Migrating ‘ndrangheta

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

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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”
Calabria
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?

Struttura della 'Ndrangheta

Crimine o Provincia

Crimine Australiano
Crimine di Toronto*
Lombardia e Liguria
Ionica o Montagna
Tirrenica o Piana
Città

Locali australiani
Locali in Ontario
Locali e Società
Locali e Società
Locali e Società
Locali in Italia***
Locali all'estero***

'ndrine
Attre Locali e Società***
Attre Locali e Società***

Horizontal Structure

The Facilitators

One Crimine
3 Mandamenti in Calabria
Chambers of Control
Horizontal Structure

3
Crimine
3
Mandamenti
7
Chambers
Of Control
1
Horizontal
Structure
4
The Facilitators

La mappa delle cosce

IL SOLE 24 ORE - 21.02.2008
‘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
The port of the ‘Ndrangheta: Gioia Tauro
Internationalisation

First Level: Migration - Blood ties - YES OR NO

Second Level: Delocalisation - Drugs & Wealth

Third Level: Colonisation - Wealth, Power & Politics

The importance of migration

Infiltration
Taking root
Imitation
Hybridisation

Internationalisation
Stable migration/colonisation out of Europe

**Canada** - Siderno
(mainly the town and nearby villages)

**Australia** - Platì (and nearby villages in the Aspromonte)
Australia & the Aspromonte
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 (?)

Siderno Group of Crime

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

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

LCN - Vito Rizzuto

Double affiliations? (Bruzzese)

Power Vacuum & Mafia feuds? Spill over not likely
Siderno...from the laundrymat
“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 organization, 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.

“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 an intricately oral system, needs various discourses to be diffused, known and transmitted”.
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 are 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 delle 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