, ran Lansky's casinos in London and Freeport, Grand Bahama. Another was Lewis McWillie, a close associate not only of Santo Trafficante Jr, but of Jack Ruby" (the eventual assassin of Lee Harvey Oswald) (Lowinger and Fox 2005, 181). Still another Trafficante associate held the concession for supplying the Tropicana's linens.

Apart from serving as a "fiscal haven" permitting the American Mafia to launder and invest wealth accumulated from Prohibition and other varied North American ventures, Havana constituted a more or less surveillance-free zone where *mafiosi* from many cities, and occasionally from Italy, could plan and coordinate joint operations, free from the gaze of the FBI and the FBN, in particular. There was no surveillance in part because most gambling in Cuba was legal (*bolita* was illegal but tolerated by authorities) and because the Mafia-linked hotel/casino/club owners, investors, and managers—along with their Cuban colleagues, most notably Barletta (Cirules 2003, 137–145)—were well positioned to influence key officials who might otherwise have interfered with their operations. According to Sàenz Rovner, *mafiosi* and their Cuban colleagues curried favor with and exercised

considerable influence over Cuban banks and other commercial entities. They also enjoyed favorable relations with such American institutions as the Rockefeller financial enterprises and the various intelligence services of the United States. Perhaps most important, they ingratiated themselves with and received the collaboration of officials of succeeding Cuban regimes—especially that of Batista—who were in any event eager to promote casino tourism in Havana, in part to stabilize an economy that was vulnerable to fluctuations in demand for Cuban sugar (Sàenz Rovner 2008, 89–91).

Quoting T. J. English, "Luciano and Lansky had spread bribes far and wide in Cuba. From the beginning their plan for Havana had involved laying the proper groundwork. Key government figures—congressmen, senators, and political operatives reaching into the presidential palace—were bought off and compromised" (2007, 46–47). It was not, however, simply a matter of cash bribery. The relationship between *mafiosi*, Cuban and U.S. political leaders and government officials, and Cuban and North American financial and commercial interests involved reciprocal personal friendships and mutually profitable collaborative investments as well as moments of tension and conflict (see, e.g., Cirules 2003; English 2007; Sáenz-Rovner 2008). The playground atmosphere of Havana gave substance to the mutuality. That the city overflowed with luxurious hotels, casinos, the Hippodrome, brothels, and beaches added to its appeal. That it attracted glamorous elites and renowned entertainers like Frank Sinatra added still more. One has to imagine that friendships were cemented through memorable good times.

According to the FBI, North American organized crime figures from many different jurisdictions met at least ten times between 1928 (in Cleveland, Ohio) and the infamous 1957 Apalachin, New York, meeting, when sixty-one alleged *mafiosi* from as far away as Los Angeles, California; Kansas City, Missouri; and Tampa, Florida, were arrested by the New York State Police while attending the Barbara "wiener roast" (FBI 2013). The FBI monograph describing what little it knew about these meetings makes no mention of another significant conference that took place in Havana, at Lansky's Hotel Nacional, in December 1946 (FBI 2013). This event was held to celebrate the clandestine return of Luciano from Italy to Havana—as mentioned above, he had been imprisoned in New York State and then deported to Italy after his release—and to engage other issues of common concern such as the leadership of New York's five families, the uncertain fate of Benjamin Siegel's Flamingo Hotel venture in Las Vegas (in which some of the attendees had a stake), gambling and other investment opportunities in Cuba and the Caribbean, and, perhaps of special note, the postwar revitalization of narcotics trafficking (English 2007, 32–37). Besides Lansky

and Luciano, the participants included a pantheon of Mafia *capi* from New York, New Jersey, Buffalo, Chicago, Cleveland, New Orleans, and Tampa/Havana as well as some of their more junior associates. Frank Sinatra was a special guest (Cirules 2003, 64; English 2007, 32–37).

Conclusion

As we have seen, from the 1930s on, the U.S. mainland, the site of the Mafia's primary territorial bases, was rife with threats to organized crime from law enforcement and political reform. Nor did moral crusades against vice disappear, the spectacular failure of alcohol prohibition notwithstanding. On the contrary, pressure continued vis-à-vis prostitution and gambling; by the 1950s, moreover, movements that would eradicate such psychoactive substances as marijuana, heroin, and cocaine were already gathering steam, anticipating the war on drugs. Kefauver and McClellan, the FBN and the FBI, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, Jr., state and local police forces, and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) all portrayed the Mafia as a danger to the moral integrity of the United States. *Mafiosi* needed a haven from these pressures—a place to launder, shelter, and invest accumulated profits; to meet with other members of their sodality and reinforce ideologically their shared sense of membership in an exclusive fraternity; to coordinate translocal operations; and to legitimize and glamorize the very commodities that prohibitionist law would suppress—all without the interruption of U.S. (or Canadian, or French, or Italian) authorities. Havana, ninety miles south of Miami, was preferable to Las Vegas or any comparable mainland site. It was a veritable, and protected, fiscal, organizational, and recreational paradise.

This raises a telling question. What would have happened to the American Mafia, and its role in American history, had it not been for the Cuban Revolution of 1959? After World War II, the cosmopolitan port city of Marseilles assumed a preeminent role in contraband capitalism. So-called Corsican gangsters smuggled Turkish morphine paste to Marseilles, where it was refined into heroin for the U.S. market, setting up the notorious "French Connection." By the 1950s, Trafficante, Jr. and his associate Norman "Roughhouse" Rothman had forged heroin smuggling relations with the Corsicans. Meanwhile, these traffickers also dealt with persons whom Lupo refers to as "Sicilian interlocutors *of Sicily*"—Sicilian *mafiosi* investing in heroin deals. They, too, were in touch with Corsican gangsters and with Trafficante and Rothman (see Deitch 1997, 119–124; Lupo 2008, 164–165). Was Havana, Trafficante's playground, becoming a way station on the heroin smuggling route? Put somewhat differently, were Lansky,

Trafficante, and their Mafia allies about to become more involved in the distribution of contraband drugs, with Havana as an operative base?

Subsequently, in 1968, according to Alfred McCoy, Trafficante was in Hong Kong and Saigon, meeting with leaders of the Corsican syndicate (McCoy 2003, 253–254). Then, following the demise of the French Connection and Marseilles as the center of gravity for contraband heroin, chemists and refining laboratories shifted to the environs of Palermo. Sicilian *mafiosi* now dominated the traffic. New immigrants from Sicily, called the "zips," helped to establish the U.S. distribution scheme known as the "pizza connection." But the dominance was short-lived. Through the combined anti-Mafia efforts of law enforcement agencies in the United States and Italy, whose investigations were stunningly advanced by justice collaborators—the so-called *pentiti* who turned state's witness—the "drug Mafia" was suppressed (see Schneider and Schneider 2003). Had Havana evolved through the 1960s and 1970s as a break-of-bulk point for contraband drugs, it might have (for awhile) postponed what happened next: American and Sicilian Mafias lost their leverage in drug-related contraband capitalism, leaving behind a much more fragmented field in which localized Mafias continued to do what Mafias traditionally did—extortion, political brokering, labor racketeering, illegal numbers rackets, and so on. Meanwhile, the market for desirable but prohibited drugs endured—if anything, it continued to evolve and expand—to be served by new entrepreneurs of contraband: leaders of Colombian cartels, Mexican cartels, and the Calabrian *'ndràngheta*, to name some of the most dynamic.

Speculative as this reasoning is, it resonates with arguments about a sinister turn of events in American history in 1963. *Mafiosi* with a stake in Havana hoped, initially, to survive the Cuban Revolution, cultivate ties to the Castro regime, and carry on with business as usual. When this became impossible—when the regime shut down their casinos and drove them out of town—they sought redemption. Of course, they resented President John F. Kennedy's decision to withhold air support for the CIA-orchestrated Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. They also bitterly contested the efforts of his brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, to investigate and suppress U.S. organized crime. Several writers, among them Trafficante's longtime lawyer Frank Ragano, have proposed that Trafficante, his good friend Carlos Marcello, who was a *capo-mafioso* from New Orleans who also invested in Trafficante's Havana operations, and Sam Giancana of Chicago—all with a major and frequent presence in Cuba—contributed to a plot to assassinate the president (and later to assassinate another of their confederates, James Hoffa). (See Blakey 1981; Ragano and Raab 1994; Raab 2005, 125–138; Vaccara 2013.)

Notes

1. This essay is based on secondary historical sources, one FBI document, and several excellent pieces of investigative journalism. It is also informed by the author's study of Mafia criminal organizations in Sicily. I owe special thanks to Jane Schneider, who collaborated in this research, and to the comments of two anonymous readers.
2. Hollywood, too, climbed onboard. In the early 1930s, it had deployed the new technology of sound to convey, in its gangster films, not only screeching cars and exploding tommy guns but also the speech of some rather sympathetic gang leaders—the marginalized but entrepreneurially talented heroes of *Little Caesar*, *Public Enemy*, and *Scarface*. With the end of Prohibition, however, the Motion Picture Production Code withheld its seal of approval from *Scarface*, causing the producer, Howard Hughes, to add the phrase *Shame of a Nation* to the title (see Reynolds 1995, 125–127). There followed a wave of films, lasting well into the Cold War, which lionized "G-men," evoking Eliot Ness and his Prohibition-era "untouchables" cornering Al Capone. As Woodiwiss notes, films like *The Enforcer*, in 1951, conjured an "invisible criminal empire of killers"—a syndicate of racketeers "working together in businesslike organizations behind respectable 'fronts.'" Glamour settled on violent police, kicking in doors and roughing up suspects; "bad guys," whether killed or sent to jail by courageous government agents and prosecutors, lost their voice (Woodiwiss 2001, 253–254).

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Book Reviews

America nuova terra promessa: Storie di ebrei italiani in fuga dal fascismo.
By Gianna Pontecorboli.
Milan: Francesco Brioschi Editore, 2013.
205 pages.

Gianna Pontecorboli's book vividly describes the migration to the United States of some 1,000 Italian Jewish scientists, scholars, artists, musicians, bankers, lawyers, and other professionals and their families after the introduction of the Fascist regime's anti-Semitic laws in 1938. While German, British, and American historians have devoted considerable attention to the flight from Nazism and Fascism of many other Jewish artists, scientists, and intellectuals during the 1930s, the Italian case has been mostly overlooked.

Jewish migration from Italy after 1938 was an important phenomenon. Mussolini's government passed the first of a series of anti-Semitic laws during the fall of 1938 that affected more than 48,000 Italians. The laws barred Jews from public life and subjected them to a wide range of humiliating restrictions and persecution. Among other things, these laws barred Jewish students and teachers from attending and teaching in public schools and universities. They barred Jews from marrying non-Jews, from working in a long list of professions, serving in the army, employing Christian servants, staying in hotels, and even placing classified ads in newspapers. More than one hundred primary-school directors and teachers were expelled for being Jewish. At this same time, at least 279 administrators and teachers from middle school and hundreds of full professors and *liberi docenti* (untenured professors) were banned from universities.

Chapter 1 describes the tragic difficulties of leaving, such as obtaining an affidavit or a quota visa to reach the United States. After the promulgation of the Racial Laws, a small segment of Italy's Jews—scholars, scientists, and university professors among them—began leaving the country. Pontecorboli draws a picture full of key individuals, families, friendships, and professional networks and examines a number of cases, dividing them into scholars, doctors and journalists, musicians and artists, and "non solo Nobel" (not only Nobel), a revealing look at lesser-known, but still well-established scientists and mathematicians.

Among the more significant cases Pontecorboli describes is the closing of the Turin School of Biology, founded by the histologist Giuseppe Levi. His students Salvatore Luria, Renato Dulbecco, and Rita Levi-Montalcini all fled to the United States and went on to become Nobel Prize winners. In medical schools, physiology, more than any other discipline, lost the most prominent faculty members. Geographer Guido Almansi, literary scholar Attilio Momigliano, and philosopher Rodolfo Mondolfo were also forced to flee. So were the mathematicians Salvatore Pincherle, a creator of infinitesimal calculus; Vito Volterra, who established the basis of functional calculus; Corrado Segre, who established the Italian school of geometry; and Tullio Levi-Civita, who developed absolute differential calculus. Turin mathematician Guido Fubini, forced to leave his post in 1939, joined the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey.

The influential group of young Roman nuclear physicists led by Enrico Fermi, known as the "ragazzi di via Panisperna" also disbanded: Fermi (who won the Nobel Prize in 1938), Bruno Rossi, Emilio Segrè (also a Nobelist), and Eugenio Fubini emigrated to the United States. Fubini went on to be appointed U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense in 1963. Mario Salvadori and Roberto Fano and his brother Ugo Fano were among the other scientists and scholars forced to leave. Using their stories, Pontecorboli points out the difficulties in settling in to a new place, in the process of becoming integrated, and in rebuilding their careers.

Pontecorboli identifies broad characteristics of this migration of Jewish intellectuals: Entire families left, and men and women were equally represented. These migrants were typically older than those who left earlier, and they tended to settle quickly in urban centers.

The author pays careful attention to the women who fled, some of whom arrived in the United States unmarried or unaccompanied. One was Gina Castelnuovo, a biologist and daughter of mathematician Guido Castelnuovo. Pontecorboli notes that women, whether as wives, daughters, or certainly colleagues, demonstrated a greater capacity than men for adaptation and learning in a new society.

Pontecorboli has written an original and informative book. One of the merits of *America nuova terra promessa* is the coverage of the immediate aftermath of the war, a difficult phase for those refugees and their families who decided to return to Italy and participate in postwar reconstruction, just as much as it was for those who remained in the United States and needed to deal with the challenges of displacement and discrimination.

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Farms, Factories, and Families: Italian American Women of Connecticut.
By Anthony Riccio.
Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014.
422 pages.

In an effort to capture the range of experiences of a group that has been relatively ignored—Italian American women workers—Anthony Riccio traversed the state of Connecticut over a period of six years. During that time, he interviewed more than 165 working- and lower-middle-class Italian American women, affording them the opportunity to share accounts of their own lives in their own words. Many of the stories collected by Riccio trace the trajectory of these women's experiences from the time of emigration from Southern Italy across three generations in the United States. Their accounts capture lives not only as women during these times but as Italian American immigrant and working women. For many of Riccio's subjects, this was an important and defining distinction.

The book is comprised of fifteen loosely organized chapters. Some chapters chronicle life in Italy prior to emigration, others the journey to the United States, and then the making of a new life in Connecticut. Still other chapters use the women's stories to trace Italian American domestic worlds—marriage, birth, and child rearing; family and generational life; as well as public spheres of education, work, and careers, including farming, manufacturing (most notably in the garment industry), and small—usually family—businesses. Women's lives in unions, in politics, and as activists are also depicted.

From these accounts emerge recurring themes from the women's lives in both private and public realms. They include the notions of sacrifice and selflessness, change and tradition, pride and determination, family values and family conflicts, personal ambition and communal obligation, and sociability and the larger world. The Italian American women interviewed by Riccio often displayed such virtues while facing overt discrimination and sexism outside the home and local community, as well as poverty and limited resources within. In more than 400 pages, Riccio presents story after story, excerpt after excerpt, of what daily life was like for these women and their families. Many of the women go into great detail as they recall their lives, and their stories often elicit a range of emotions in the reader. On several occasions, I found myself laughing at a humorous saying in Italian dialect, enraged by an injustice, or saddened by a particularly poignant account of a death—sometimes within a single page.

Riccio certainly is to be lauded for his efforts to capture and preserve these heretofore largely ignored accounts. However, his book, like so much oral history, can frustrate readers seeking to make full sense of the material presented to them. Riccio provides relatively brief introductions—mostly setting the historical context—to each section of the book and offers even less critical and analytical interpretation of the greater significance of his interviewees' stories. While the accounts are detailed, rich, and vivid on their own, they might have had even more force had Ricco found a way to step back and critically examine *why* they are so appealing and *what* exactly they tell us about the human condition. In the case of oral histories, why should or do we care about these accounts? How generalizable are these women's experiences? And if they are not generalizable, what are the factors and variables that make these accounts so unique to this particular ethnic group and gender? Even if it never was Riccio's intention to offer such critical analysis and interpretation, he is to be lauded for gathering these accounts and providing future researchers and scholars the first-person narratives with which to further theorize and philosophize about the human condition—or at least the condition of the twentieth-century Italian American immigrant woman. This, then, is the greatest contribution of this collection.

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Trilingual Talk in Sicilian-Australian Migrant Families: Playing out Identities Through Language Alternation.
By Nina Rubino.
New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
312 pages.

Relatively little has been done to examine the experiences of migration, settlement, and acculturation of migrants to Australia from Sicily and its minor islands, particularly the Aeolian archipelago, although they have been going to Australia since the mid-nineteenth century and, with their descendants, comprise what is arguably the country's oldest and most numerous community of Italian Australians. Studies such as Stephen Castles et al. (1992), Gerardo Papalia (2014), Gaetano Rando (2014), and Ellie Vasta (2014) have concentrated on a number of aspects of migration and settlement—Castles et al. on Italian Australians in general, Papalia, Rando, and Vasta on the Australian Aeolian community. Nina Rubino's volume *Trilingual Talk in Sicilian-Australian Migrant Families* is thus a welcome addition detailing at an idiolect level the language practices that have accompanied such processes.

Rubino analyzes in detail the linguistic practices of two families with specific socioeconomic and language characteristics, although her study might have profited from additional definitions: for example, naming the actual place of origin since local language practices in Sicily can be highly variable. Despite the absence of this and other potentially relevant details, the families can be taken as indicative, although not completely representative, of the Sicilian Australian community. These qualitative data are complemented by quantitative data taken from a sample of about one hundred respondents—hardly as large a sample as the author would lead us to expect—that can again be taken as indicative but not necessarily representative. The conclusions that Sicilian Australians communicate by using a mix of three languages (Sicilian, Italian, and English) could thus have profited from appropriate qualification and discussion of possible bias.

The book presents an initial chapter dealing with Italian and, particularly, Sicilian migration to Australia. It then proceeds to discuss bilingualism in Sicily and trilingualism in Australia (chapter 2) and then to focus on approaches to multilingual talk (chapter 3). The data obtained through fieldwork undertaken with two Sicilian Australian families are analyzed and discussed in chapters 4 and 5, while chapter 6 presents the results of a quantitative study, and the final chapter provides a summary and conclusions.

The literature review is quite good on the linguistic situation in Sicily, previous studies on bilingualism and trilingualism, and other linguistically related matters as well as the theoretical and methodological framework; it is, however, somewhat light on studies on language use among Italians in Australia. Admittedly, very little has been done specifically on Sicilian Australians, but Luisa Baldassari's work on language use and related identity aspects with a sample of second-generation respondents that included some Sicilian Australians would have been worth a mention (Baldassari 1999).

The qualitative data presentation and analysis chapters give detailed and interesting examples and analyses meticulously cross-referenced to relevant theoretical and empirical studies. The commentary, however, could have benefited from a discussion

of possible bias in the different approaches to data collection in the two families. The transcription of the excerpts is accurate, and generally good English translations are provided, although in some cases fine-tuning would be needed—for example, *fare di più* (90) really means *do any more* (rather than *do much more* as the book has it); *mègliu accussì* (101) should be rendered *better like this* (instead of *even better like this*); *è chiù chiù di menu* (171) is much better translated as *it's much less* (rather than just *it's less*). The quantitative survey data provide interesting information on linguistic patterns and sociolinguistic parameters observable in the sample, even if it is unfortunate that questions on reading and writing skills in Sicilian were not included (240), given that written Sicilian can claim a centuries-long existence and is practiced by some Sicilian Australians. Additionally, the data relating to marital status in the quantitative sample would have been worth cross-referencing to Vasta's (2014) detailed analysis on the same topic.

There are a number of issues in the sections discussing sociocultural factors that result in claims that are at times simplistic and occasionally not quite as up to date as possible. It is puzzling to note that Rubino did not consider any of the material presented at the "Emigrazione Eoliana in Australia" (Aeolian migration to Australia) conferences organized by Marcello Saija (University of Palermo), held in Sydney and Melbourne in November 2011. The conference presentations on the sociocultural and historical perspectives on the Sydney and Melbourne communities from the Aeolian islands, arguably the largest Sicilian grouping in Australia, could have usefully augmented Rubino's survey, particularly as it appears that one of the families in the study could be from the Aeolian Islands since in one of the conversation excerpts analyzed mention is made of a locality on the island of Lipari. In this respect it is unfortunate that the survey of the dialects of Sicily (34–41) does not include any mention of the distinctive features of the dialects of the Aeolian Islands, such as the existence of diphthongization, not present in other Sicilian dialects.

Rubino refers to "the prominent role played by Sicilians in . . . migration . . . to Australia" without specifying what that role is and without at least noting that other regional groups can also claim "prominent roles." She provides an outline of post–World War II migration without considering that the prewar Sicilian Australian (in particular Aeolian) communities were relatively sizable, probably more numerous than Northern Italian groupings by the end of the 1920s, and had already formed distinctive community networks that promoted linguistic and cultural practices. The claim that Sicilian Australians have a "strong sense of regional identity" (3) is somewhat problematic since community practices suggest a Sicilian Australian sense of identity that is more local than regional—for example, the Aeolian Islands Association (initially constituted in 1903), the Poggiorealese St. Anthony Association, the Sortino Club, and many other local groups. This tendency to oversimplify sociohistorical factors can also be noted in the discussion on Sicily, for example, the claim that Sicily participated in Italy's transformation from a mostly "agricultural country to a modern industrialised society" (166) is highly misleading given the current dependency of the Sicilian economy on tourism and construction and Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) data indicating that Sicily has the highest proportion of poor families with respect to the rest of Italy (Italian National Institute of Statistics 2014).

The conclusions that Sicilian Australians communicate by using a mix of three languages would thus have been better explicated using stronger contexts. Rubino's study clearly proves that two Sicilian Australian families engage in this practice and that a small sample of Sicilian Australians uses all three languages in clearly designated domains, although the presence and extent of mixing do not emerge from the analysis. Despite the risks of so much concentration at the microlevel, the findings can be taken as indicative of the linguistic practices of part of the Sicilian Australian population, although the extent to which these practices occur remains unknown. It would have been worthwhile discussing the larger picture of Sicilian Australian linguistic and cultural practices—among others, the fact that some families keep English/Italian/Sicilian or English/Sicilian relatively distinct; possible switching from one Sicilian dialect to another by specific speakers (as in the case of a family in Perth from the Aeolian island of Filicudi, who switched from their dialect to that of Capo d'Orlando because their neighbors were from Capo d'Orlando); the written dimension of Sicilian; and the production of oral and written literary texts in Sicilian by Sicilian Australians—in relation to the findings. Nevertheless, the volume can be considered a valuable contribution to the study of patterns of language use among Sicilian Australians and does suggest themes for further investigation that could perhaps lead to a richer analysis of the topic.

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A Great Conspiracy against Our Race: Italian Immigrant Newspapers and the Construction of Whiteness in the Early Twentieth Century.
By Peter G. Vellon.
New York: New York University Press, 2014.
171 pages.

There are few topics in U.S. history as complicated as the intersection of immigration, race, color, and national identity during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the 1990s, historians began to consider whiteness as a racial identity and to investigate how immigrants fit in American society as either white, nonwhite, or in between. The place of Italian Americans on this continuum has provoked an especially vibrant debate. Did native-born whites embrace Italian immigrants as white as soon as they arrived or relegate them to a status somewhere between white and nonwhite? How did Italian Americans understand race relations and their position in a changing racial matrix?

In *A Great Conspiracy against Our Race: Italian Immigrant Newspapers and the Construction of Whiteness in the Early 20th Century* Peter G. Vellon engages these questions and contributes to an understanding of the formation of immigrant racial identities in the United States between 1880 and 1920. He draws on twelve Italian-language newspapers published in New York City that he categorizes as mainstream and radical. The key conclusions of the book rest on evidence from the mainstream press, owned by *prominenti*, or prominent community leaders, represented by such papers as *Il Progresso Italo-Americano* and *Il Cittadino*. Vellon argues that Italian Americans' racial consciousness evolved over time so that by 1920 the mainstream press had constructed an identity with three dominant features: Italian, American, and white.

Change over time is an important aspect of Vellon's argument and one that allows him to treat identity formation with nuance. Before 1910, Italian Americans were involved in a project of constructing a group identity as they tried to understand the dynamics of race in the United States. In chapters 1 and 2 Vellon examines two strategies the press used during this period to elevate the status of Italian Americans in Americans' eyes and more clearly define what it meant to be Italian. First, Italian-language newspapers regularly celebrated the long history of Italian civilization and the contributions Italians had made to the world. Second, these newspapers defined what it meant to be Italian by using Africans as an "other." Taken together, Vellon suggests, these tactics of representation formed a sense of Italianness, or *italianità*, among Italian immigrants and their children in the United States that may have encouraged a more cohesive identity than that which existed among Italians in Italy. He implies that the newspapers' construction of an Italian civilization provided a foundation upon which they could later add a layer of white racial consciousness.

In chapters 3 and 4 Vellon continues to probe the period between 1880 and 1910 but shifts focus from the newspapers' ideas about Italian identity to the crucible of race relations in the United States. He examines the mainstream and radical press for clues to how Italian Americans understood themselves vis-à-vis Native Americans, Asian Americans, and African Americans. Both categories of newspapers marginalized Native Americans, viewing them as uncivilized and unlikely candidates for assimilation. When the papers discussed Asian Americans and African Americans,

differences emerged. Radical newspapers, especially *Il Proletario*, blended discussions of economics and race to emphasize the evils of capitalism and promote a broad, class-based identity that could accommodate other marginalized groups. A different dynamic developed in the pages of mainstream papers. Newspapers such as *Il Progresso Italo-Americano* demonstrated a "fluid racial worldview" (58), according to Vellon, where articles transitioned over time from expressing sympathy with Asian Americans and African Americans to reflecting dominant racial ideologies to justify racism and violence directed at the two groups. Vellon interprets this shift as Italian Americans using a key community institution to distance themselves from nonwhite groups and assert their whiteness.

In chapter 5, Vellon traces the deployment of this now racially defined Italian identity. After 1910 mainstream Italian-language newspapers left behind overt criticism of white violence and discrimination against African Americans and Asian Americans. Instead, the mainstream press asserted whiteness by conflating the Italian national heritage they helped construct with being white and distancing Italian Americans from groups of color. Vellon suggests this shift was partly in response to increasing calls for the restriction of southern and eastern European immigration and the heightened nationalism brought on by World War I. In his careful reading of the newspapers' discussions of race, Vellon finds that Italian Americans identified as white through a discourse of civilization, abandoning public criticism of lynchings of blacks, and interpreting the race riots of 1917 and 1919 to suggest that African Americans, not Italian Americans, were the greater threat to American order. By 1920, Vellon concludes, Italian-language newspapers had helped their readers learn the contours of U.S. racial politics well enough to understand that they were best served by asserting whiteness and abandoning any solidarity with other groups marginalized by race.

Anyone interested in the history of immigrant newspapers in general, and the Italian-language press in particular, would do well to read this book. Vellon educates the reader on the variety of newspapers and offers some distinctions between mainstream and radical views, although the focus is largely on the former. While he finds, for example, that *prominenti*-owned mainstream papers used race to define an Italian American identity, radical newspapers such as *Il Proletario* more often tried to rally readers around issues of social class. The book provides an engaging glimpse into the types of stories Italian immigrants would have read in New York City between the mid-1880s and 1920. Vellon also offers some revisionist history regarding Italian American identity formation. Unlike other historians who have argued that Italian immigrants lacked a clear sense of Italian identity and racial awareness until after Mussolini's rise in 1920, Vellon moves the marker backward, suggesting Italians in the United States had formed their sense of *italianità* well before the rise of Fascism.

On the more central question of Italian American racial identity, Vellon produces compelling evidence to support the claim that their racial consciousness evolved over time and that mainstream Italian-language newspapers had embraced whiteness by 1920. However, even a generous reading raises questions about how representative the mainstream press in New York City was for all Italians in the United States. Vellon attempts to expand his sample by lightly sprinkling evidence and analysis from the Italian-language radical press throughout the book, but these sources either contradict some of the author's key claims about Italian racial consciousness after 1910 because

of the radicals' focus on class rather than race or nearly disappear from his narrative altogether, such as in the crucial last chapter of the book. Readers curious about other sites where racial identities were formed—such as the workplace, the theater, the law, or the church—will need to look elsewhere.

Vellon contributes to whiteness studies by rejecting the argument that Italians were "white on arrival" (per Thomas Guglielmo [2003]), either in their own minds or in the minds of native-born whites who appear in the book mainly in the form of lynch mobs. He clearly attempts to build on the work of scholars such as David Roediger, James Barrett, and Matthew Frye Jacobson who have argued Italian Americans moved from an "inbetween" to a "white" status. Tracing this journey requires an exploration of at least two perspectives: the immigrants' sense of themselves on one hand and the ideologies of native-born whites who policed the boundaries of whiteness on the other. Vellon's focus on the Italian-language press leaves one half of this interaction unexplored. What would it have meant for Italian Americans had they asserted a racial identity that others failed to recognize? How did Italian Americans respond, for example, to legislation that restricted immigration from southern and eastern Europe in the early 1920s and that seemed to represent a clear rebuttal to any claims that Italians were white? Was an Italian American assertion of whiteness before 1920 a prerequisite for inclusion at a later time? When did other groups begin to recognize Italian Americans as white? These questions are offered less in the spirit of criticism and more as reflections on the fact that Vellon has written a book that compels attention by anyone interested in immigrant identity formation and the politics of race in the United States.

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Passione.
By John Turturro.
Skydancers and Squeezed Heart Production, 2010.
90 minutes. DVD format, color.

For film scholar Giuliana Bruno "over time, the image of Naples . . . has teetered on the verge of stereotype" (Bruno 2002, 367). *Passione*, a documentary about Neapolitan song directed by John Turturro, does not fully escape such stereotypical views of the city, as is evident already from the opening shots. The film begins with contemporary street views of the alleys and buildings of the city's center. Then with the notes of "Carmela" interpreted by Italian singer Mina we see archival images of street urchins, vendors, and other paradigmatic figures of the Neapolitan urban landscape. Then, listening to the band Spakka-Neapolis 55 performing "Vesuvio" (a song written by Angelo De Falco of E Zézi, a music group comprised of factory workers), we see an aerial view of the city with Mount Vesuvius and the Bay of Naples—an image captured in countless photographs, postcards, and paintings. At the same time, the sound of Spakka-Neapolis 55, who blend local work and protest songs with flamenco and Arab-influenced modulations, complicates what might appear as the setup for a single and homogeneous history of Neapolitan song. Following these sounds, suspended between the local and the global, *Passione* proposes a multilayered history of Neapolitan song based on unexpected and neglected encounters across the Mediterranean, the black Atlantic, and the Americas.

Given the classic representations of street life associated with Naples, it is not surprising to see such imagery in *Passione*. Most of the songs in the film are performed in the streets and their extensions—squares, alleys, courtyards, markets, churches, the beach. Turturro is totally immersed in these streets. Many songs are introduced by Turturro himself who, instead of using the technique of voice-over narration, directly addresses the camera, inviting us to follow him in a musical journey along the streets of Naples. He looks comfortable walking these streets. There is no tourist gaze here; it is as though Turturro were at home. In an article in the British newspaper *The Guardian*, Turturro wrote: "Naples itself reminds me a little bit of New York in the '70s" (Turturro 2010). Although New York City is never mentioned in *Passione*, we feel a sort of intimate and "simultaneous communication" between Naples and New York (Bruno 1993, 125). In one scene, we see a teenager singing "Dicitencello Vuje." I could not help but imagine the streets of 1950s New York City with Italian American youth singing doo-wop on the street corners of their neighborhood. Italian American doo-wop bands like Dion and the Belmonts, for instance, grew up listening to R&B and black vocal harmony groups. Yet their sound was also influenced by Neapolitan popular songs that traveled to New York City with Neapolitan migrants.

In one of the first scenes of the film, Turturro says: "Napoli—a city that has survived earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, foreign invasions, crime, corruption, poverty, neglect, and at the same time continuously produced an avalanche of music throughout the ages. 'A hot spot,' as James Brown would say, 'of song,' covering the gamut of human

expressions: love, loss, sex, superstition, immigration, social protest, birth, death; these songs are drenched in contradiction and irony." To quote James Brown suggests American black music is part of this story. Neapolitan music, like the blues, R&B, and funk, comes from the street. However, as in the blues and its derivates, here the street is not a stable archive and site of authenticity. Rather, it acquires the form of "a polymorphous and multidirectional juncture" (Kun 2005, 89). Just as in black music, in Neapolitan song there is a kind of "utopic/dystopic tension" (Clifford 1997, 263): This is the instability of living under the volcano, histories of racism, marginality, loss, the impossibility of making ends meet, but also the hope of a better future.

Black music arrived in Naples with the U.S. Allied occupation of the city (1943–1947). In addition, in the 1950s Naples was chosen as the Southern Mediterranean Headquarters of NATO and as the base for the U.S. Sixth Fleet. Yet, in this encounter there is more than a simple importation of black American sound, but an encounter between the black Atlantic and an already creolized Mediterranean. A multifarious Islamic culture was central to a world system that stretched from India to West Africa and much of the Mediterranean shoreline. The Iberian peninsula was Al-Andalus. Naples was already a multiethnic city in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In this "cultural mélange" (Chambers 2012, 41), we can trace the influence of the blues on Mediterranean music—from Neapolitan song, to flamenco in Spain, to *rebétiko* in Athens, to *raï* in Oran, to fado in Portugal.[1] The idea of a multiethnic Mediterranean traveled to the Americas, too. Poet Langston Hughes embraced a concept of the blues more as Afro-diasporic music rather than as a sound exclusive to an African American expression. He was struck by the similarities between the blues and flamenco during his stay in Spain (Frias 2004, 146). *Passione* re-opens this neglected archive connecting Neapolitan music with flamenco, fado, and sounds coming from northern Africa. In *Passione*, we can hear these connections in the wonderful version of "Era de Maggio," performed by Piccola Orchestra Avion Travel, a band whose members hail from the province of Naples, and by Misia, one of the finest interpreters of Portuguese fado.

Another key performance in the film also points to this multiethnic history and the subsequent event of the encounter with African American music. The African American presence in Naples during World War II inspired Neapolitan composer E.A. Mario, who wrote a song in 1944 titled "Tammurriata Nera," which speaks of black babies born to Neapolitan women. The song dramatizes the U.S. presence in Naples by referring specifically to the presence of African American GIs in Naples. The title "Tammurriata Nera" was also inspired by the *tammurriata*, a form of popular music and dance performed by peasants around Naples during festivals, religious feasts, and rituals. In *Passione* this vortex of voices—the peasant origin of *tammurriata*, the black element, and the U.S. military occupation of Naples—is made audible and visible in the joint performance on stage of Neapolitan singer Peppe Barra, Tunisian singer M'Barka Ben Taleb, and Italian American actor Max Casella.

This is a key moment in the movie; it connects to the life story of black Neapolitan musician James Senese, to the transatlantic movement Turturro seems so interested in underscoring. Senese was born in 1944 in Miano (a neighborhood in northern Naples), the son of a Neapolitan woman, Anna Senese, and an African American G.I., James Smith, who was in Naples with the Allied troops during World War II and returned home immediately after the war. It was not easy for Senese, the only black kid on

his block, growing up in the working-class area of Miano without his father. Senese recalls that when he happened to have an argument with other kids they immediately called him "*o nirone*," which can be translated as "nigger." However, on his street he also found many friends and people who loved him, in particular a woman who lived opposite his window on the other side of the alley who endearingly called him "Jamesiell," or "little James." In the film Senese performs a blues version of the song "Passione." Like the screams of James Brown, the acerbic saxophone sound of Senese has the power "to extend communication beyond words" (Gilroy 1995, 212).

Tammurriata and work songs that originated in the fields and towns on the outskirts of Naples greatly influenced artists such as Senese, Enzo Avitabile, and Raiz. Turturro in *Passione* focuses mainly on the old historical center of Naples, yet we can hear the echo of these peripheral sounds in the performances of these artists. Their music is suspended between the suburbs of Naples—today part of a large conurbation stretching inland and along the bay—and black America. Black music becomes a tie that binds. We can trace unexpected and critical connections between the cotton fields in the U.S. South and the hemp fields in northern Naples, New York's inner city and the deepest heart of Naples.[2]

This perspective emerges in the sound of Raiz and Almamegretta. In "Nun Te Scurdà" as performed in *Passione*, we have a New York–Naples connection via Kingston, Jamaica. In the scene, the heavy bass line and the echo of dub music produced by Almamegretta, the menacing voices of Raiz and Pietra Montercorvino, and the rapping style of M'Barka Ben Taleb become, as in the tradition of "roots reggae," the voice of the silenced majority (Veal 2007, 31). Toward the end of the song we see African migrants and working-class Neapolitans sharing the same spaces in the alleys of Naples's old center. This is a blues continuum in which the urban conditions of blacks in the United States and the Caribbean and of conditions of migrants and working class are visually conjoined to show similarities in their mutual struggles. The film ends with a favorite of contemporary Neapolitan music, Pino Daniele's song "Napule è." Daniele is a Neapolitan blues man who in his songs fuses blues, Latin jazz, Neapolitan tradition, and Arab sounds. In the late 1970s and early 1980s he was the most well-known musician in Naples. His songs are about the Neapolitan working class and the "lumpenproletariat." They tell us about the workers in the Port of Naples who brought heavy boxes on their shoulders and were unable to inhale the sea breeze, the women who sold contraband cigarettes at the street corners, and the transgenders of the Quartieri Spagnoli. Here, music is not simply a reflection of urban struggles; it is a central part of them.

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Notes

1. Of course, I am referring here to a broader idea of the blues. The blues is part of a precise history that took place in the United States and Texas/Mexico borderlands: "Slavery, ten years of freedom, the overthrow of Reconstruction and the beginning of ninety-five years of what has been called 'the second slavery'" (Woods 1998, 16). Yet, as the late African bluesman Ali Farka Touré explains, the blues took form thanks to the melodies

and rhythms of Muslim African slaves themselves influenced by the world of Islam (Chambers 2012, 1).

2. It is important to point out here that in the old center of Naples, especially in the areas of Porta Capuana, Montesanto, Quartieri Spagnoli, Porta Nolana, Tribunali, and Borgo di Sant'Antonio, there are large communities of migrants from locations including North Africa, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Somalia, Dominican Republic, and China. Referring to the area of the *ferrovia*, which is part of the old center, Neapolitan author Peppe Lanzetta writes: "Palermo me sora, Marsiglia me mamma, Dakar me frate . . . Questa è la ferrovia!" (Palermo is my sister, Marseille is my mother, Dakar is my brother . . . That's the ferrovia, Quintavalle 2008).

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Devoti: The Documentary.

By Pete Soby.

A sobyVISION Documentary, 2013.

92 minutes. DVD format, color.

In the early 1920s, Grazia Bonafede Caniglia of Omaha, Nebraska, began raising funds to create a version of the *festa* in honor of Saint Lucy (known locally as the "Saint Lucia Festival") that she knew from her early years in Carlentini (Syracuse province), Sicily. By 1925, she and other early supporters had gathered enough funds to have a replica of Carlentini's Saint Lucy statue created and shipped from Italy, and the tradition of an annual Mass, procession, and feast was recreated. *Devoti: The Documentary* explores

this feast through the memories of its participants, connections with Carlentini, and the history of the Little Italy neighborhood.

Through interviews with dozens of residents, and a mix of home movies and new footage, the film depicts key elements of the feast: the Mass, the emergence of Saint Lucy's statue from Saint Frances Cabrini Church, the procession of the float as people approach it with offerings, the crowning of the "festival queen," the band music, dancing, fireworks, and food. Firsthand recollections of feast participants vividly convey the emotional impact of these events and the sense of pride and history that many associate with this celebration.

Director Pete Soby has also incorporated substantial footage of Carlentini's feast in Italy, giving viewers the opportunity to compare visually these two events. In Carlentini, the streets are filled with people, and Saint Lucy's statue is carried beneath a seventeenth-century canopy, moving from neighborhood to neighborhood throughout the day. Fireworks punctuate the event, culminating in a grand display. Decorative illuminations hung above the streets add to the sense of celebration. During a midnight viewing of the statue before the morning Mass, a crowd of devotees in the church recites prayers as people approach the statue to make offerings and request healing. By comparison, the Omaha event is smaller and less elaborate but clearly well-loved by those who take part in it.

Early in the film, a segment depicts Saint Lucy's story using a combination of artwork and reenactments. As Patricia Coate, a graduate student who appears at several points in the documentary, notes, Carlentini is not the site of the saint's birth or death; rather, the special association between the saint and the town resulted from a pilgrimage. Lucy persuaded her ailing mother to travel to the tomb of Saint Agatha in search of miraculous healing. Along the way, the two stopped at Carlentini to rest, and this is why Saint Lucy was eventually declared the town's patroness. Following her mother's restoration to health, Lucy was martyred because of her refusal to marry a pagan man and make offerings to the emperor. The film takes viewers to two key sites that house materials associated with Lucy's life: Venice and the Sicilian city of Syracuse. At the tomb of Saint Lucy in Venice, her body is displayed, adorned with a silver mask and fine clothing, and the voice-over narration recounts many movements over the centuries that ultimately brought her remains to this site. In Syracuse, her birthplace, the basilica at the site of her execution now houses a precious collection of her relics, alongside ex-votos (e.g., rings, jeweled crucifixes, wristwatches) donated by visitors.

During a section on the early history of Italian immigrants in Omaha, the narrator notes that the thousands of residents of the neighborhood known as Little Italy who came from the Carlentini area were not the only Italians who came to Omaha (for instance, Calabrian immigrants lived elsewhere in the city). The filmmakers also show a few examples of other food-centered celebrations of Italian heritage in the city. Because the narrative is so entrenched in the viewpoints of those with fond memories of the Saint Lucy feast, the film does not give a sense of whether there were rival events, if the appeal of the feast was primarily for those with personal connections to Carlentini, or if it drew a broader group of participants. It is also unclear whether most who attend the feast follow the full sequence from the Mass through the procession and out to the grounds. By the 1930s, the feast had grown to be a nine-day event, so it seems

likely that most people pick and choose their favorite parts, but the many interspersed interview segments give the impression of a more uniform experience.

To the film's credit, while the narration places a great deal of emphasis on continuities within this tradition, it also considers changes in both the Omaha and Carlentini feasts. In Carlentini, participation in the various activities of the feast was once rather rigidly limited by class, but it is now much more open. Furthermore, the platform on which the statue is transported was originally hand carried; then, in the twentieth century, participants pulled it by truck. During the 1980s, a campaign succeeded in restoring the practice of moving the platform by hand, reviving a sense of commitment and physicality among those who volunteer for this task.

Instead, in Omaha, the early energy of the feast was cut off for several years during World War II and then revitalized and expanded when returning soldiers joined the feast organizing committee. This group revived an earlier practice of naming a queen and added a coronation ceremony, which is popular to this day. One Omaha woman's account of being stricken by and recovering from polio as a child highlights the tradition of turning to Saint Lucy for healing, but this emphasis seems less central in descriptions from more recent feasts. Most dramatically, the city of Omaha, in the wake of complaints by newer residents and businesses, barred the festivities from their original neighborhood, leading to a succession of venue changes and major shifts in the procession route.

The Saint Lucy feasts in Omaha and Carlentini resemble numerous other Italian and Italian American *feste* in many respects. It is unfortunate that the film does not make viewers aware of this broader tradition, as such comparisons could illuminate common elements among the feasts while also highlighting issues that make these two particular feasts distinctive. For example, the displacement of the feast from its original neighborhood parallels the challenges faced in Brooklyn, where traditional routes for processions wind through areas where Italian Americans no longer make up a visible majority of the population (Sciorra 1999).

This is an unabashedly sentimental film, centered on the memories and emotional associations that participants have with the feast. It honors a host of donors and fundraisers in its credits and packaging, and it feels primarily like an effort to document the history and value of this event for future generations rather than a project undertaken from an academic perspective. The inclusion of many firsthand recollections makes sense in this regard. Unfortunately, at over ninety minutes, the many recountings of the same favorite elements get somewhat repetitive, which may limit the value of this film for classroom use. However, viewers interested in lived religion and the revival of traditions in new contexts will find much to appreciate in this rich document.

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Fighting Paisanos.
By Marco Curti.
Briciola TV and RAI Cinema, 2013.
53 minutes, DVD and streaming formats, color.

The title of the film *Fighting Paisanos* (although never explained within the film itself) refers to a term coined by famed war correspondent Ernie Pyle to identify a young Italian-born U.S. citizen, Alfonso Felici, who accumulated an impressive war record fighting in the U.S. Army for the liberation of Italy. In addition to Felici, over one million young men with Italian last names either enlisted or were drafted into the U.S. armed forces during World War II. Assigned to every branch of the services, they fought in all theaters of the war. In this Italian-language (with English subtitles) documentary produced by Italy's national public broadcasting company RAI, director Marco Curti tells the story of four of these young Italian Americans who, like Felici, participated in the battle for the liberation of their country of origin.

The distinct stories of Alberto "Al" Soria, Ferdinando "Fred" Baldino, Frank Melone, and Eugenio "Gene" Giannobile represent the range of backgrounds of young Italian American GIs during the war. The first two were second-generation immigrants from working-class families who had come of age during the hard times of the 1930s in Italian American neighborhoods in Brooklyn and the coal towns of Pennsylvania. The other two, born and raised in Italy, immigrated to the United States as young adults to escape Fascism and, in one case, Mussolini's anti-Semitic laws of 1938.

Although their wartime experiences were diverse, all four shared a common determination to be on the front lines of the war against Fascism and Nazism by volunteering to serve in special units, such as the 10th Mountain Division, the Office of Strategic Services, or among the paratroopers in the 82nd Airborne Division. Interviewed while in their eighties and nineties, Giannobile, Melone, Soria, and Baldino soberly recount how their decisions to fight were motivated by a combination of youthful ardor, a sense of adventure, the determination to assert their patriotism, and, in the cases of Soria and Giannobile who left Italy as refugees, as personal responses to Mussolini's racial laws—along with the sense of duty to help rebuild their country of birth from the devastation of war.

The documentary traces the four separate stories, from the first taste of battle in North Africa to the invasion of Sicily, using a combination of interviews, off-screen narration, historical footage, and still photographs. It then follows the four soldiers as they made their way northward in the bloody fighting at Salerno, Cassino, Anzio, Rome, all the way to the final breakthrough in the Po Valley in April 1945.

Throughout the film the protagonists provide clues about the sense of pride they derived from fighting for their country of adoption as well as the concerns about taking the war to their country of origin. Unfortunately, *Fighting Paisanos* does not develop either of these themes. In fact, the film is primarily a chronological description of the mens' battle-related accounts as they progressed up the peninsula. For instance, there is no follow-up when Melone and Giannobile point to the obvious contradiction between Italian citizens living in the United States being formally classified as "enemy aliens" and the subsequent decision to allow them not simply to contribute in the war against the country's enemies but, more significantly, to fulfill that service on Italian

soil. This apparent contradiction not only begs comparison with the discrimination inflicted upon Americans of Japanese descent; it also raises a broader question about the development of complex identities among Italian Americans. For instance, how did an ethnic community, many of whose members and leaders had identified support for Mussolini and his regime as important factors of their distinctiveness during the interwar years, so rapidly turn on the dictator and rally in defense of the United States? In the same way, *Fighting Paisanos* lets stand without explanation or further analysis references to Italy as "home," remarks of the deep feeling of connection with a country never before experienced in person, along with repeated declarations of personal fulfillment for having played a role in the liberation of Italy from Fascism. Unfortunately, the film does not attempt to make a distinction between these two sets of reactions, nor does it call attention to one of the men's Jewishness, especially in light of this history.

In the end, the greatest shortcoming of *Fighting Paisanos* is that it reduces the clearly noteworthy actions of Giannobile, Melone, Soria, and Baldino to little more than a simple chronological account of the Allied Italian campaign. Still lucid and articulate, the four "fighting *paesani*" deserve better.

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Terra Sogna Terra.
By Lucia Grillo.
Calabrisella Films, 2010.
45 minutes. DVD format, color.

My Backyard, Your Backyard.
By Sandra Pires.
Produced by Itsowel/Why Documentaries, 2012.
30 minutes. Multimedia. Web series.

The Italian Garden Project.
By Mary Menniti.
Website. www.theitaliangardenproject.com/, 2013–Present.
Accessed March 15, 2015–May 25, 2015.

On one of my first trips back to Italy after I had migrated to Australia I bought seeds for *cavolo nero* (black cabbage), which, in the days before kale became a trendy superfood, I could not buy anywhere in Sydney. I planted the seeds in my backyard and watched the seedlings grow. And grow some more, because in Sydney's subtropical climate *il cavolo nero* grew to be the size of a palm tree.

I tell this story because it illustrates well how gardening practices are adapted in new and unexpected ways in the process of their relocation from Italy to other countries. The love and care with which fig trees are ingeniously wrapped up for

winter in Pennsylvania (as explained in a video tutorial in *The Italian Garden Project*), for instance, or indeed the significance of planting fig trees as a sign of prosperity (in *Terra Sogna Terra*) has no equivalent in Australia. Here the "Italian backyard is actually very Australian" (as someone says in the first episode of *My Backyard, Your Backyard*), tomato sauce is bottled in Victoria Bitter beer bottles, and a milder and more humid climate creates a different set of problems in the *yarda* behind the *fenza* in the suburban Italian Australian vegetable gardens (from the English *yard* and *fence*, as explained in *My Backyard, Your Backyard*).

Gardens, however, remain an important site of cultural and environmental engagement in the histories of the Italian diaspora. Gardening offers the possibility to keep traditional cultural practices alive and to re-create familiar sensory landscapes in environments that are everything but familiar. Perhaps more important, cultivating *l'orto* (a vegetable garden) also encourages resilience, self-sufficiency, a more sustainable approach to food consumption, and well-being.

These themes run through three video and multimedia documentaries on Italian gardens, two from the United States—Lucia Grillo's documentary film *Terra Sogna Terra* and Mary Menniti's website *The Italian Garden Project*—and one from Australia, *My Backyard, Your Backyard*, a web series, available also in DVD format, produced by the Italian Social Welfare Organisation of Wollongong (ITSOWEL) and directed by Sandra Pires. The three projects are vastly different in terms of resources, media, and narrative style. Considered together they form a continuum from the intimate portraits of multiple generations of gardeners in New York in Grillo's feature-length documentary, to the celebration of Italian gardens and their place in multicultural Australia in the seven episodes of *My Backyard, Your Backyard*, to the ongoing website *The Italian Garden Project*, whose scope is both preserving and documenting the knowledge and stories of sixteen Italian gardeners and their *orti* and demonstrating their relevance to contemporary everyday life.

All three projects engage with forms of intergenerational learning, and they all start from the desire to document the knowledge and practices of largely elderly and first-generation Italian immigrant gardeners. The stories of the garden are the stories of migration itself, and they often start in a rural past in Italy, where many of the storytellers learned how to cultivate plants, as farmers or as *mezzadri* (sharecroppers). Or, in the case of second generations, the garden is a site for both remembrance of relatives as well as production and sharing.

What makes these projects stand out is that the desire to document the life of Italian diaspora gardens is not simply archival. The narratives presented in and around these gardens are not motivated by a wish to preserve gardening as a form of intangible cultural heritage. On the contrary, there is a recognition that, first, as an intangible cultural heritage, gardening is constantly reinvented in the interaction with new environments. Second, there is a wealth of experiential and hands-on knowledge to be gained that can be put into practice for the enhancement of present and future gardens and kitchens. A bit like sharing garden produce with family, friends, and neighbors—of which there are many examples in the three works—these documentaries set out to share the joy, passion, and importance of growing one's own food and giving it to others. "I want to share this love I have for growing with other people, so maybe they can start cultivating," as a young woman in *Terra Sogna Terra* explains.

This collective aspect of gardening is also stressed by some stylistic traits in *Terra Sogna Terra*, where often the protagonists remain unidentified in the course of the film; and, although they narrate a personal story, what they communicate is a shared experience, as in the case of the young woman quoted above. In this work, Lucia Grillo interviews Italian Americans from Francavilla Angitola (Vibo Valentia province, Calabria), the hometown of her own family, the members of which are also interviewed in the documentary. The film takes place in gardens, all of which, with the exception of one mainly ornamental garden, are well-tended *orti*, including a rich container garden producing an abundance of tomatoes, eggplants, basil, figs, and peppers. The oral histories with Italian Americans are set against this abundance and revolve around the difference between working the land in Italy and in New York. Taken together the unnamed individuals' stories create a choral narrative of food production and migration. The filmmakers talk to a man who was sent to war by Mussolini, became a prisoner of war, and later immigrated to the United States. One interviewee had to move from Calabria to Northern Italy, and another explains how the government in Italy "took everything." Yet another interviewee worked for a *padrone* who took a fifth of everything that was cultivated.

The documentary is not simply a memoir of a community of immigrant gardeners; it also has an environmental message in the promotion of a short supply chain—so short, in fact, that it is from plant to plate. An interviewee, for instance, stresses how the connection with the land enables one to grow *il vero cibo* (the true/real food)—to pick a tomato, season it with oil and salt, and eat it. Another one is critical of contemporary forms of consumption and notices that the new generations will not survive unless they change. Two young women offer a counterpoint, connecting their gardening to sensory experiences and memories of fresh food during visits to relatives in Italy, to Italian American traditions such as the planting of a fig tree in a new house, and to a general awareness of food production, given that, as they explain, they buy what they don't produce through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA).

A similar message is promoted by *The Italian Garden Project*, which sees Italian American backyards as sites of traditional knowledge and self-sufficiency that can help people to live in a more sustainable way, as the opening page's video "Welcome to The Italian Garden Project" states through a voice-over narrator: "During these times of increasing global economic and environmental uncertainty, when questions about the wisdom of being unable to provide for our most basic needs loom even larger, what these gardeners have to teach us becomes ever more relevant." The project was founded, researched, developed, and is maintained by Mary Menniti, whose grandfather was a first-generation pre–World War II immigrant to Pennsylvania from a village near Caserta (Campania). The project is a multimedia site developed on a blog platform and as such the individual items are ordered chronologically. Possibly to overcome the difficulty of searching items in a chronological order, in addition to blog posts (grouped under the menu "Overview"), it is also possible to find specific items under different menus. These include a section on upcoming events, news clips, image galleries, profiles, and stories of the gardeners who take part in the project, as well as a section detailing visits to the Macchione family's garden from spring to autumn.

The Italian Garden Project contains a wealth of articles, photographs, and videos about topics ranging from making sausages and prosciutto to visiting a Portuguese

chestnut farm in California in search of the perfect chestnut, or from how to properly care for pole beans and fig trees, braiding onions and garlic, to making chamomile tea. The website includes stories of people and plants and the visual recording of a garden captured in different seasons through a series of visits. This part of the project was made possible through a partnership with the Village Garden Club of Sewickley, Pennsylvania, to document a traditional Italian American vegetable garden for the Smithsonian Institute's Archives of American Gardens. The focus, however, is not simply to document and preserve gardening as cultural heritage but also to share specific practices that, thanks to locavore food trends and growing awareness about food safety and the impact of conventional agriculture on the environment, are becoming relevant again. Rain harvesting, composting, no waste and recycling, seed saving and exchanging, companion planting, and chicken coops are documented and explained.

My Backyard, Your Backyard, unlike the previous two projects, was developed wholly by an organization, the Italian Social Welfare Organisation of Wollongong, and received government support, which made possible a transmedia approach to the narrative (unfortunately at the time of this writing the project website was under maintenance). *My Backyard, Your Backyard*, is a web series, a Facebook page, a YouTube collection on the ISOTWEL channel (https://www.youtube.com/user/ITSOWEL2011), and a DVD comprising seven stories connected with Italian gardeners in Wollongong, a richly multiethnic city in Southeast Australia. The YouTube channel and the DVD collect the seven stories in the form of short films. These vary from a reconstruction of childhood memories of a father's garden shot with actors, to long interviews led by the interviewees, to short documentaries on thematic narratives. The Facebook page extended the life of the project to include other contributors, still images, posts about gardening, and updates on the project from 2011 to 2014.

If *Terra Sogna Terra* and *The Italian Garden Project*'s main focus is on the garden as a productive space, in *My Backyard, Your Backyard*, *la yarda* is also a site of social and cultural exchange. Whereas the U.S.-based projects concentrate on stories about gardens, the Australian program is all about the gardeners. The first story, for instance, is a memoir written by Enri Parolin that uses the garden to evoke the narrator's father, Pietro Parolin, and childhood memories connected with the cultivation of the *orto*, the visits of friends, the sharing of produce, the banter, the division of space and labor between husband in the *orto* and the wife in the flower garden, and the inevitable comparisons among gardeners as to who grows the best tomatoes. Similarly, in the second episode we meet four sisters, two of whom, Vincenzina Ciccarelli and Lina Mormile, we learn are so passionate about their vegetables that "they would make their bed in their garden." There is not a consensus among the siblings on who is the best gardener, and there are strong suspicions that Lina, who produces the most beautiful and flavorsome artichokes, has a secret growing ingredient. This secret is later revealed to be chicken manure and tender care. Pasquale Braccia's story on the making of tomato sauce, an end-of-summer ritual among the first generation of Italian Australians, is a vignette on family life, including the patriarch who has to "make sure the women are doing their job," as the narrator notes. Because of suburban architecture, the backyard is also a liminal space, and the fence between backyards is the place of intercultural encounters and ongoing exchanges with neighbors from other cultural backgrounds, as it unfolds in the story of Frank Mastroianni and Fred Smith. In another case, a perfectly

tended flower, vegetable garden, and orchard is the backdrop for a couple, Alfonso and Anna Zarrella, to tell their story of courtship and to reveal that spending three quarters of their life in the garden, growing food and fruit, and sharing it is their recipe for a happy and healthy life. In pure Australian multicultural spirit, the series closes with kids from a local school visiting and commenting on the Italian backyards and then giving a tour of their own school vegetable garden to the Italian gardeners.

Looked at together or singularly, the three projects articulate how the domestic garden in the histories of Italian migration is one of the main sites of engagement with the diversity of new natural and social environments. *Terra Sogna Terra*, *The Italian Garden Project*, and *My Backyard, Your Backyard* do the very important job of documenting and distributing both the cultural and social histories of Italian diaspora gardens and of recognizing that there is a lot to learn about self-sufficiency, reliance, and a more sustainable way to live from these gardeners and their edible landscapes.

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Sinatra: An American Icon.
Curated by Bob Santelli and Jaqueline Z. Davis.
Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullman Center, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center, New York City, New York.
March 4–September 4, 2015.

The year 2015 is the centenary of the birth of Frank Sinatra (December 12, 1915–May 14, 1998), and the year saw dozens of cultural moments commemorating this milestone in American history. *Sinatra: An American Icon* was one of the most ambitious moments, placing its subject in the larger context of American musical, political, and cultural history. With the collaboration of the Sinatra family and Frank Sinatra Enterprises, it was also one of the most intimate. The result was a fascinating installation, one that caused the viewer to think about Sinatra's central role in American and Italian American history.

The exhibition was organized chronologically and thematically. It was comprised of about two dozen small theatrical sets with a variety of themes, from the personal and private to the musical and performative aspects of Sinatra's career. Upon entering the exhibit, a viewer first noticed cases displaying several of his many gold and platinum records. Another early section was devoted to his family and to Hoboken, New Jersey, Sinatra's hometown. Here, a young Sinatra grew up within the boundaries of Monroe, Grand, Jefferson, and Garden Streets where you can find his church, a bakery, his childhood home, his father's firehouse, and the family-owned saloon. A small glass display case housed such personal items as his father Marty's wallet and other family keepsakes. Nearby was the replica of an American living room of the period, complete with daily newspaper, checkers set, and the most important item: the radio. Before being displaced by the television, the radio was the family hearth, bringing together three generations of a family in one spot daily, and it made Sinatra famous in the late 1930s and 1940s. Due acknowledgment was made of The Hoboken Four, the Rustic Cabin Nightclub in New Jersey, and the group's big break on *Major Bowes Amateur Hour*. More than one early microphone was showcased, reminding viewers of how Sinatra learned to use the new technology to benefit his voice and develop an intimate relationship with his listeners.

Sinatra's early success with the orchestras of Harry James and Tommy Dorsey was documented, and, through the display of bobby sox and shoes, as well as responses to fans who had written to the Sinatra Fan Club, so was the teenage pandemonium (perhaps partially manufactured) at the Paramount Theatre in New York City in the early 1940s. The exhibition made an interesting contrast between Sinatra and the reigning king of the crooners, Bing Crosby. Sinatra had first heard Crosby live in 1935 and resolved to be a singer. His eventual eclipse of the Irish American star said something about a changing America and the prominence of Italian American singers in the middle third of the twentieth century; Crosby commented, "Sinatra is a singer who comes along once in a lifetime. But why did it have to be my lifetime?" Perhaps most impressive for music scholars was the re-creation of Studio A at Capitol Records

Tower in Hollywood, where Sinatra recorded many of his signature records. Here, one could listen in on a recording session as Sinatra insists upon impeccable craftsmanship from himself and his fellow artists.

Clips of various films showed Sinatra on the silver screen, starting with musical fluff and transitioning into serious turns in *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962), *The Man with the Golden Arm* (1955), and *Von Ryan's Express* (1965). Many viewers would be surprised that Sinatra's first Academy Award was not for his role as Private Maggio in *From Here to Eternity* (1953). He won an Honorary Academy Award for his role as a singer taking a break during a recording session and confronting prejudice and bigotry in *The House I Live In* from 1945, just a month after World War II ended, a short film that may be viewed online in its twelve-minute entirety.

Sinatra was indebted to the work of the very finest musicians, and the exhibit is to be commended in noting his recognition of African American musicians such as Billie Holiday and Ella Fitzgerald. Sinatra's lifelong commitment to civil rights and combating anti-Italianism and anti-Semitism is noted in his 1987 lifetime achievement award from the NAACP, his 1975 visit to Jerusalem, and his 1985 winning of the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Some sections were a bit disconcerting. Displays devoted to Tina Sinatra, Frank Sinatra Jr., and Sinatra's amateur paintings didn't measure up. And Jack Daniels Whiskey—Sinatra's favorite drink and a corporate sponsor—got its very own display case. Despite these missteps, a display of a 1940s bowtie sewn by young wife Nancy Sinatra and a mannequin sporting Sinatra's tuxedo from his later career lent both poignancy and power to the exhibit by reminding us of Sinatra's physical presence and charisma. Even as a young boy, the only son of Marty and Dolly, known on the streets of Hoboken as Slacksy O'Brien due to his father boxing under the Irish surname, Sinatra was careful to cultivate what Italians call *bella figura*, which is more than just the American idea of a "good impression."

Fundamentally, Sinatra represents a complex problem for Italian Americans. On the one hand, he defied all the negative stereotypes common since the great wave of immigration to the United States. Once he took the stage or entered the recording studio, all those negative traits disappeared and he was the consummate professional; yet at the bar or in the casino, the street kid would come out, especially if taunted as he often was by the gossip columnists. Later in his career, of course, he was above all this. "The Kid" became "The Voice" and then head of the Rat Pack who morphed into "The Chairman of the Board," almost Olympian in his disdain for the pettiness of the earlier years.

The exhibition catalog was a disappointment in that it does not explain the various displays, but a recording and earphones in the exhibit gave viewers a more complete story to accompany each station. The catalog did mention all those who participated in bringing the exhibition together and includes a Walking Tour map of Hoboken and Manhattan, pinpointing nearly three dozen important spots in Sinatra's life, from the Rialto Theatre in Hoboken to Patsy's Restaurant in Midtown Manhattan. The brief explanations of these locales function almost as a mini-biography of the singer.

The exhibition was an unusual joint production between three institutions: the GRAMMY Museum in Los Angeles, the New York Public Library, and Jazz at Lincoln Center. Viewers could have their picture taken with the exhibition logo and emailed

to them instantly, and they could sing along with Sinatra in a (luckily) soundproof booth. In conclusion: This show was an eclectic mix of the serious, the scholarly, and the archival along with the mischievous, the moving, and the marvelous.

—STANISLAO G. PUGLIESE
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Tutta La Famiglia: Portrait of a Sicilian Café in America.
Curated by Harris Fogel.
University of the Arts, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
October 2–23, 2015.

Paul Cary Goldberg began documenting La Sicilia Café in Gloucester, Massachusetts, soon after he moved to that city eight years ago. He was a regular patron of the café and came to know and admire its owners and clientele as he photographed it regularly.

Tutta la Famiglia: Portrait of a Sicilian Café in America, in both its form and subject matter, is a classic example of humanist documentary photography, a genre informed by a universalizing take on the human condition that brings together high artistic standards and deep concern for ones subjects. In keeping with the traditions of the genre, the photographs are black and white, relatively small (by contemporary standards), and presented formally in bevel cut mats with ample white space and clean black frames. Although the images are entirely digital in their production, they are virtually indistinguishable from black-and-white silver gelatin prints made from film negatives. This is Goldberg's intention, and he carries it off well, especially given the fact that this is his first digital project. Indeed, he says that learning how to work digitally was one of his motivations in initiating it.

Goldberg's photographs primarily depict the clientele of the La Sicilia Café individually and in groups. Many are portraits of near-studio quality in their composition and lighting. There are also exteriors and interiors of the café, including some interesting details of its furnishings, decorations, and products for sale. From all indications, Goldberg must have been regarded as a regular and welcome presence in the environment; the subjects seem comfortable being photographed, even unaware of the photographer.

These details aside, the salient question for the readers of this journal might be how well does Goldberg represent *italianità* (or perhaps even *sicilianità*) in this set of photographs that he calls a portrait of a Sicilian café? Furthermore, how much do his images inform the discourses of immigration, such as the preservation of traditions balanced against social and cultural adaptation?

Certainly, a majority of photographs in the series, especially the portraits, do not read as particularly Italian. Yes, most of the faces are vaguely Mediterranean in character, but some look Greek or even Middle Eastern, which is not surprising given Sicily's diverse gene pool. The *italianità* of the subject matter is established most firmly by contextual images including exteriors of the café, one quite delightful photo of two

men smiling from inside a Fiat 500, and another of people making music, one of them playing an accordion. There are also some wonderful detail photographs, still lives in a way, of pastries and cookies, bread, and statues of saints.

Ultimately, Goldberg's project is highly romantic. He undoubtedly loves the café—its clients, its atmosphere, its owners—as well as the feeling of family that he perceives there and presents in his imagery. As with many romantically conceived photographic projects, its power comes as much from the conviction of the author/artist as from the images themselves. The installation of *Tutta La Famiglia: Portrait of a Sicilian Café in America* at the University of the Arts was brought to life during its opening reception on October 2, 2015, when Goldberg spoke about his project and the café that is at its center. From what he said that evening, it is clear that Goldberg admires what he perceives as a genuineness and cohesiveness in the café's regular clientele and is attracted by the otherness (not a term he used) of these men who, to paraphrase Goldberg, get very close to speak to each other, conversing loudly in Sicilian.

Without the author's words this kind of photographic series, while evocative, can convey only certain kinds of information. Materials found on Goldberg's website, such as links to video pieces, flesh out some things about La Sicilia Café that are not conveyed by the photographs. A video produced by RAI Television reveals that its relatively young proprietors speak excellent Italian, as well as the Sicilian spoken by their customers, and are immigrants themselves. This underscores the close relationship between the Gloucester Sicilian American community and those who remain in Sicily. One of the proprietors, Giuseppe Cracchiolo, labels Goldberg an honorary Italian and part of the "famiglia" of the café, noting that he comes every morning for a cappuccino ("Puntata 127" 2014).

Goldberg says that another goal in doing this project, besides an eventual hardcover book, is to preserve what he sees as a fleeting moment in the life of the Italian American community of Gloucester and, perhaps, something of an anachronism in the fabric of twenty-first-century American life. This sentiment is echoed by the café's other proprietor, Maria Cracchiolo, who notes wistfully in the RAI video clip that Italian traditions are slowly but surely fading as subsequent generations assimilate.

In this exhibit, Goldberg echoes many earlier humanist documentary photographers who worked in a similar fashion with similar intentions. Two who come to mind are Walter Rosenblum (my own principal photography teacher), who through the 1950s and 1960s sought to "heroicize" the working people of New York City's Lower East Side, and Bruce Davidson, who spent a year among the residents of New York City's East Harlem in 1966 so that they would accept his presence, allowing him to produce the remarkable series "East 100th Street."

Goldberg is in good company with Rosenblum and Davidson, but the question must be asked: Is his project itself an anachronism? It relies on the assumption that good intentions and excellent craft will produce the meanings and results that the artist desires. More than forty years of critical theory have told us that we need to be careful in this assumption. Photographs are a tricky kind of document; they may hide more than they show; they may raise significant questions about the artist's intention, process, and presentation. Perhaps Goldberg's photographs serve as a mirror to the clientele of the café, a mirror in which they enjoy seeing themselves. But to what extent do they serve as a window for the rest of us? Ultimately, since they are photographs

and not windows, they rely on our own experiences for completion. If they cause us to recall, even subconsciously, similar places, similar people, and similar events that we remember fondly, then we are likely to regard them fondly and identify with Goldberg's own love for that which he has photographed.

—BLAISE TOBIA
Drexel University

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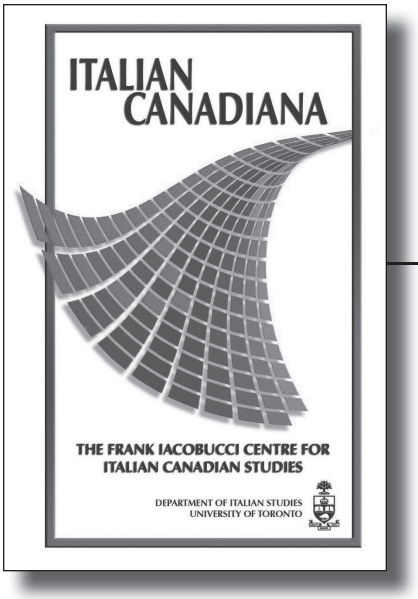

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