



Migrating 'ndrangheta

& the paradigms of cultural policing of mafia-type organised crime cross borders.

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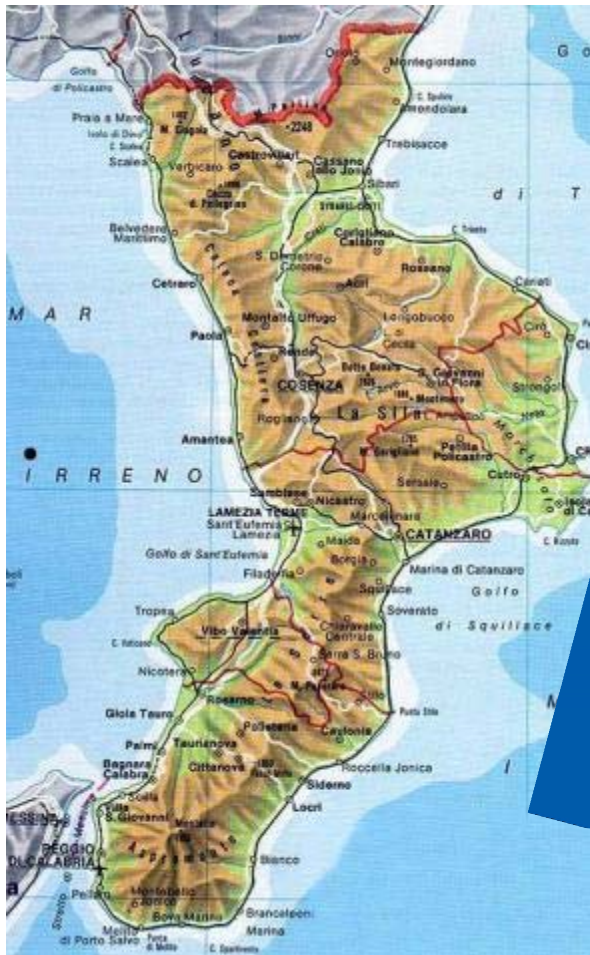
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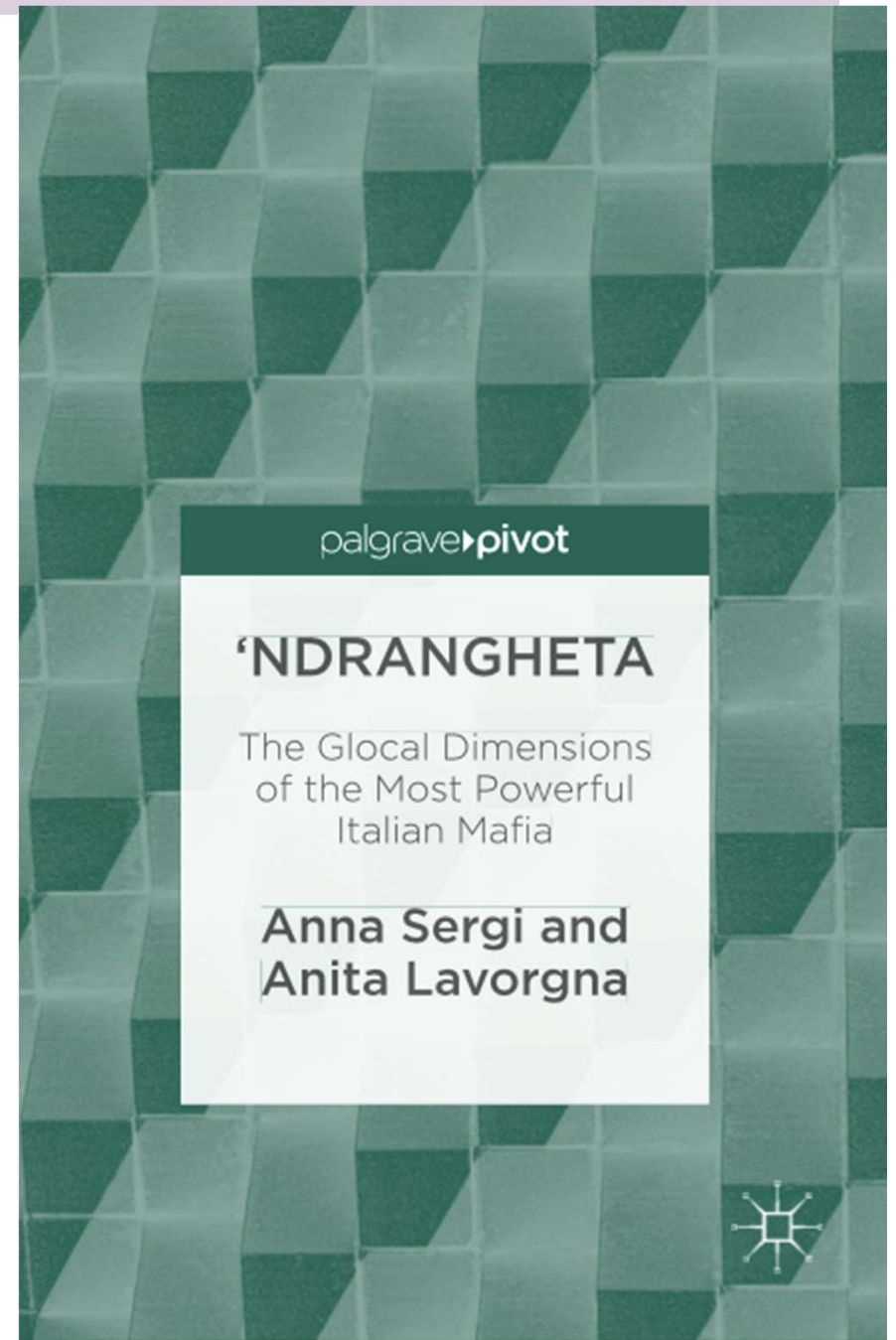
University of Montreal, 5th April 2017

An on-going project

- A 12 months project in Australia and in Canada
 - British Academy/Leverhulme Trust Research Grant
 - Why and how the 'ndrangheta is the only Italian mafia that is successful in its mobility, both in Italy and abroad
 - The answer to this question might lie in the criminal reputation, in the structure and group's dynamics as well as in the exploitation of the Calabrian diaspora. I argue that a promising way of looking at this success has a cultural dimension too
 - **"Cultural differences or cultural bias? Policing the Calabrian 'ndrangheta around the world"**
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Calabria

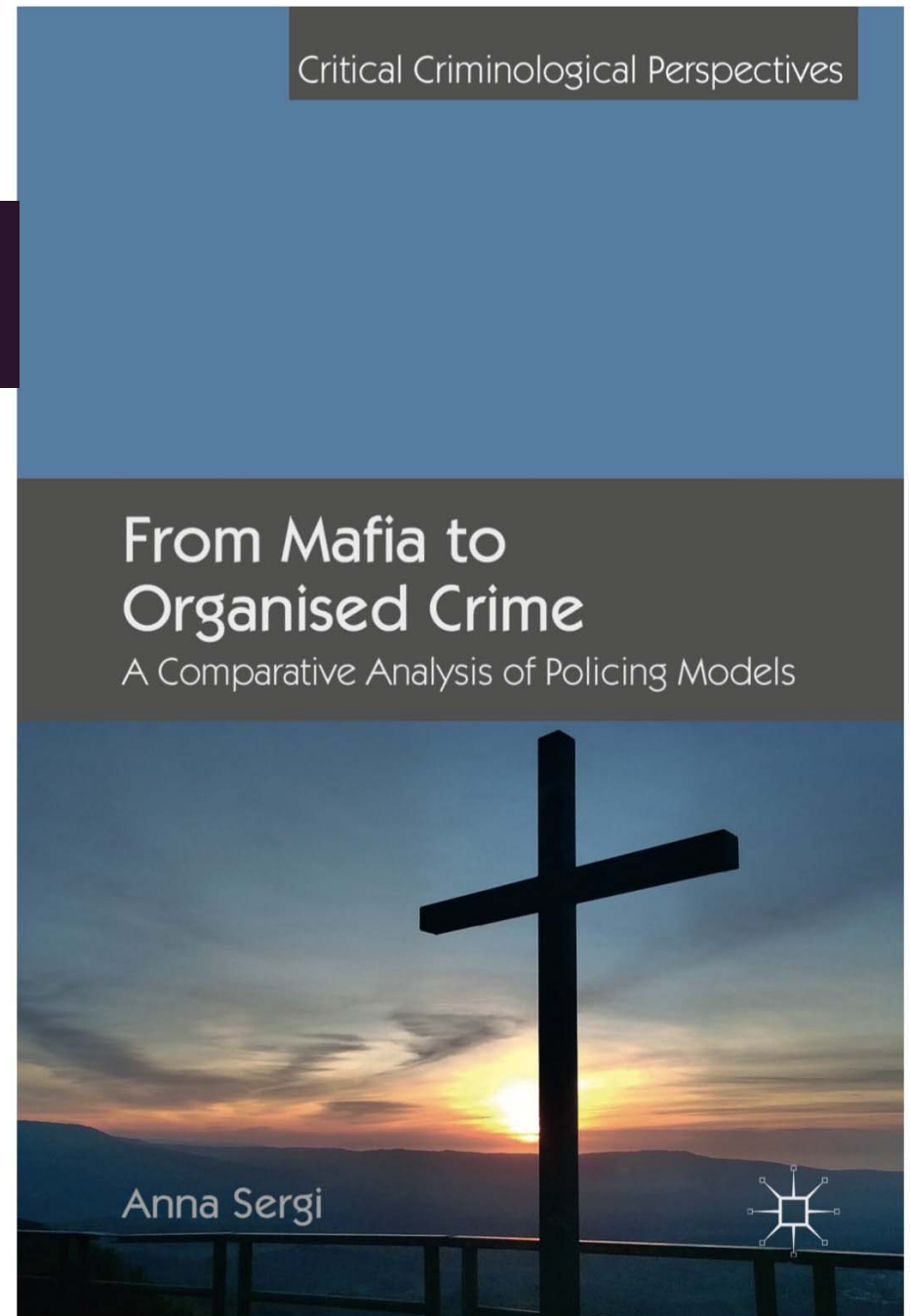




Policing....

From Mafia to Organised Crime. A comparative analysis of policing models

- In press – June 2017
- Palgrave Macmillan/Springer
- Perspectives in Critical
Criminology



Calabria & the 'ndrangheta: between normality and diversity

Mafia feuds,
blood feuds

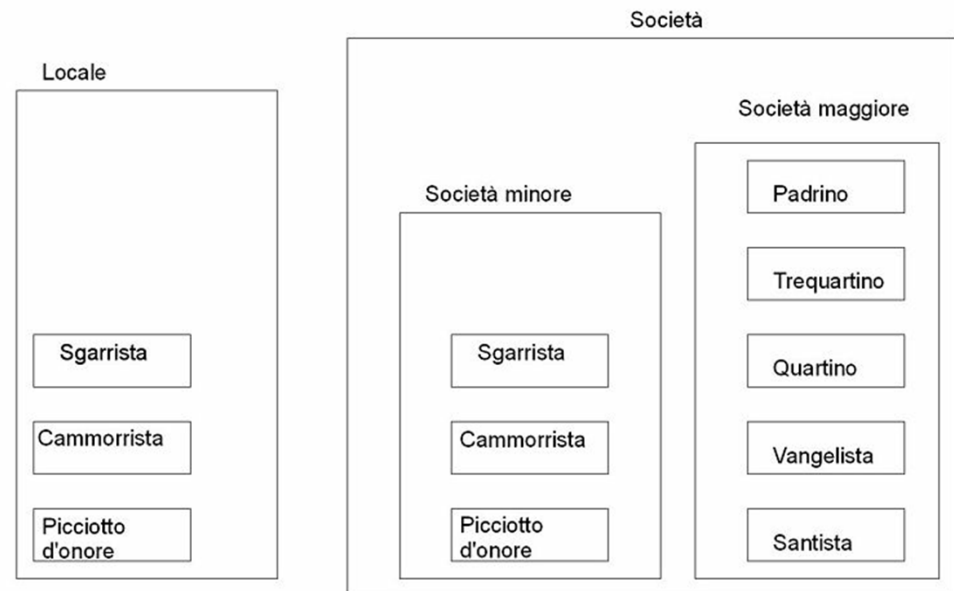
Mafia villages, the
Mountains and
the Sea

The 'New Mafia'
news (from
kidnappings to
cocaine)

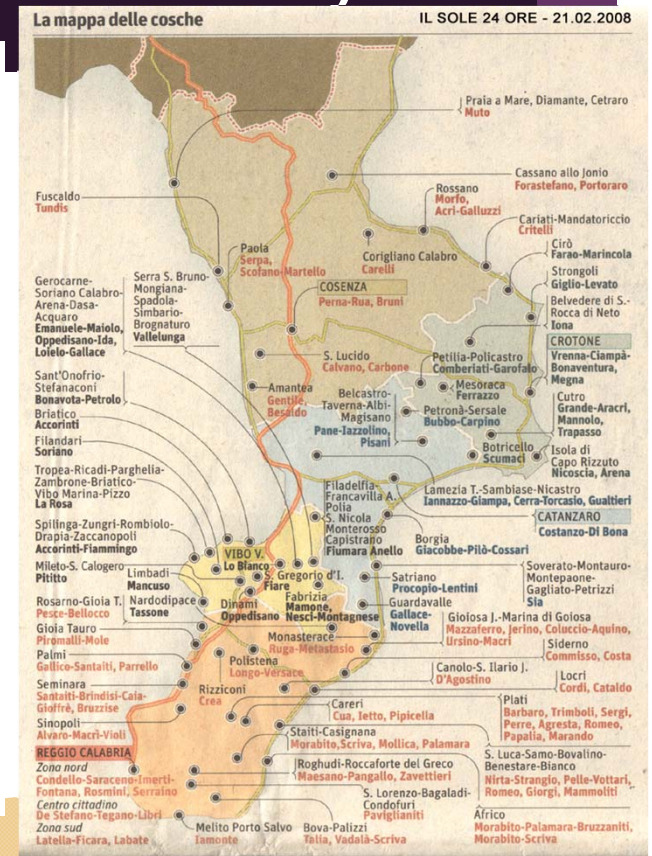
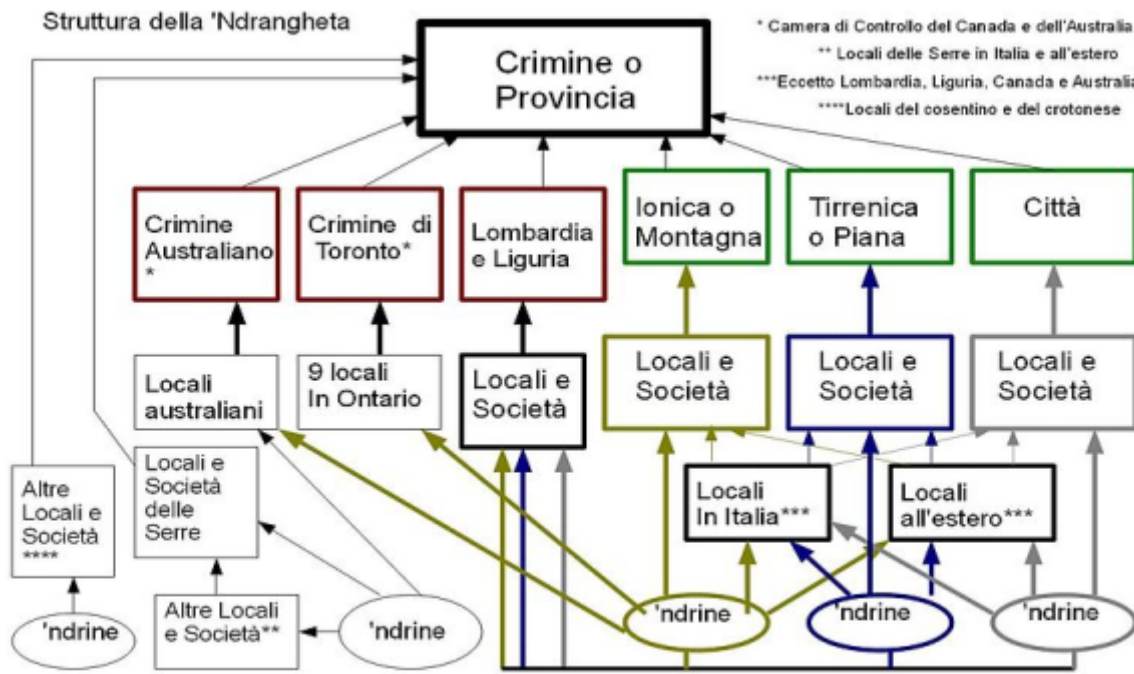
'ndranghetisation
- global

Evolution: main features of the 'ndrangheta

- *A' Ndrina* is a clan (155 +/-)
- Blood ties > meritocracy
- Group of '*Ndrine* form a 'Locale'
- Feuds
- Kidnapping Season – the money
- La 'Santa'?
- Al-Qaeda Model (2008)
- A holding with the subsidiaries – internal warranties
- Transplantation – Colonisation-Delocalisation model in Italy and Abroad



“Operation Crimine”: Today's 'ndrangheta - One & Many?



One
Crimine

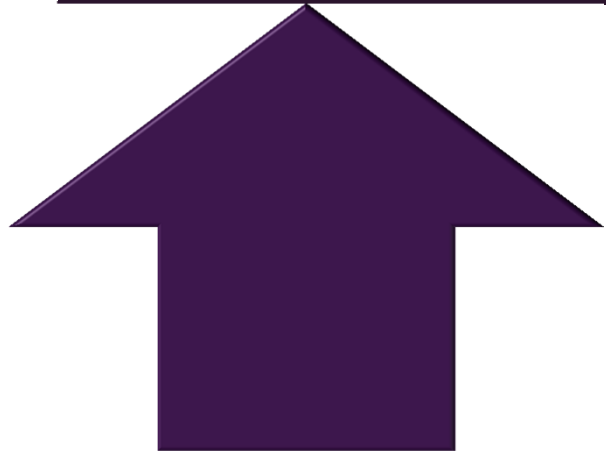
3
Mandame
nti in
Calabria

Chambers
of Control

Horizontal
Structure

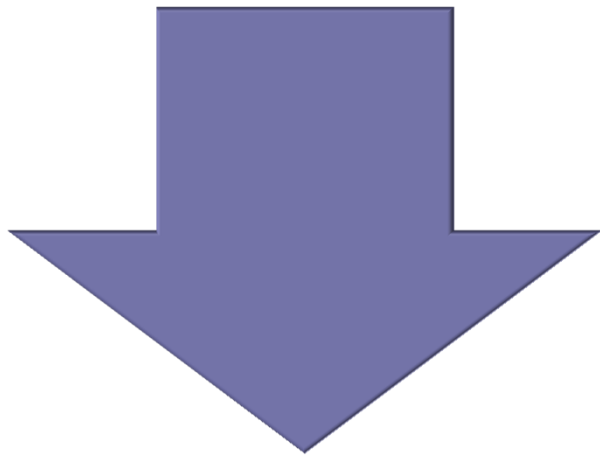
The
Facilitators

'Ndrangheta/'ndranghete



A mafia-type (formal)
criminal organisation

Reggio Calabria hinterland

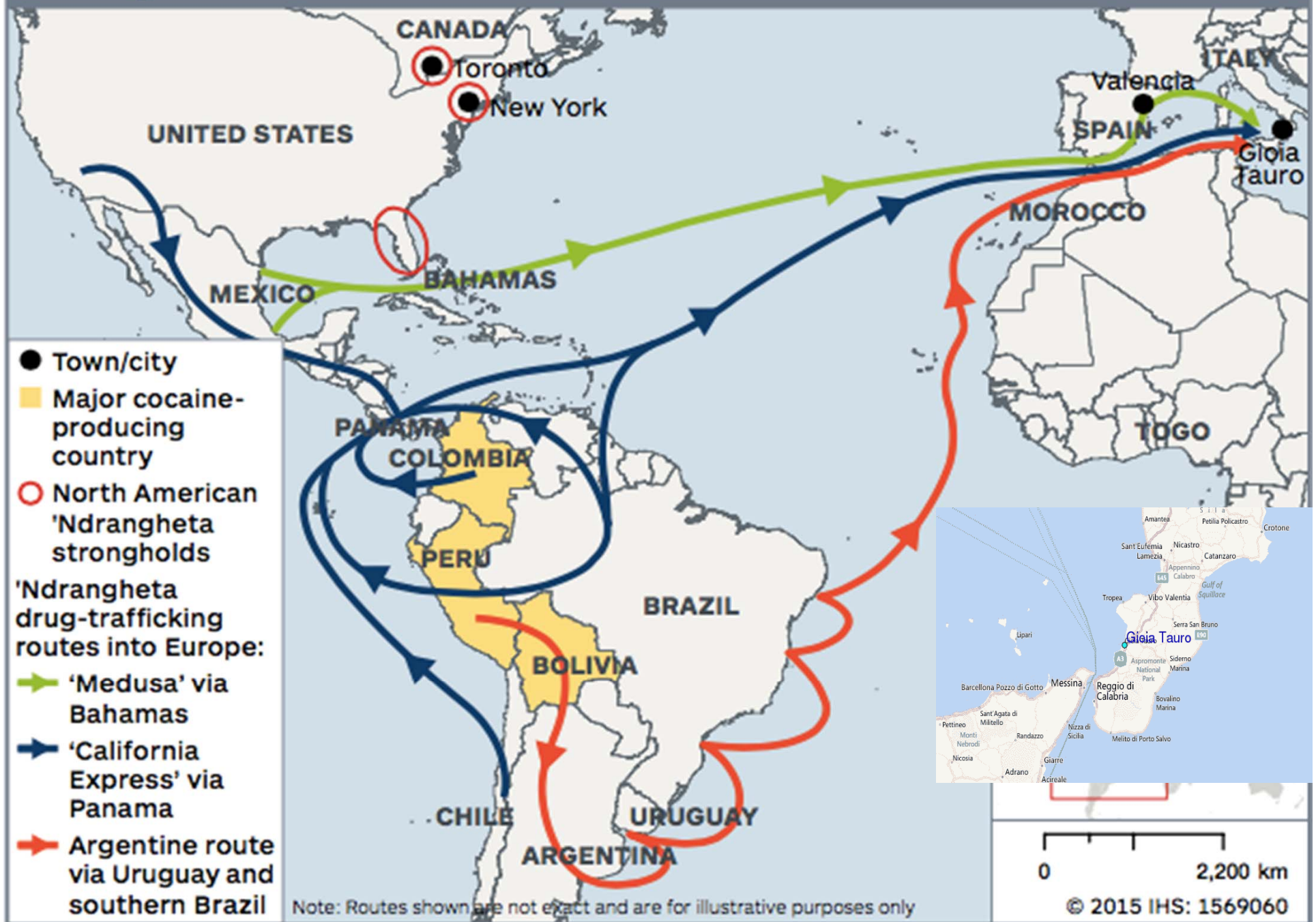


A set of behaviours
('ndranghetism)

The exploitation of cultural and
social values from Calabria through
intimidation, violence, usurpation,
nepotism and patronage – mafia
method

The homogeneity of the clans in and from Calabria
'NDRANGHETISATION PROCESS

'Ndrangheta internationalisation



The port of the 'Ndrangheta: Gioia Tauro



Colonisation & Delocalisation

The importance
of migration

Infiltration
Taking root
Imitation
Hybridisation

First Level:
Migration -
Blood ties -
YES OR NO

Second Level:
Delocalisation
- Drugs &
Wealth

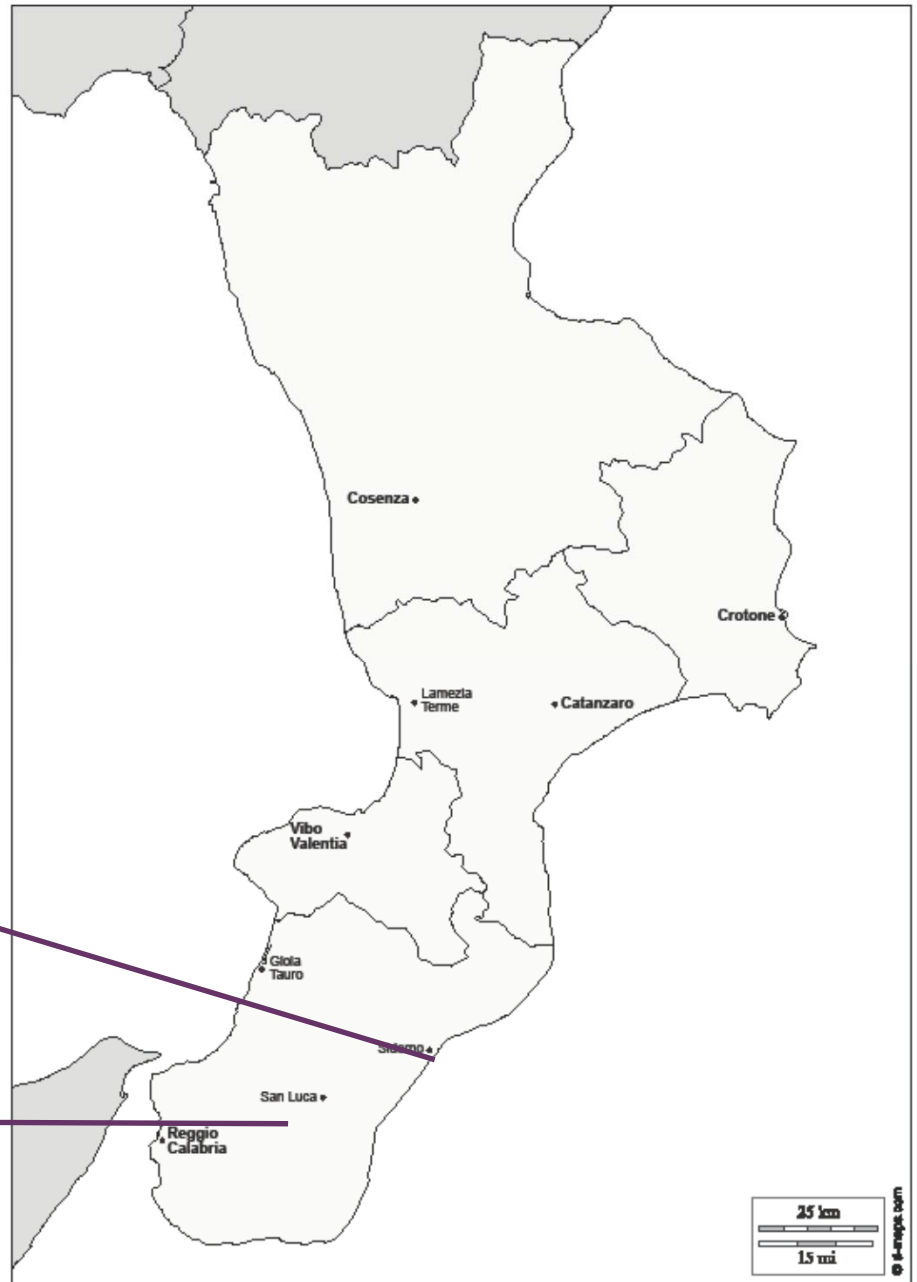
Third Level:
Colonisation
- Wealth,
Power &
Politics

Internationalisation

Stable migration/col onisation out of Europe

Canada – Siderno
(mainly the town
and nerby
villages)

Australia – Platì
(and nearby
villages in the
Aspromonte



Australia & the Aspromonte



2...



Australian 'ndrangheta

- Two different moments of the 'ndrangheta – the old 'ndrangheta and the new ndrangheta
- Matching the judicial truth on the 'ndrangheta in Calabria and the Australian *apparent* situation – “everyone” knows the Calabrian mafia!
- An “idea” of the 'ndrangheta (a thing? A behaviour? Can it move? Does it move?) –
- The growing moral panic (“gangland”)
- Violent/Visible Melbourne but Controlled/Invisible Adelaide?
- 9 families of Adelaide + the drugs of Melbourne + political proximity (!) - the Siderno Group of Crime in Perth (Op. Crimine) - where is the “head”?



The 'ndrangheta before the 'ndrangheta?

- **John Cusack (FBI) August 1964** - enquiry into an Italian Secret Society operating in Melbourne, in Victoria, in New South Wales and South Australia and, to a lesser extent also Queensland and Western Australia.
- This Secret Society *"is exclusively Calabrian", "it numbers at least 300 members, 200 alone in the Melbourne area" and "it is obviously a derivation of the ancient Calabrian Secret Criminal Society known as the l'Onorata Società (the Honoured Society), N'Dranghita (Calabrian dialect for the Honoured Society) also referred to by some as Fibia".*
- *"If left unchecked, this secret organisation similar to the Mafia, within the next twenty-five years...is capable of diversification into all facets of organised crime and legitimate business. This could very well include narcotics, organising gambling including corruption...and organised usury".*

Canadian 'ndrangheta (?)

Toronto

Siderno Group
of Crime

Op. Crimine (3
foreign
chambers –
Germany,
Australia,
Canada)

Murder of Carmine
Verduci (April
2014) - the links
with the head of
the Bonannos,
Montagna, killed in
Montreal

Montreal

LCN – Vito
Rizzuto



Double
affiliations?
(Bruzzese)



Power Vacuum
& Mafia feuds?
Spill over not
likely

Siderno...from the laundrymat



'ndranghetisation?

- *"In 2008 Mr Bruzzese was prosecuted in Italy for being associated with a Sicilian criminal organization. He was ultimately acquitted of that charge. However, in 2010 a warrant for Mr Bruzzese's arrest was issued by the Italian authorities alleging that he was wanted in relation to his alleged association with the 'Ndrangheta" (Bruzzese and Minister of Public Safety + Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Ottawa, October 2016)*
- *Op. Crimine: "In Canada, especially in the cities of Toronto and Montreal there is a complex mafia-style criminal organisation, made of families of Calabrian and Sicilian origins. The leader, at the time of facts, was RIZZUTO Vito, who, thanks to his relationships with the BONANNO family and the CUNTRERA-CARUANA family, had created in Montreal a mafia structure connected to Toronto and to Italy. (...) BRUZZESE Carmelo is the referent of the calabrian cell of this organisation, connected to the entourage of Rizzuto and Rizzuto himself before his arrest in 2004. (...) Carmine VERDUCI can be defined as very close to Carmelo Bruzzese. He used to travel systematically between Italy and Canada as a messenger between the Italian group (Siderno) and their Canadian counterpart".*

The main problem

- The problem with recognising, researching, discussing, and countering the 'ndrangheta outside Calabria is about understanding how the culture of origin mixes with the culture of arrival and how this can inform policing work.
 - This presupposes an understanding of the hybrid conditions of Calabrian culture in different areas of Australia and Canada, to single out mafia behaviours within Calabrian-Australian and Calabrian-Canadian culture(s) and avoid discrimination instead.
-

Preliminary challenges & concerns

The real issue is the *ethnic* element that is necessarily implied when identifying something/someone as 'ndrangheta or Calabrian mafia



The mechanisms of the swings between liberal denialism and moral panic in the mafia/'ndrangheta discourse.



The conceptualisation of culture and the definition of mafia behaviours and mafia mobility within cultural studies.



The challenge of defining and using culture in policing mafias cross-borders.

Between liberal denialism and moral panic in mafia discourse

- The denial or the downplaying of the presence of mafia groups
- Denial is attached to the necessity to avoid prejudice or stigmatisation of entire communities of migrants - the "*liberal progressivist*" variation on the denialist theme (Lupo, 2008: 191)
- The '*ndranghetisation*' of anything "criminal" that is connected to Calabrian individuals or groups or somehow has a Calabrian connection of some sort.
- This swing between denial and panic revolves around the *ethnic* question. Essentially, this question is about the **Calabrian** character of the 'ndrangheta. Is the 'ndrangheta just Calabrian? If we eliminate the Calabrian adjective, does it make sense to talk about the 'ndrangheta?

Mafia behaviours and mafia mobility within cultural studies

- The South of Italy and the Southern Question.
 - the perceived or real backwardness of the South of Italy
 - the irregularity of social relationships and the “**otherness**” of a **problematic South**
 - **mafias appear as the results of the southerners’ attitudes** towards institutions, private property, power and public life.
- This leads to **ethnocentrism**, and a cultural *bias* (racist and discriminatory) on mafias as expressions of southerners’ *psychological* attitudes (*sicilianità* or *calabresità*)
- But culture is not fixed, behaviours change and behaviours are social.

The experience of the North of Italy

- Op. Fiori della Notte di San Vito (1994-96) against clan Mazzaferro in Lombardia: recognising socio-behavioural practices out of Calabria
 - *"This is precisely the point: the 'ndrangheta and the clan Mazzaferro were not born with a specific plan in mind to commit a specific crime, like drugs, kidnappings, robberies or else. The real aim of the 'ndrangheta is mutual assistance, is about offering the right ways, the right connections, the right people for every circumstance, each in their own territory whose control needs to be secured".*
 - *"There were weekly meetings, on Saturday usually, of men of the clans, usually in a bar to avoid phone conversations and to be close without being noticed. Every clan had their own bar and the manager often was also an affiliate and acted as reference point for other clans when they needed to get in touch with someone, without risking sharing addresses or phoning numbers. Meetings at the bar were occasions to drink, play cards or pool, and also communication, discourses of the 'ndrangheta, which is a intricately oral system, needs various discourses to be diffused, known and transmitted".*

The challenge of using “culture” in policing mafias cross-borders

The ‘ndrangheta is the most successful mafia when it comes to maintaining contacts with the motherland. It exhibits a **set of behaviours** that exists and originates within Calabrian culture, but Calabrian culture is a migrant culture.

Things like participation to weddings, baptisms, funerals, dinners, engagement parties as social behaviours are *“validation of the affiliation to the mafia association (...) as moment of the associative life that they cannot miss.”*

The difference between **culture – ethnicity –nationality**

Re-evaluating the value of **“social culture”** as a system of socially developed behaviours, made of collectively held notions and values, understandings, and attitudes, which are dynamic and evolving and most of all inclusive of the “new”.

Final examples



La Madonna della Montagna di Polsi
(2.09) Melbourne (21.11) Toronto (15.08) –
Our Lady of the Mountains in Polsi

- ▣ **Calabria:** Op. Crimine and the meaning of Polsi for the clans – attendance from Germany, Australia, Canada - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A79oXiOt5WI>
- ▣ **Australia:** it *"is not venerated in a church, but in a locale that Calabrian migrants feel belongs to them, an appropriation of the Australian landscape (...) at the edge of the Reggio Calabria Club car park in metropolitan Melbourne"*
 - ▣ *"by its direct association with the sublime symbol of the Madonna della Montagna, the Reggio Calabria Club has become the pre-eminent sacred Calabrian space"* in Melbourne (Papalia, 2008: 67).
 - ▣ On the other side during the bail hearing for Pasquale Barbaro, afterwards convicted for the 2008 case as a 'ndrangheta boss, *"surveillance material will reveal a plan by Mr Barbaro and others to attend the Reggio Calabria Club on 24 July 2008 to murder Michael Barbaro"*.
- ▣ **Canada:** the community of Capistrano in Calabria provided the statue of the Madonna to their Toronto community – Giuseppe Coluccio, boss of the 'ndrangheta arrested in Toronto in 2008 was holding a figure of the Madonna at the moment of his arrest

Policing the 'ndrangheta through cultural awareness

- What are the elements of the culture of origin, the Calabrian culture, that are exploited by the 'ndrangheta? What does the 'ndrangheta clans' set of behaviours twist of their culture of origin? What do **Calabrians and Calabrian *mafiosi*** share? What do they share with the hybrid forms the 'ndrangheta takes abroad?
- Does a **socio-behavioural** help to bridge the gap among Italian investigators from the South, from the North of Italy and foreign ones? Does it allow for a more advanced translation of criminal and social practices to identify, know and recognise the phenomenon abroad?
- Can this approach be translated into culturally oriented policing strategies against the 'ndrangheta in Canada and Australia without leading to bias, racism and ethnic labelling?

"We shall not cease from exploration
and the end of all our exploring will be
to arrive where we began and to know
the place for the first time."

T.S. Eliot - Four Quartets, Little Giddins

The end

Thank you for listening
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