Why Did the Mafia Emerge in Italy? An institutional answer.

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Introduction

Why did the Mafia develop in Italy?

This paper provides an answer by considering Mafia as an institution\(^1\) that arose in a unique cultural context. This context-a product of historical circumstances-included a system of widely held moral beliefs and values that were heavily influenced by the Church and were conducive to the development of Mafia.

The first section explains the emergence of Mafia using the HCIA framework. Such an analysis contrasts with common stereotypes of Mafia as a purely criminal activity. The principal argument advanced is that the growth of Mafia was supported by Italian social and cultural retrograde conditions, most notably the practice of clientelism.

The underlying system of social and cultural beliefs is a key element to every institution, as it contributes to regularities in behavior. In a realistic world of incomplete information, beliefs determine a given agent’s expectations about

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\(^1\) This paper relies on the definition of institutions supplied by Grief (2003): “An institution is a system of man made, non-physical factors, that are exogenous to each individual whose behavior they influence. These factors jointly generate a regularity of behavior by enabling, guiding and motivating it.”
reactions by other agents and therefore influence the agent’s best response to the environment he faces. This paper focuses on the micro environment peculiar to Italian society, which was the basis for the development of Mafia. The stereotype of mafia focuses mostly on criminal activity and organization. While these are certainly major components of Mafia, I argue that it is the social and cultural retardation that differentiates Mafia from other criminal organizations.

The second section analyzes the historical precursors to this retrograde condition, with particular attention to the Italian reality during the decline of mercantilistic power. Following Weber's theory, I compare Calvinist and Catholic values as imposed by the Vatican and argue how the first fostered the creation of a global feeling of rational society, whereas the latter maintained the individual in an isolated condition characterized by a contrast between capitalistic and egalitarian values, between rational and moral beliefs, and between the individual sphere and society as a collectivity. I argue that these cultural retrograde conditions, together with the lack of a central political power to protect individuals and a view of everyone outside the family or a close friend as an enemy, are fundamental to understanding the development of Mafia.

After introducing this historical backdrop, I look more specifically at the rise of Mafia in Sicily in the third section. The cultural and moral retrograde condition, together with the failure of the mercantilist, the abolition of the feudal system, and a large supply of unemployed agents accustomed to the use of violence created a need for protection and organization. The Mafia was the institution that arose in response to this need.
The fourth section explains how the same State agents sent to Sicily to fight the Mafia became central to its evolution in the rest of Italy. Mafia grew from an informal, yet commonly accepted phenomenon in the South to a powerful organization strictly connected to the government by a democratic rule: elections. The fifth section reinforces the importance of culture by reviewing the main actions taken to fight Mafia. All of the principal organizations had education and awakening a sense of social responsibility as their goals. These developments support the central idea propounded by this paper, that beliefs are a key element in the institution of Mafia. As long as the agent believes that by standing out from the Mafia he will incur a severe enough punishment, the institution will be self-enforcing. The feeling of a society on the individual’s side, a common education, will influence his best reaction and therefore the evolution of the institution of Mafia.

The last section concludes.

1. Existing Literature and Common Misconceptions

The existing literature on mafia is quite broad and unfocused. Most documents center on Mafia crimes, and the common American stereotype sees mafia as an organization whose main purpose is to kill. This paper gives a broader view, using historical and comparative institutional analysis. The Mafia arose in response to a particular culture and it is thus important to understand the peculiarities of the Italian context at the micro-level.
There is no specific date for the origins of Mafia; instead we see a gradual emergence of the institution amidst particular historical, cultural, political conditions (Tullio-Altan 2000).

By surfing the web for definitions and explanations on the origins of mafia, we come up with a very limited knowledge of the phenomenon, mostly connected with movies and the notion of Mafia as an organization used for the purpose of murder. A typical stereotype:

My first real introduction to the mafia was

a film I saw in about 1980 with English subtitles called 'Salvatore Giuliano'.

The earliest references appear to be from around 1874,

but the first significant case, at least in Sicily,

was the kidnapping of a banker from

Edinburgh called John Forester Rose in 1877.

http://www.angelfire.com/ok/hoddis/Page2.html
Even on http://www.nybooks.com/articles/11132, we see the critics of the limited definition:

“He (Barzini) confuses the Mafia with the mythical mafia as a criminal organization.”

Giovanni Schiavo

“A better attempt to understand Mafia has been made by economic papers. For example, Bandera 2000 constructs a model to study the influence of the land reform following the abrogation of feudalism. Using a menu-auction model, he empirically tests if the demand for Mafia protection increases with a higher division of land. Using market rules, he argues that more division increases competition in the demand side of protection, providing higher rents for the suppliers. To quote Bandera,
“The conditions that promoted the rise of the Mafia in western Sicily can be summarized as follows:

-Inability of the State to guarantee effective protection of persons and property.

-Land reform, hence more landlords in need of protection.

-Landlords absenteeism coupled with no fixed settlement on landlord.

-Poor peasants who often resorted banditry.

-Large supply of unemployed agents accustomed to the use of violence.”

Although this is a very interesting economic theory of the origins of mafia, we are still in an analysis that abstracts from the cultural beliefs peculiar to Italy.

This paper proceeds to a deeper understanding of Italian culture, tracing the peculiarities of this culture to historical circumstances, in accordance with the theory of path dependence (Greif 1998). In particular, the presence of the Church, and the individualistic values inherited from this powerful institution, interrelated with the development of Italian society. The fragmentation and lack of a sense of collectivity that followed has had a lasting effect via self-enforcing processes that have led to the endogenous establishment and persistence of new institutions, including Mafia.
2. The origins of Italian social and cultural retardation

“In Italy there is too much individualism,

too little attitude to cooperate for a common project.

We hear too much the ‘I’ and too little the ‘We.’

We succeed very well in everything that requires private initiative, individual energy;

we do much worse whenever the common energy of many is required,

not for a personal goal, but for a common one”

P. Villari 1972

Turiello 1882 traces the peculiar defects of Italian society to a common root: “the repugnance to harmony and cooperation”.

What are the historical origins of this social and cultural retardation?

We have to go well back in time to find an answer. Although Italy in 1100 had anticipated the rest of Europe by two centuries with the comunal era, the bourgeois failed to respond to the new challenges the rest of the continent faced in the XV
In particular, Italy was unable to unify under a common central power, mostly as a result of the fragmentation and lack of cohesion created by the Church, which was unwilling to relinquish hegemony and power. The potential values of collectivity and cooperation never gained a foothold as they did elsewhere in Europe.

Not only did the lower class' lack of a sense of collective solidarity contribute to the social and cultural retrograde condition, the leading class was also facing cultural limitations that would prevent her from adapting to the new financial challenges of a common market. The remainder of the section gives particular attention to the role of religion.

The Italian mercantile class balanced capitalistic rational values with moral values dictated by the Church. For example, religion attempted to impose certain prices that often differed from the market dictated price. Banks, lending and borrowing activities were morally damned: charging interest over time was viewed as selling something that is God's property, time. (J. Le Goff, 1976). Even though the Genoa and Florence mercantilists were ahead in time with respect to the rest of Europe, Italy was lacking of a common set of values that would allow the entire society to develop.

The continuation of a fragmented and individualistic society, which later formed a basis for the emergence of Mafia, has been often attributed (Weber, 1976) to
religion. In Weber's theory the Calvinistic religion and the belief in human predestination contributed to the development of capitalism in the rest of Europe. In the Calvinistic beliefs, God's grace is proved through the success a single individual has in life. Individuals have to work and live in a society according to divine prescriptions, common values everyone is presumed to follow, which provide a sense of cohesion. The work of the Calvinist in the world is mostly “ad majorem Dei Gloriam.” There are no sentimentalisms, work is a rational execution of social duties, there is an effectual calling for salvation. There is a cultural mechanism that produces continuous activity and participation. While in Italy capitalism is banned, the Calvinistic religion allows the individual to follow any legitimate way to gain money, as not following one's own predestination would mean breaking God's will.

In contrast Catholicism focused on post mortem salvation. The mercantilist could “buy” forgiveness for sins by giving large sums to the Church, sum produced through market-based financial activities. While the Calvinist believed in direct communication with God and self-study of the Bible, Italians largely believed in communicating with God through the Church, which was often corrupt. Daily good behavior did not foster salvation as much as following the Church's Sacraments and rules. There was a continuous trade-off between actions we should feel guilty for and the purchase of forgiveness through the Church.

Perhaps arguing that this Italian attitude, which led to uneducated lower and middle classes that were scared of powerful institutions like the Church, create the basis for the power of Mafia is a bit strong. But we cannot deny a cultural predisposition to buy protection and for the Italian to consider himself alone in
society, with the exceptions of family connections and extremely local environments. Indeed, in the Italian slang, the Church is sometimes referred to as the “White mafia”.

Just as these Italian social and cultural retardation have historical roots, clearly the missed development in the late mercantile period also has historical (and largely political) causes, such as the lack of a strong national power capable of supporting its economic agents militarily and diplomatically. Even here, though, culture is a powerful explanatory variable. The Italian Catholic mercantilist had to cope with his sense of guilt and to compete with Calvinist mercantilists that could see in their success and power a revelation of God's will. Holland and England economically passed Italy.

Moreover, the Church, in order to its hegemony, had an interest in keeping men in their individual spheres. We observe an official separation between private individual feelings and conscience on one side, and social and public activities on the other side. This is a very relevant characteristics of the Italian culture, as pointed out by Miccoli’s “Storia d' Italia” (1974).

This is the climate which existed at the time of the Mafia’s emergence in Italy. This climate, with its cultural beliefs, costumes and norms, influenced the evolution of Italian society and played an essential role in the persistence of organizations like Mafia.
3. The development of Mafia.

The last section focused on the general social and cultural conditions that created a fertile soil for the development of Mafia. The cultural belief synthesized by the Italian popular proverb, “Trusting the collectivity and the others is good. Not trusting them is better,” is an integral part of the Italian institution Mafia and it affects the Italian society and the persistence of this alternative form of protection.

Greif (1994) emphasizes the importance of cultural beliefs as integral determinants of agents actions in historically repeated games. They affect agents’ strategic behavior by creating expectations that influence the selection and enforcement of institutions. Accordingly, the previous analysis of past historical cultural beliefs is an essential to understanding Mafia peculiar to the particular context in Italian society.

While some historians trace the origins of Mafia to the Italian Unification in 1865, the roots go back further in Italian society, although the institution gained a stronger foothold after the process. Some superficial analysis has connected the origins of Mafia with the thousand men of Garibaldi, but this definition of Mafia as a simple organized group of popular criminals is very misleading. A few lines from Franchetti (1974):

“The complete fact, of which the common use of the term Mafia is only a little part, is a way of being for a given society and for the individuals part of it. Consequently, to express ourselves clearly and to obtain a clear idea, we better think about Mafia not as a noun, but as an adjective.”
The middle class, responsible for the French revolution and the major changes in European society in the XIX century, was almost absent in Italy. Another element was the lack of commerce and industrialization and consequent infrequent relations with the rest of Europe. There was no space for private initiative, and it was even more impossible to cultivate ambitions in public life. Individual spheres of influence did not generally extend beyond very tight circles.

The economic and cultural factors that led to the individualism typical of Italian society were strictly interconnected. As a consequence of these local realities, a broad system of family rivalries was passed on from generation to generation.

Given the lack of a sense of social unity and the absence of public authorities, the best response for an individual seeking to exert influence over others was appeal to the *baroni*. No social authority existed, the only way to be successful was the use of personal power, which often required astuteness and violence. Furthermore, the use of power became legitimated (if only for defense) and eventually became a part of the Italian institutional landscape. This element of culture is essential to understanding the historical perpetuation of the Mafia: society accepted the brute force of Mafia as necessary, and the first magistrates who tried to fight the phenomenon were unable to overcome the cultural barrier to receive any form of cooperation.
Land division not only increased demand for protection as shown by Bandera, this change also had a strong impact on social relations. Use of force became accessible to more people, since there was not a clear hierarchical power structure in place anymore. Moreover, the lawless crowd once at the service of the barons became independent. Force became a common means of obtaining desired outcomes.

This had very specific consequences for social organization. Given that others were doing the same, an agent’s best response was to obtain the help and protection of the strongest. Therefore, returns to being the strongest increased, creating additional incentives to organize and increasing the supply of protection. As social, legitimate, strength did not exist, Italian society adopted clientelism (patronage).

Sicilian society after the abolition of feudalism displayed characteristics typical of every European country in medieval times:

unequal distribution of wealth;

lack of the concept of equal rights for everyone;

predominance of personal power; and

every social relation had only individualistic connotations.

All this was accompanied by harsh feelings of hate, passion for revenge, and the well known popular concept of “who does not do justice by himself has no honor.”
This historical and cultural evolution has to be taken into account when explaining the Mafia and how the structure of clientelism took form. The abolition of the feudalism erased a well defined social structure and violence became accessible to everyone. The abolition of the privileges of the barons opened the way to smaller interests. Whereas before the individual could only count on his own force, now there was a large crowd of “bravi,” once exclusively at the service of the barons that was now easily accessible. The feudal hierarchic scheme was replaced by clientelism.

Note an important difference between these unlawful crowds and the other illegal crowds in the rest of Europe: the former operated within a social and cultural context in which the use of power was commonly accepted as legitimate. This crowd was at the service of people holding power. The Mafia became a class with its own industries and peculiar interests, as well as an autonomous social power. If we look at these unlawful people from a modern American point of view, we would define them as people rejected from society, in need of integration. In that Italian context they were an essential part of society.

Some historians have described the Mafia phenomenon as an evolution of the Southern bourgeois, in its attempt to enhance the social status and power that it held during a pre-capitalistic and still feudal period. But we cannot explain Mafia
from a purely historical point of view as a class evolution. Mafia is not only a class phenomenon; it is an autonomous form of violence, strictly interrelated with the Italian system of values. The Italian micro-context is essential to understanding this institution and its consequences for the entire national history. As a matter of fact, the Mafia became an essential part of the Italian social structure in the late 1800s and early 1900s, one which coexisted with society and its formal laws, unlike the common forms of criminality. The Mafia did not try to substitute itself for society, unlike the revolutions. Instead Mafia integrated itself with society.

If we look more closely at the structure of Mafia, we see a hierarchic structure in which the boss is on top. His social class of origin is high, and there is a wide structure of lawless and apparently completely lawful people connected to him by different relations and levels of clientelism. From an economic point of view, we can look at this organization as an exchange of services, with the surplus on the side of the boss. The menu of services offered by the boss ranges from protection to more diverse requests, such as revenge, contacts, information, etc.

Looking at the mafia as a firm, the boss would be the manager as well as the owner, giving unity of directions, dividing jobs and functions, and setting inner rules in order to maximize income. And the maximization of income requires displaying constantly the power of the family, since a strong power attracts more clients and fewer challengers. We could therefore also analyze the most brutal killing as the product of homo economicus, were it not for the peculiar “Italian warm blood,” far away from rationality when facing emotions and issues of honor. Yet, it is the boss deciding when violence is necessary and when to use which
people. Arlocchi (1983) described the Mafia from a market point of view, looking at its economic behavior as a rationally managed small business.

The common stereotype of the Mafia boss is “someone that does whatever he wants, has full and complete discretion on his actions.” Following Greif (2003) and his definition of Institution,

I argue that this is not the case. The Mafia has the power it has because it corresponds to the individuals’ best responses. If they pay their “pizzo” and have Mafia’s protection, they can do business. If they don’t do what they are told, a high enough punishment follows. As long as the Mafia is capable of affecting the agents’ behavior through this strong system of beliefs, it has full institutional power. As long as there is a strong enough belief that standing out is followed by a punishment, the behavior of the entire society is affected.

The single agents are exogenous to these man made, non physical factors. What about the Mafia Boss? According to the common stereotype, he is completely unconstrained, he is not part of the institution, his actions are free choices. Again, I argue that this is not the case. If he fails to create protection when protection is paid for, if he fails to punish when punishment is expected, if he fails to be seen as
the most powerful partner you can have, he is a dead man himself. If the system of beliefs changes, the institution will not be self-enforcing. If individuals realize that their actions are not best responses anymore, Mafia is undermined. Thus, the institution of Mafia is partially exogenous to the Mafia Boss and induces a regularity of behavior typical to his “social position”.

The mafia and clientelism have the same common matrix: the parafeudal society, an hybrid combination of modern bourgeois and archaic combination. The entire Institution is completely a part of the society and has cultural legitimation. In the next section we will see how this contributed to the evolution of Mafia in the rest of Italy, with an invasion of the public sphere through corruption. Interestingly enough, the same state agents sent to fight it, unable to break the cultural barriers, finally became a key part of the phenomenon.

4. The development of Mafia in the rest of Italy

In the last section we have seen how Mafia became an integral part of society by common law (Mosca 1905). I have described the complex system of cultural
values essential for the development of such organization. The State agents sent to Sicily to fight the phenomenon were mostly unaware of the social complexity, unable to fight the Mafia without support of the locals, isolated, incapable of entering the social tissue, and closed in their offices like rocks in enemy territory.

Now I'll claim that the same cultural and social conditions described in the second section, which created the basis for Mafia, we also responsible for its evolution. State agents, incapable of fighting with legal methods what was recognized as a legitimate institution in Sicily, would often end up with ambiguous forms of cooperation.

Eventually collusion developed between Mafia and the State, and we witness the creation of a market of reciprocal courtesies, with the lines between the two blurred and the Mafia penetrating State institutions.

After the Italian unifications, elections became the principal instruments of Mafia's power. Mafia became the local manager of the votes, capable of guaranteeing election and power preservation. The local power could use the Mafia to go even further than this and to reach out to the national level by controlling parliamentary elections. The Mafia became the connection between local and national power. Romano (1963) defines it as the principal element of political power. Slowly, the electoral districts matched the Mafia's districts. The 1882 extension of the voting
base offered the right to vote to a class of people even more sensitive to corruption, be it by treat or “exchanges.”

Can we consider the Mafia to be simply an interest group (IG)?

There are fundamental differences between the Italian institution and the definition of IG:

- the IG last as long as the represented interest, whereas the Mafia lasts persists only so long as the social-cultural and historical condition that generated it are present

- the Mafia represents diverse and changing interests, not only economic ones, without losing its connotation and character

The Mafia is seen as a necessity by its society. It is a difficult phenomenon to fight, since so long as the people do not change their cultural beliefs, it is not in their best response to stand out by helping the State. Omerta’ had been described by Giovanni Falcone as the principal obstacle to fighting Mafia.

The same State that had to purify Italy ended up being itself a slave of political groups controlled by Mafia. Years of arrests did not produce much change, so long as the State was unable to gain moral power.
Elections contributed to a progressive degradation of Italy's official power. While the first representatives were chosen based on merit during the unification process, elections were quickly manipulated by corrupt powers. The electors themselves had not been taught to believe in public goods and the notion of common interests. Once more, this was a product of history, of social and cultural conditions. This condition was more crucial in the areas outside of Europe's influence; the regions under parafeudal system experienced less civil evolution.

Nitti 1987 points out how the first deputies in southern Italy were highly ideological people, who lived outside the area and were unaware of the complex social micro-tissue they were facing, a tissue created by centuries of history. Their limited knowledge certainly did not contribute to a cultural evolution. Moreover it did not change individualistic paradigms, nor mistrust of the government, which was seen as a separate entity that “takes your money through taxes”, not as a provider of public goods beneficial to the whole society. In the public’s eyes, a “cavalier cross” had more value than a commercial or financial law. The South continued to be individualistic, economically underdeveloped, and socially disaggregated. Political officials were used to represent local and atomistic interests, the median voter’s needs were certainly not a top priority and any election outcome could be changed, before or after the actual elections were held. Concern for the general interest was nonexistent.
This section has shown how the same conditions that gave rise to the Mafia- a
generalized lack of collective responsibility and feeling, a retrograde social and
cultural condition- also favored its evolution in the rest of Italy.

The next section sustains the theory of the paper with empirical evidence on the
means adopted to fight Mafia: the institution of several organizations to create
social awareness and cultural education. As mentioned before, arrests were not
effective in fighting the Mafia, whereas the growth in cultural awareness has been
effective, as reported by the official antimafia investigation department
(http://www.interno.it/dip_ps/dia/eng/home.htm) as well as the parliamentary
commission http://www.senato.it/parlam/bicam/14/antimafia/.

5. Fighting Mafia Today: cultural education

This section first gives a brief chronology of anti-Mafia activity from 1980 through
the killing of Giovanni Falcone. Next the constitutional goals of some of the main
antimafia organizations are examined in order to support the theory sustained in
this paper that the Mafia developed as a consequence of cultural and social
conditions and that, it will exist and develop as long as these conditions are in
place. To fight Mafia we would need to educate the population, to create social
awareness, and this is exactly the essence of the constitution in the main antimafia
organizations born in Italy in recent years, as reported in the end of this section. I have chosen the killing of Giovanni Falcone as a time threshold because the whole Italian society reacted against this killing, and this event demonstrates the movement from social indifference to social indignation toward a phenomenon that had for years been widely accepted.

A chronology of anti-Mafia activity:

6 January 1980 Mattarella, president of the Sicilian region, is killed by two hit men.

May 1980 Government member Rocco Chinnici appoints Giovanni Falconi to the Spatolo process, the first big process in the 80's.

25 August 1982 During the Trabia Blitz, Mafia boss Gerarldo Alberti is arrested. The first heroin refinery is discovered.

Spring 1980 Palermo team writes the first tentative map of Mafia: “rapporto dei 162”. They are later murdered.

30 April 1982 Carlo Albero della Chiesa is appointed as prefect in Palermo with the duty, but not the power, to coordinate the fight of Mafia.

August 1982 Doctor Giaccone refuses to falsify the medical report that accuses boss Marchese and his clan. The 10th of the same month he is killed.

29 September 1984 Tommaso Buscetta reveals names of Mafia members. 366 arrest warrants are issued.

3 November 1984 Vito Ciancimino is arrested under order of Giovanni Falcone

14 August 1985 Judge Antonio Saetta gives a life sentence to bosses Michele and Salvatore Greco for the Chinnici homicide. Saetta is murdered in 1998.

10 January 1987 The “Corriere della Sera” publishes an article by Leonardo Sascia, in which he claims that anti-Mafia operations are now an instrument of power and career. Public opinion identifies the “anti-Mafia professionals” as Borsellini and Major Orlando.

28 June 1989 Falcone is nominated unanimously as prosecuting attorney in Palermo.

January 1990 14 drug dealers are arrested and a connection between Sicilian Mafia and Colombian narcos is proved.

9 May 1990 Bonsignore Giovanni, a regional employee claiming to have evidence of a connection between politics and business, is killed

15 January 1991 Protection for justice cooperators is proposed. The proposal is approved after 1992, when Falcone is killed.
31 May 1991 “decreto legge 164” is approved to break up the municipal councils, as a consequence of mafia infiltration. 40 of them are actually dissolved.

10 January 1991 Libero Grassi, after announcing publicly he was not going to pay the Mafia’s “suggested contribution”, is murdered in his own house.

29 October 1991 “decreto n.345” is approved. The DIA is created to unify different police and army branches against Mafia.

20 November 1991 The DNA is instituted.

17 January 1992 Vito Ciancimino is condemned to 10 years in jail. He is the first parliamentary member to be prosecuted for association with Mafia.

26 February 1992 30 kg of cocaine are confiscated in Genova.

8 June 1992 Falcone is killed.

Ironically enough, the killing of Giovanni Falcone shook Italian society. The media gave an enormous amount of attention to the Capaci massacre. On the assumption that the media follow strictly the laws of demand in selecting which stories to air, we have here evidence of increased social awareness and reaction to the Mafia. On the official side, the government passed act the “decreto antimafia,” made stricter after the killing of Judge Borsellino. Greater powers are given to the DIA and new laws were implemented. 36 days after the massacre, the first huge demonstration took place, entitled “Italia parte civile” (Italy’s civilized side).
75,000 people from all over Italy took part in this demonstration. Earlier I pointed out the lack of a common sense of society, and related it to the development of Mafia. Now we see how the decline of the Mafia (according to official DIA and DNA evaluations) is strictly interrelated with the rise of social conscience.

Further actions have been taken to improve the culture and education has become a primary means of fighting the Mafia.

Not surprisingly, one of the strongest foundations is the Foundation "Giovanni e Francesca Falcone," constituted in Palermo on the 10th of December 1992. In 1996 the Foundation received consultative status at the United Nations with ECOSOC. On the homepage http://www.fondazionefalcone.it we read:

“Dr Maria Falcone, sister of Judge Giovanni Falcone,

is personally committed to the promotion of culture

against mafia in our society, especially through activities

(meetings, conferences and lectures)

for elementary, high school and university students in Italy and abroad. “.

The association recognizes fully the importance of fighting what helped Mafia to develop: retrograde social and cultural conditions. Education, schools and university are seen as main channels for awakening social and cultural awareness.
The official homepage, http://www.scuolaantimafia.org/, further bolsters the central theory of this paper.

*The points of view of Association:*

- **Anti mafia education must imbue the whole didactic curriculum and proceed day by day to build awareness. An occasional anti mafia week or an anti mafia day is useless.**

- **New contents and methods must be directed towards the development of a critical awareness of the pupils.**

- **Mafia can be fought only through education to democracy and people’s awareness. The study of Sicilian country from various angles (history, economics, social sciences, language and so on), and its relationships with other countries, is necessary for this aim.**

“The work carried out in schools has been effective in starting to build a new culture: the anti-Mafia movement, born in Sicily, has found in the schools a foundation. In 1992 after the killing of Judges Falcone and Borsellino, Mafia came up against the hardest reaction of the people. This cannot be compared to the indifference the news of homicides was greeted with in the previous decade.”

This section has synthesized the main facts of the fight against Mafia, as a support of the theory sustained in the paper: Mafia developed because of a social and cultural retrograde condition, and only by changing this historically path dependent condition can we hope to eradicate the phenomenon.
Recalling again the definition of Institution adopted in this paper, as long as Mafia was able to affect behavior through a strong system of beliefs, it is in full institutional power. As long as there is a strong belief that standing out, not following Mafia’s rule, is followed by a high punishment, the behavior of the entire society is affected. The State agents had no hope of fighting Mafia simply by trying to dismantle the organization and arrests would not be effective so long as the Institution was self-enforcing. This last section has pointed out the importance of education. Wide spread knowledge changes expectations about other’s reactions and therefore the agent’s b.r. is affected. If the agent believes that, by standing against a Mafia action, he will lose his house, his family will die and his friends will be mutilated, it will certainly not be in his best response to stand against Mafia.² If the agent starts believing that the threat is not credible, if he believes that others will stand up with him, this lowers the probability of Mafia being able to punish all the individuals, which further bolsters the new belief. If there is a common feeling of society, agents’ best responses might change, inducing an evolution in the Institution. Beliefs are an instrument to fill in incomplete information and education induces widespread knowledge. The agent knows others have this same education, his expectations about others’ reactions change. Given that the best response of a single agent is defined given every other action, if education manages to arise a feeling of society, a feeling of solidarity, then everyone’s best reaction changes. We could potentially see education as a counter Mafia Institution: it is man made, it is exogenous to every single agent considered alone, but in is endogenous to the society as a whole. It changes the system of beliefs that support the Mafia, creating the premises for Institutional

² I am assuming to face a representative agent, who does not have any particular strong personal motivation to stand against Mafia. In other words, his indifference curves as such that the punishment is “high enough”.

28
evolution. I am again not denying the importance of police action to undermine the organization, but the theory of the paper remains the same: beliefs are a key element and to fight mafia we need to change the underlying system of beliefs.

6. Conclusion

This paper has addressed the question of why Mafia developed in Italy. The paper has sustained the theory that peculiar social and cultural conditions were in place in Italy and that these conditions laid a foundation for the creation and evolution of the Mafia. I have pointed out the historical origins of these conditions, looking back to the micro-tissue of social relations after the abolition of feudalism. Cultural beliefs, the influence of the Church on beliefs and corruption within the Church, and the absence of a central power all contributed to the need for an Institution to provide protection. Mafia and its use of power became widely accepted. The inability to eradicate the problem through education and creation of faith in something other than the private sphere helped the Mafia to spread from Sicily through the rest of Italy. The whole political system became corrupt thanks to Mafia, a way of being under Franchetti's definition.

This paper does not aim to give a complete description of the Mafia, or of Italian society. It mostly invites the reader to think of the Mafia as much more than the common stereotype present in the American mentality. It is certainly true that homicides, drug traffic and criminal action attract and deserve attention. But these
elements are only the most violent manifestation of a very complex cultural
phenomenon, one that requires a historical and very specific analysis of Italian
society, its micro-structure and its beliefs. In fact, so long as the State was unable
to garner public support, it was unable to fight the Mafia. Ironically enough, the
killing of two major Mafia fighters, Borsellino and Falcone, helped to arouse
public opinion.

The social and cultural conditions that make the Mafia a self-enforcing outcome
have changed and continue to change thanks to anti-Mafia activity and the ongoing
unification of Europe.

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