

Spring 5-2011

Taking Back Sicily: The Antimafia Movement and its Counter-Hegemonic Attack on Cosa Nostra

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**Taking Back Sicily:
The Antimafia Movement and its Counter-Hegemonic Attack on *Cosa Nostra***

An Honors Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Politics
Bates College
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Arts

By
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Lewiston, Maine
March 25, 2011

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Numerous individuals deserve to be recognized for the formative role they each played in helping to create this project.

First, I give my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my advisor, Jim Richter. The countless hours he has invested in this project deserve praise. Thank you for your unwavering support, positive encouragement, and willingness to help in all conceivable ways.

Thank you in advance to my Honors Panel, as well. I am so appreciative of Jane and Peter Schneider for traveling to Bates to participate in this process, as well as to Arlene MacLeod and Francesco Duina for giving me their time and support in the final stages of this project.

My wonderful family and friends also deserve acknowledgement. Your endless support and love mean more to me than I can express.

I am forever in gratitude to my abroad institute, the Mediterranean Center for Arts and Sciences, for first showing me the wonders of Sicily, and on my second trip guiding me through the realization that even the most breathtaking place in the world can sometimes struggle under dark shadows.

This is the story of the activists with whom I worked in Sicily, and represents an account of their unrelenting fight and determination to take back their island from *Cosa Nostra*. Their incredible willingness to aid my research helped me to fully understand all that is at stake in *la lotta contro la mafia*. I can only hope that this thesis pays proper tribute to their remarkable courage and incredible daily efforts.

Abstract:

This thesis utilizes Gramscian theory to explore the antimafia movement's shift in tactics from the 1980s to present day. The movement that arose out of the violence of 1980s Sicily is hardly the same in nature as the contemporary movement. During the 1980s, the mafia was conceptualized mainly as a political problem requiring political solutions. When legislative reforms did not eradicate the mafia's entrenched power, however, *Cosa Nostra* came to be perceived as a cultural phenomenon. In order to curb mafia power, therefore, the antimafia movement recognized the need to focus on society as the agent that could deliver Sicily into a new future. Using my own fieldwork from Sicily, it will be shown that the movement has changed its focus over time from state to society. Gramscian theory will be employed to argue that the antimafia movement is counter-hegemonic in nature, as it works to eliminate the physical and ideological domination *Cosa Nostra* has held over Sicilians for nearly 150 years. Moreover, Gramsci's ideas will show why—when challenging hegemonic power—it is not enough for civil society to target the state for reform. Rather, the antimafia movement must engage in a deliberate and evolving attack on *Cosa Nostra*, working amongst society in order to redirect Sicily's political, social, and economic trajectory that the mafia has dictated since the 1860s.

INTRODUCTION:

It is a Saturday morning, but Gobina Scuola in Sicily is full of students. Today represents an important day for the high school children; while school is not in session, attendance is taken to see how many students have shown up for the antimafia lecture. The turnout is remarkable, forcing students and teachers alike to sit on the floor or stand in the doorway of the classroom. All attendees have come to hear five members of one of Sicily's leading antimafia organizations, Libera, speak to the students about their role in *la lotta contro la mafia*. The atmosphere in the room is one of intrigue, curiosity, and a touch of skepticism. Libera is just one of several antimafia organizations working to drastically alter the political and social trajectory of Sicily by destroying *Cosa Nostra*. Images of fallen antimafia heroes flash across the projector screen and video clips are shown of emotive speeches against the mafia at the height of its violence in the 1980s. It is a day of education in civic responsibility, for all young Sicilians are told today that they have the power and obligation to resist, denounce, and actively fight against the mafia just as these fallen martyrs did. The students are encouraged to view themselves as part of a society that respects and values legality, law and order, and the dignity of legitimate work—a marked departure from decades of acquiescence to criminality on the island. Scrap pieces of paper are passed around displaying a famous quote from now immortalized antimafia magistrate Giovanni Falcone who first called ordinary citizens to action in the form of the antimafia movement in the late 1980s. The paper reads: “yes, I am afraid, but we all should be more courageous.”

This educational lecture represents a key component of the contemporary antimafia movement: working at the societal level, and particularly among Sicilian youth,

to destroy *Cosa Nostra*. Thirty years ago, such cultural work was not prudent or effective among a society that had not yet broken free of its stupor of acquiescence and fear that reigned in Sicily as long as the mafia has been a dominant power on the island. This widespread sentiment was responsible for effectively suppressing any limited forms of resistance that occurred in the years prior to the 1980s. Indeed, thirty years ago in Sicily the mafia ruled with heavy hand, as any opposition or resistance to its authority was met with violence or murder, and consequently apathy and turning a blind eye to pervasive *mafiosi* illegality became an everyday survival mechanism. The general conviction in Sicily for decades was that “to save your life...you have to be careful, wary, silent.”¹ The civilian-based antimafia movement is responsible for transforming the Sicilian climate from trepidation to one in which individuals can now collectively stand up against mafia power and influence. While much progress has occurred, there are still many who believe that *Cosa Nostra* represents the “irreversible destiny” of Sicily—a scar that is imprinted too deep upon the land to remove. One of the most significant challenges the antimafia movement faces today, therefore, is overcoming and dismantling the insidious mentality of apathy and passive acceptance of mafia domination of social, economic, and political affairs on the island—sentiment that has become solidified over a period of 150 years.

While educational lectures are a common tactic among many contemporary antimafia organizations, this now widespread practice represents a fairly new development and phase in antimafia strategy. Now attending exclusively to efforts at the societal level, the antimafia movement is very different from when it first arose out of the violence and chaos of 1980s Sicily. The reason for the uniqueness of the 1980s was the evolving and growing nature of *Cosa Nostra* during these years. In the late 1970s, the

¹ Roberto Saviano, *Gomorra* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2007), 119.

mafia entered the drug trafficking market and began acquiring unprecedented wealth. As a result, a “mafia war” between competing mafia families waged publicly in the streets as *mafiosi* vied for supremacy and the chance to head *Cosa Nostra* whose power was growing ever more potent. This publicly fought war began compromising law and order and the safety of ordinary civilians.² This decade, therefore, stood apart from previous decades of mafia power, where in the past *Cosa Nostra* had taken strides to avoid implicating civilians unnecessarily in its affairs, as long as the criminal organization’s ability to maintain a dominant influence over businesses, attitudes, and culture was not impeded.

Another important factor contributing to mafia power during the 1970s-80s was the Italian state and its historical relationship with *Cosa Nostra*. Since unification in 1860 and particularly after World War II, the Italian state has depended on and utilized *Cosa Nostra* as an organization to help carry out state functions of controlling order, monopolizing violence, and providing essential services to citizens. The mafia has grown over the years as a result of this partnership. Particularly after the 1950s, the state informally granted legal impunity to the mafia in exchange for electoral support from *Cosa Nostra*—a mutually beneficial transaction that allowed the mafia to acquire a new level of dominance by the 1980s.³ This symbiotic relationship largely went unnoticed and unchallenged for many years, as Sicilians became accustomed to such state of affairs, not questioning this system as long as their basic needs were met by some higher authority—whether that authority was the state or mafia. However, in the late 1970s and early 1980s when it became increasingly clear that the Italian state had delegated its roles to the mafia

² Alison Jamieson, *The Antimafia* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 24-5.

³ Jamieson, 16.

to the extent that the state was incapable of carrying out basic functions of enforcing order and providing protection to civilians, powerful state authorities came forward calling for an end to state-mafia relations, and more importantly, the eradication of *Cosa Nostra* from the Sicilian landscape.

Early antimafia activists primarily hailed from the state level, including General dalla Chiesa and Pio la Torre, and sought to check the mafia's growing sense of invincibility.⁴ These early forms of antimafia activism, however, were met with swift elimination by *Cosa Nostra*, which effectively quelled out of fear any widespread civilian activism that may have arose in the wake of these early protests against the mafia. Through the murdering of early activists, *Cosa Nostra* clearly demonstrated its commitment to eliminating any opposition threatening its power. Not all Sicilians were ready to continue the trend of acquiescence and acceptance to status quo power structures and the state-mafia system, however. Magistrates Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino arose on the antimafia scene in a commanding way in the early 1980s in the wake of these murders, determined to lead a widespread fight against the mafia that would destroy *Cosa Nostra* for good.

Falcone and Borsellino advocated for a new strategy to combat the mafia. Recognizing that past antimafia attempts had failed because state authorities were isolated and alone in their challenge of *Cosa Nostra*, these magistrates aptly realized that a successful fight against the mafia would require broad participation and involvement from Sicilians—not simply at the magistrate level.⁵ Falcone and Borsellino, therefore, effectively laid the framework for a grassroots, civilian-based antimafia movement to

⁴ Jamieson, 2-3.

⁵ Jamieson, 26.

develop and flourish with their emotive calls to action that rallied ordinary Sicilians to overturn decades of fear and acquiescence and fight against the mafia in their daily lives. Civilian involvement began in the early 1980s, as a result, but would not culminate into the widespread movement of today for several more years—a testament to the extent to which *Cosa Nostra* had become engrained within Sicily.

How Falcone and Borsellino interpreted the mafia phenomenon in the 1980s directly affected how ordinary Sicilians came to understand the factors that were responsible for allowing *Cosa Nostra* to achieve the unprecedented level of power they saw openly and unremorsefully expressed in the streets and against antimafia activists. Through working with *pentiti*, or mafia penitents, Falcone and Borsellino learned intimate details about *Cosa Nostra* and its relations with the Italian state.⁶ During the 1980s, therefore, these magistrates—in line with the thinking of past antimafia activists, as well—believed *Cosa Nostra* fundamentally to represent a political problem. Falcone and Borsellino believed the Italian state and its historical dependence on the mafia was directly responsible for the unchecked power of the mafia Sicilians witnessed in the 1980s.⁷ Based on these sentiments, the magistrates spearheaded a new antimafia effort that encouraged civilians to join in protesting the state to enact legislative reforms that would end a symbiotic relationship that had existed for over a century.

The antimafia movement in its nascent form, therefore, focused on targeting the state for reforms in order to dismantle *Cosa Nostra* and its influence over the island's economy, politics, and culture. Pressure at the civilian and magistrate level began encouraging the state to reevaluate its historical ties to the mafia, as the full extent and

⁶ Jamieson, 3.

⁷ Jane Schneider and Peter Schneider, "Suggestions from the Antimafia Struggle in Sicily," *Anthropological Quarterly* 75, no. 1 (2001): 156.

compromising nature of these ties were increasingly coming to light and could no longer be hidden from the now aware and scrutinizing public eye. This reevaluation manifested in important legislative reforms that broke with the state's history of implicit grants of impunity to the mafia. Among the earliest of these reforms was the *Rognoni-La Torre* Law, which officially made it a crime to be a *mafioso* or to be associated with *Cosa Nostra*, no matter the extent of that involvement.⁸ Another important political development of the mid-1980s was harsher legislation dictating the condition of *mafiosi* prison sentencing. These important reforms paved the way for the Maxi Trial—the first Sicilian trial utilizing these new laws as a legal framework to fight the mafia. The Maxi Trial of 1986-7 represented the culmination of Falcone and Borsellino's testimonial work with *pentiti* and culminated in the arrest of over 300 *mafiosi*.⁹

Cosa Nostra did not lie dormant in the wake of this rising antimafia tide, however. Despite fear of a mafia response, Falcone and Borsellino continued their work against *mafiosi* and encouraged the politicization and involvement of ordinary Sicilians in the antimafia cause. When it became glaringly apparent that *Cosa Nostra* could no longer depend on state allies to insulate the organization from judicial prosecution, the mafia retaliated by murdering the famous faces and rallying loci of the antimafia movement, publicly killing Falcone and Borsellino in 1992.¹⁰ While the civilian-based antimafia movement had its first seeds sown in the mid-1980s particularly outside of the courtroom that housed the Maxi Trial, civilian involvement in the antimafia cause had been somewhat limited thus far. By murdering the leaders of the antimafia movement, *Cosa*

⁸ Jamieson, 3.

⁹ Jane C. Schneider and Peter T. Schneider, *Reversible Destiny* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 140.

¹⁰ Jamieson, xix-xx.

Nostra believed it had effectively suppressed any future antimafia activism.¹¹ What was unanticipated by the mafia, however, was the extent to which ordinary citizens would be incensed and mobilized by the death of these antimafia martyrs. Therefore, 1992 marked a new phase of the antimafia movement, in which ordinary civilians in unprecedented numbers and commitment carried on the antimafia fight to which Falcone, Borsellino, and other early activists had devoted their lives.

Thus, in the wake of the magistrates' deaths, the antimafia movement became increasingly more civilian-driven, with ordinary Sicilians furthering the antimafia cause in the best way they knew how: by continuing to push for political reforms and legislative initiatives to curb mafia power as Falcone and Borsellino had begun to do before their untimely deaths. Early antimafia organizations arising in the mid-1980s and early 1990s showcased this commitment to targeting the state by lobbying authorities and government leaders to adopt a harsher legal stance against the mafia. Also during this time, Sicilians pressured the state to remove from power corrupt politicians with known mafia ties.¹² A new era of transparency, accountability, and legality was desired by Sicilians, and political reforms appeared to be the necessary medium through which to accomplish such a drastic change.

While the antimafia movement undoubtedly succeeded in prompting a rush of legislative reforms in this era that allowed Sicily to develop an overdue penal code against *mafiosi*, political reforms clearly were insufficient in eradicating *Cosa Nostra*.¹³ Despite the fact that a new law intending to address organized crime was said to be

¹¹ Jamieson, xx.

¹² Jamieson, 128-130.

¹³ Ernesto U. Savona, "The Mafia—What to Do Next?" (Conference, Palermo, Italy, December 10-12, 1992), 15.

enacted every three weeks in the early 1990s, the mafia still reigned over Sicily with its power and influence largely unchallenged.¹⁴ This was because the mafia—as it had succeeded in doing several times since its origin in 1860—responded to the unfavorable political climate of the 1980s-early 1990s by channeling its activities into more elusive and less visible markets such as heroin trafficking and illegal immigration.¹⁵ Most importantly, however, *Cosa Nostra* remained because it represented much more than a political problem, and merely attending to political ends would never be enough to curb this powerful criminal organization.

After the early 1990s, when it was clear that political reforms could only go so far in checking mafia power, *Cosa Nostra* became widely perceived as a cultural problem requiring work at the societal level to fully challenge and dismantle. Thus, beginning in the mid-1990s the antimafia movement evolved from targeting the state to society, engaging in community work among Sicilians in order to address the factors that have allowed mafia power to perpetuate over 150 years. The hope behind these efforts is to encourage legality, law and order, and denouncement of the mafia among ordinary Sicilians whose involvement is an imperative component of this new phase of the antimafia fight. Only by engaging in cultural work will the movement be able to address the apathy and fear that continues to contribute to mafia power and influence. It is clear, therefore, that the antimafia movement has changed significantly over time, from perceiving the mafia as a political to a cultural problem, and focusing not on the state but

¹⁴ Savona, “The Mafia—What to Do Next?” 94.

¹⁵ Alessandra Stanley, “Palemo Shows Off as a Cleaned-Up Mafia Capital,” *The New York Times*, December 13, 2000, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9802E5D6133FF930A25751C1A9669C8B63>.

rather Sicilians, and specifically the youth, as the agents that will carry Sicily towards a future no longer dictated by *Cosa Nostra*.

The important ways in which the antimafia movement has changed since its origins are hard to discern from current scholarly literature on the subject, however. Indeed, the breadth of research about the movement in its nascent form stands in stark contrast to the lack of contemporary examinations of antimafia efforts in Sicily. The reason for disproportional attention from scholars during different time periods does not reflect the movement's strength or weakness in the 1980s versus the contemporary period. Rather, the changing aims and strategies of the contemporary movement simply have not attracted the international media spotlight to the extent that the movement did when it first arose unpredictably out of the destruction and ruins of 1980s Sicily.

Contrary to assumptions that could be derived from the lack of research on the contemporary movement, the antimafia movement has not lost strength or influence, but has rather changed the way it operates in important ways deserving of attention. This thesis seeks to fill this gap in scholarly literature about the movement by attending to the following questions: What is the current nature of the antimafia movement compared to its nascent form in the 1980s? With these new changes in mind, how does defining the antimafia movement as counter-hegemonic reveal the complex aims of the movement and the difficulties it faces in producing widespread cultural change in Sicily?

The complexity of these questions has required me to evolve my focus and redirect my attention to different aspects of scholarly literature that will allow me to fully uncover the intricacies of the antimafia movement and what it seeks to accomplish. My focus centered first on social movement theory (SMT), which offered important insight

on the conditions that can bring about a civilian-based movement and the hindrances that commonly stand in the way of movements working to accomplish broad cultural changes. I next examined important subsections of social movement theory, including political opportunity structure, resource mobilization, and framing theories. While this was a necessary theoretical framework from which to start, as these ideas shed light on how a movement appeals to the masses, mobilizes support, and maintains constituents, social movement theory failed to explain why the antimafia movement has changed over time, and specifically why it was considered prudent to switch from targeting the state to society in the mid-1990s.

What follows in Chapter One, therefore, is an analysis of Antonio Gramsci's main theoretical ideas about hegemony and civil society. The Italian Marxist's notions will be explicated, as his ideas offer a compelling framework from which to analyze what a social movement must do in order to enact widespread cultural change in a society that has long been under the control of a dominant group and ideology. Social movement theory proved insufficient because its focus on the state hindered an understanding of why a social movement might also need to work amongst society. Gramsci provides a sound theoretical framework from which to analyze the antimafia movement, as he describes what a movement must do in order to challenge hegemonic forces deeply entrenched within a region's economy, politics, and culture. Because Gramsci notes the importance of working within but also outside the state when attempting to bring about widespread cultural change, Gramsci explains what social movement theory could not.

CHAPTER ONE: Gramsci, Hegemony, and Civil Society

Antonio Gramsci was an Italian Marxist who made his most significant contributions to political theory during the 1920s-30s. Writing in Italy during the time of fascism, Gramsci sought to understand and explain why a socialist revolution failed to come to fruition in his home country.¹⁶ Incarcerated because of his beliefs, Gramsci was forced to document much of his political thinking on scraps of paper while in his prison cell. His ideas about how a society could enact widespread cultural change would later be compiled in his *Prison Notebooks*.¹⁷ Because Gramsci explored how the proletariat could generate a “cultural revolution” to overthrow the bourgeoisie,¹⁸ Gramsci’s theories offer insight into why a social movement—socialist or otherwise—might change from targeting the state to targeting society when trying to accomplish a broad revolution. Gramsci’s ideas differed from other Marxist theorists of his time in a notable way; in attempting to launch a cultural revolution, Gramsci recognized that tackling the state is not enough to produce widespread cultural change. Rather, Gramsci believed that a movement must also work amongst society if a revolution is to be successful. In order to understand Gramsci’s rationale for why targeting the state is insufficient, it is imperative to examine the Marxist’s concept of hegemony.

HEGEMONY:

As Gramsci described, hegemony is the “‘spontaneous’ consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on societal life by the dominant

¹⁶ Sidney Tarrow, *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 120-1.

¹⁷ Roger S. Gottlieb, *An Anthology of Western Marxism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 112.

¹⁸ Chantal Mouffe, *Gramsci and Marxist Theory* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 179.

fundamental group.”¹⁹ Gramsci believed hegemony to manifest in both physical and ideological domination,²⁰ consequently resulting in “not only united economic and political objectives but also intellectual and moral unity.”²¹ At the time when Gramsci was writing what would become the *Prison Notebooks*, he conceptualized the locus of hegemony creating such uniformity to be the Italian state. The widespread infiltration that hegemony necessitates led Gramsci to devote time to explaining how other actors besides the state are necessary in order to ensure that domination is spread so widely that it infiltrated all levels of society.²² Simply put, the state requires the active involvement of other external actors in order to achieve hegemony. Gramsci deemed these multifaceted outlets outside the state to be “hegemonic apparatuses” that contributed to and helped enforce state hegemony.²³ Instead of a single locus of hegemonic power, therefore, there exists a hegemonic or “historical bloc,” whose different components work in tandem to achieve the level of domination needed for hegemony to be achieved.²⁴ Gramsci’s hegemonic bloc consisted of several actors, including institutions such as political parties, the Catholic Church, civil society, and a last category he deemed “traditional intellectuals.”²⁵ The strength of the hegemonic bloc, therefore, was dependent on the active involvement of these non-state actors, as dominant ideology continually was reproduced through these varied mediums in order to create and entrench hegemony.²⁶

¹⁹ Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, eds., *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 12.

²⁰ Gottlieb, 112.

²¹ Mouffe, 181.

²² Mouffe, 5.

²³ Mouffe, 5, 187.

²⁴ David L. Levy and Daniel Egan, “A Neo-Gramscian Approach to Corporate Political Strategy: Conflict and Accommodation in the Climate Change Negotiations,” *Journal of Management Studies* 40, no. 3 (2003): 4.

²⁵ Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 143.

²⁶ Hoare and Smith, 12.

It is important to delineate how Gramsci conceptualized the latter two components of the hegemonic bloc—civil society and traditional intellectuals—as these elements are not self-explanatory and an understanding of their nature and function is of paramount importance to grasping the complexity of the bloc and the vital role that each actor plays within it. Gramsci’s understanding of civil society is particularly important, as his way of conceptualizing this notion differs considerably from more modern, neoliberal scholars who predominantly consider civil society to be a “third sector” operating outside of state and market influences.²⁷ Gramsci believed such positioning to be idealistic and highly improbable—especially in Italy. Indeed, Gramsci suggested that civil society, as the private sphere where individuals operate, is a vital medium the hegemonic state seeks to control in order to ensure that hegemonic “ideology is produced and diffused” throughout society.²⁸ Quite to the contrary of neoliberal theorists, therefore, Gramsci suggested civil society was the “hegemonic apparatus of the ruling group, or the arena where hegemony is reproduced and legitimized, thereby helping to enforce pre-existing power structures.”²⁹ Based on this definition, it is easy to understand why Gramsci considered civil society to be an instrumental component of the hegemonic bloc.

It is also important to explicate Gramsci’s notion of “traditional intellectuals” as another crucial pillar within the hegemonic bloc. Gramsci qualified that, while every individual possessed the potential to act as an intellectual, not all carry out this function.³⁰ In order to be an intellectual, one must “participate in a particular conception of the

²⁷ Neera Chandhoke, “The Limits of Global Civil Society,” in Helmut Anheier, Marlies Glasius and Mary Kaldor, eds. *The Global Civil Society Yearbook* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2002), 36.

²⁸ Gottlieb, 118; Mouffe, 187.

²⁹ Mouffe, 30.

³⁰ Hoare and Smith, 9.

world”³¹ by perpetuating the ideology propelled by the dominant ruling group.³²

Traditional intellectuals have a dual role in ensuring the effective functioning of the bloc, therefore, as they show individuals how to conceive of their function within the dominant system and also work to ensure that hegemonic ideology is accepted among the masses.³³

In order to attend to these tasks, traditional intellectuals must coerce the masses until they are in congruence with the dominant ideology. Traditional intellectuals work to create a society where hegemony is so deeply rooted that over time the masses consider such ideology natural to the extent that it comes to reflect the “collective will.”³⁴ When the hegemonic system becomes developed to this extent, the masses grant “spontaneous consent” to the ruling group, and the system reproduces itself with little effort.³⁵

However, in instances where consent is not spontaneous, it is the responsibility of traditional intellectuals to patrol any deviation from the hegemonic ideology. The threat of non-consent may be enough to hold society to an ideology. However, in “moments of crisis of command and direction when spontaneous consent has failed,”³⁶ and threats are insufficient, traditional intellectuals play a large role in obtaining consent through force. In this role, intellectuals function as an “apparatus of state coercive power” by punishing those who break the trend of granting “consent, either actively or passively.”³⁷

Traditional intellectuals are responsible, therefore, for spreading hegemony and the acceptance of such ideals until its entrenchment is universal and widespread and therefore hard to refute or dismantle. These intellectuals work to maintain a “culture of silence” in

³¹ Gottlieb, 116.

³² Hoare and Smith, 12.

³³ Mouffe, 185.

³⁴ Mouffe, 40.

³⁵ Mouffe, 191.

³⁶ Gottlieb, 118.

³⁷ Hoare and Smith, 12.

which the masses are “ignorant and lethargic” to hegemony, not protesting this state of affairs out of fear or ignorance about the power structures controlling them.³⁸ These intellectuals are thus of vital importance, and represent a specific sector of the population that tends to the perpetuation of the hegemonic system. Traditional intellectuals are backed by institutions also serving the hegemonic bloc, and can be found in the capacities of school teachers, religious leaders, or the media, for instance.³⁹

IMPORTANCE OF NON-STATE ACTORS:

It is evident that hegemony is not just created and reproduced through the state. Rather, the state controls institutions, the economy, and societal actors in a way that ensures its dominance is reverberated throughout society, and that its ideology becomes entrenched to stabilize and maintain the system.⁴⁰ Hegemony thus becomes solidified over time with the help of the components of the hegemonic bloc. The involvement of varied non-state actors ensures that hegemony becomes an all-encompassing system of dominance over the economy, politics, and culture. As a result, any alternatives outside the system are hard to conceptualize, as the components of the bloc work diligently to limit the expression and ability for alternatives to exist. The hegemonic bloc thus comes to control production and creates a subordinate group of the masses who make sense of their realities by contributing to the further production of the established system.⁴¹ In this way, the masses form a “collective mentality” under the hegemonic system, and develop “a typical way of perceiving and interpreting the world that provides orientations to

³⁸ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1997), 12.

³⁹ Mouffe, 187.

⁴⁰ Mouffe, 5.

⁴¹ Robert W. Cox, *Production, Power, and World Order: Social Forces in the Making of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 17.

action” for these individuals, channeling their activities and behavior into ways that further perpetuate hegemony.⁴²

DISMANTLING A HEGEMONIC BLOC:

Taking Gramsci’s ideas into consideration, it would be logical to assume that the Marxist had little faith in society’s ability to generate a cultural revolution based on the strength of hegemonic forces working to limit any deviation from dominant ideology. While it is clear that the hegemonic bloc constantly works to maintain this system, it is important to note that overthrowing hegemony is difficult, but not impossible. Gramsci expressed the belief that hegemony could be dismantled by society under very specific conditions.

Hegemonic blocs are not impermeable.⁴³ Due to the fact that solidification depends on a variety of actors working in congruence with one another constantly to maintain the system, fissures are a natural occurrence within the dominant bloc. Fissures can be understood as the natural breaks within a bloc that threaten its overall strength, and can be created “endogenously as well as from external shocks” to the hegemonic system.⁴⁴

Internal fissures may develop within the hegemonic bloc as a result of the fact that the bloc’s strength depends on the consistent efforts of a variety of state and non-state actors working to perpetuate the hegemonic system. As the state depends on civil society, traditional intellectuals, and various institutions to reinforce its hegemony, it is possible that conflicts between the state and non-state actors can create fissures that threaten the stability of the hegemonic bloc.

⁴² Cox, 25.

⁴³ Levy and Egan, 5.

⁴⁴ Levy and Egan, 5.

The hegemonic bloc is far from stable, as it is also liable to external challenges to its stability. Gramsci believed that an external source of fissures could be produced through the medium of civil society. This requires sufficient explanation, as it has already been noted above that Gramsci believed civil society to be a vital component of the hegemonic bloc. However, this is precisely where civil society derives its unique ability to challenge hegemony; because this medium is an important channel for the maintenance of hegemony, should civil society renege on this imperative function, the stability of the overall system is threatened. As Gramsci explained, civil society must be acutely aware of its importance in maintaining hegemony in order to recognize its ability to also destroy that system by no longer choosing to perpetuate it. Gramsci thus attributes civil society with the ability to “reclaim political society” as a space for power negotiations instead of a medium serving hegemonic ends.⁴⁵ As Gramsci suggests, the moment civil society recognizes that it does not need to “produce the hegemony that will stabilize bourgeoisie domination” is the moment civil society recognizes its power to dismantle hegemony.

Civil society therefore must become aware that it is “capable of creating a new history and collaborating in the formation of a new power, rather than to justify a power which has already been established.”⁴⁶ This recognition of civil society’s duality may come about once natural fissures within the hegemonic bloc are made apparent, at which point civil society becomes attuned to its ability to widen those fissures by withdrawing its support of the hegemonic system. Civil society has the power, therefore, to either capitalize on preexisting internal fissures within the bloc, or create its own external fissures that jeopardize the hegemonic system by refusing to perpetuate hegemonic

⁴⁵ Mouffe, 41.

⁴⁶ Mouffe, 36.

ideology. Therefore, Gramsci's ideas suggest that civil society can play a variety of roles and have varied relations with the state; while civil society can act as an enforcer of already established power structures,⁴⁷ it also has the ability to serve as an important realm for power discussions and challenges—thereby representing the medium through which cultural revolution can be enacted.⁴⁸

Only when civil society becomes aware of its unique spatiality within a hegemonic system—as both enforcer and potential challenger of hegemony—does it realize its ability to work “within and against the state” in order to dismantle this domination.⁴⁹ Gramsci coined the duality of civil society as the “war of positioning.”⁵⁰ Through a war of positioning, by working at the state but also societal level as a result of civil society's favorable location among these two entities, hegemony can be dismantled. The importance of engaging in a “war of positioning” is paramount, Gramsci believed, because to merely target the state for reform is not enough. This is because the state is not the only source of hegemony, as many non-state actors also work to perpetuate hegemonic domination and ideology.⁵¹ Thus, merely attending to the state is insufficient, as these external pillars can still work to maintain the bloc. Counter-hegemonic initiatives must also tackle society where these non-state actors exist and work, therefore, to limit the dominant group's ability to retain a hegemonic bloc over the masses.⁵² When civil society becomes attuned to its ability to engage in a “war of positioning” to dismantle hegemony, it is said to become aware of its “counter-hegemonic potential.”

⁴⁷ Peter Mayo, “In And Against the State: Gramsci, War of Position, and Adult Education,” *Journal of Critical Education Policy Studies* 3, no. 2 (2005): 2.

⁴⁸ Cohen and Arato, 144.

⁴⁹ Mayo, 1-2.

⁵⁰ Mouffe, 5.

⁵¹ Mouffe, 5.

⁵² Mouffe, 5.

COUNTER-HEGEMONY:

In order to dismantle hegemony, civil society must create a counter-hegemonic movement. Counter-hegemonic movements must attend to two essential tasks to dismantle hegemony, the first of which involves dismantling the existing hegemonic ideology perpetuated by the dominant group and made strong by the hegemonic bloc. In order to dismantle hegemonic ideology, the individuals who perpetuate such—the traditional intellectuals—must be targeted. In an effort to do so, a counter-hegemonic movement must create its own group of intellectuals, the “new intellectuals,” who help to destroy the dominant ideology. New intellectuals therefore must “assimilate and conquer ideologically the traditional intellectuals” responsible for reproducing hegemony.

New intellectuals of a counter-hegemonic movement face a challenging task. Hegemony is characterized by the extent to which it pervades all levels of society and daily life. As previously stated, the longer hegemony goes unchallenged, the more it becomes entrenched, and the harder task new intellectuals are presented with as they attempt to deconstruct power structures and ideology that have long been acquiesced to or considered the norm. In order to challenge these often deep-rooted sentiments, new intellectuals must work amongst the masses to call into question how the masses conceptualize the world they live in, and the power structures that dictate their reality.⁵³ It is imperative for new intellectuals to demonstrate to the masses that a given ideology or authority is in fact hegemonic, and moreover that their lack of action against such forces is perpetuating this domination.⁵⁴

⁵³ Mouffe, 194.

⁵⁴ Gottlieb, 128.

An essential task before new intellectuals in dismantling hegemony, therefore, is the development of a “critical consciousness” among the masses. Gramsci notes the presence of two consciousnesses that exist within individuals, which stand in contradiction to one another.⁵⁵ One consciousness, he maintains, is “inherited from the past and uncritically absorbed.”⁵⁶ This consciousness is relevant, however, because it dictates an individual’s moral convictions and their “direction of will.”⁵⁷ The detriment of this consciousness exists in the fact that these are inherited sentiments, which can have the effect of discouraging individuals from acting against or questioning them, merely encouraging them to continue to acquiesce to the status quo.⁵⁸ The second consciousness is the way in which an individual views the world in theory—felt but not performed.⁵⁹ A successful counter-hegemonic initiative must therefore encourage the contestation between these two consciousnesses, and advocate for individuals to no longer act contradictorily in “theory versus practice.”⁶⁰ It is this contradiction among the masses that enables them to acquiesce to or unknowingly accept hegemony.

New intellectuals directly challenge these contradictions by promoting “critical consciousnesses,” where they work to advance an acute awareness among the masses of how their double consciousnesses contribute to the hegemonic bloc. This critical awareness promotes an intellectual awakening that shakes one from a stupor of acquiescence, and encourages him to understand how hegemony has repressed him. This intellectual awakening grants individuals agency over their lives and allows them to

⁵⁵ Gottlieb, 127-8.

⁵⁶ Gottlieb, 128.

⁵⁷ Gottlieb, 128.

⁵⁸ Gottlieb, 128.

⁵⁹ Gottlieb, 127.

⁶⁰ Gottlieb, 128.

discover how to function within a new “intellectual-moral bloc”⁶¹ where they no longer need to acquiesce to the “intellectual and moral direction” imposed upon society by the hegemonic group.⁶² New intellectuals therefore demonstrate that hegemony need not reflect the “collective national-popular will” as it does not truly reflect the will and interest of the masses, but rather exclusively benefits the ruling group.⁶³ This intellectual-moral bloc directly creates fissures within the hegemonic bloc, as it is created by critical and aware masses who no longer passively acquiesce to advancing hegemony. As Gramsci describes, through the development of a critical consciousness, every individual is made into a “philosopher,” in that they critically evaluate the world and their role in it.⁶⁴

Paulo Freire optimistically suggested that “every human being, no matter how ‘ignorant’ or submerged in the ‘culture of silence’ he or she may be, is capable of looking critically at the world in a dialogical encounter with others.”⁶⁵ If new intellectuals can prompt this realization, the oppressed “can gradually perceive personal and social reality as well as the contradictions in it, become conscious of his or her perception of that reality, and deal critically with it.”⁶⁶ This is a crucial step towards cultural change, because it is not until an individual comes to an understanding of the world that they can then work to change it.⁶⁷ The difficulty in accomplishing “critical consciousness” in a society that has long been subjugated should not be underestimated, however. Hegemonic

⁶¹ Gottlieb, 127.

⁶² Mouffe, 193.

⁶³ Mouffe, 194.

⁶⁴ Emily Grady, “Generating a Counter-Hegemonic Food Movement: Exploring the Role of Participatory Processes in a Lewiston, ME Community Food Project,” (Undergraduate Honors Thesis, Bates College, 2010), 28.

⁶⁵ Freire, 14.

⁶⁶ Freire, 14.

⁶⁷ Grady, 28.

forces entrenched over time have the effect of creating a mentality among the masses that discourages challenges against the hegemonic system, as individuals come to “confuse freedom with the maintenance of the status quo.”⁶⁸ The strength of counter-hegemony, therefore, can be measured in its ability to overcome the “fear of freedom” among masses long suffering under an oppressive power structure.⁶⁹ Because the oppressed have been victims under hegemony for so long, and only through counter-hegemonic activities are made to realize they were exploited under status-quo power systems, freeing themselves from this domination seems unnatural, unsafe, and difficult.⁷⁰ Through developing critical consciousnesses among the masses, however, counter-hegemonic movements demonstrate that individuals need not fear, but rather should embrace and actively work towards the attainment of the benefits and agency this freedom from hegemony brings.

Critical consciousness must occur throughout society; it is not enough solely for intellectuals to engage in this introspective process if cultural change is to be accomplished.⁷¹ Working within schools, Gramsci believed,⁷² is an important way to carry out the development of critical consciousnesses in society and overcome the “culture of silence” that perpetuates hegemony.⁷³ Because schools can act as a medium for either the reproduction or challenge of hegemonic ideology, it is important that a counter-hegemonic movement reclaim these mediums in order to gain control over the varied sources that strengthen hegemony daily. The importance of schools in counter-hegemonic movements is an idea that will be revisited and explicated in Chapter 4.⁷⁴

⁶⁸ Freire, 18.

⁶⁹ Freire, 28.

⁷⁰ Freire, 29.

⁷¹ Gottlieb, 127.

⁷² Gottlieb, 117.

⁷³ Freire, 12.

⁷⁴ Freire, 16.

It is important to note, however, that it is possible for the dominant group to perceive an ideological shift occurring, and attempt to stop any shift away from the hegemonic system so as to prevent its loss of control over the masses.⁷⁵ A hegemonic bloc will work diligently to monitor and limit fissures, particularly those created by external forces. Specifically, the dominant group fearing a loss of power might attempt to prevent “critical consciousnesses” from being attained, as the dominant group benefits from a docile, consenting population that acquiesces to its power and does not realize that it is oppressed. Gramsci therefore accurately worried that hegemonic groups would have an interest in attempting to prevent counter-hegemonic initiatives.⁷⁶ This is why the first task of counter-hegemonic movements is to weaken the ability of traditional intellectuals to carry out their role, because if the hegemonic bloc loses this agent of enforcement, its overall strength is fundamentally weakened.

Because this introspection and critical awareness among the masses is dependent on their ability to perceive alternatives to the hegemonic system, the second role of a counter-hegemonic movement is to produce and spread a new, counter-hegemonic ideology to take place of the old that new intellectuals work to deconstruct. As Gramsci recognized, introspection among individuals only takes place in the arena of contesting “political hegemonies,” when individuals are made to realize that there are viable alternatives to the hegemonic ideology in place, causing them to critically reconsider the ideology to which they wish to ascribe.⁷⁷ New intellectuals, therefore, must further a new way of conceptualizing the world, and actively encourage citizens to adopt this

⁷⁵ Gottlieb, 124.

⁷⁶ Gottlieb, 124.

⁷⁷ Gottlieb, 128.

conception through a three-step process of constructing the counter-ideology, organizing the masses, and then persuading the masses in concordance with the new system.⁷⁸

Building a counter-hegemonic ideology requires a new category of intellectuals, called “organic intellectuals.” Gramsci believed that most intellectuals came from peasant backgrounds, and through their intellectualization ultimately left behind their class of origin, no longer “organically” a member of their original background.⁷⁹ This disconnect between the informed and uninformed contributed to the perpetuation of hegemony, as the uninformed classes possessed no intellectuals who stayed amongst them to further their knowledge of their oppression and the need to challenge such.⁸⁰ Therefore, Gramsci believed that a successful counter-hegemonic movement must breed its own “organic intellectuals” who stay within the movement and organize at the societal level, helping to further the “alternative ideological and cultural awareness.”⁸¹ Only when organic intellectuals work within the masses from which they arose will they be able to spread widely counter-hegemonic ideals and a new ideology.⁸²

Organic intellectuals must assure that the masses are made to support the creation and uptake of counter-hegemonic ideology in society through actions and behaviors in their everyday lives.⁸³ This newly created ideology must reflect the “collective will” of the masses and be compelling enough to act as the “organic cement” holding the masses together in their counter-hegemonic movement.⁸⁴ In other words, this ideology must help individuals come to a larger understanding of the world in which they live, giving

⁷⁸ Gottlieb, 116.

⁷⁹ Hoare and Smith, 6.

⁸⁰ Hoare and Smith, 6.

⁸¹ Hoare and Smith, 6.

⁸² Hoare and Smith, 6.

⁸³ Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony & Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1992), 67.

⁸⁴ Laclau and Mouffe, 67.

meaning and solutions to their problems. If organic intellectuals can attend to this end—showing the masses a viable alternative to the hegemonic system—another divisive fissure within the hegemonic bloc can be generated that delegitimizes the belief that only through participating in the hegemonic system can individuals prosper. The ability of organic intellectuals to convince the masses of the viability of the alternative counter-hegemonic system depends on the ability of the movement to develop counter-hegemonic institutions that support the new ideology. Just as the hegemonic bloc relies on non-state actors to solidify its strength, the counter-hegemonic system must develop a similar system of support that ensures its perpetuation. Various apparatuses must work to further the counter-hegemonic ideology if it is to become pervasive like hegemony once was. These apparatuses must enable the counter-hegemonic movement to offer an alternative medium for economic, social, and cultural production. The strength of the counter-hegemonic movement, therefore, is dependent on its ability to convince the masses of the need to dismantle the hegemonic bloc, and making this pragmatic by proposing a legitimate substitute to living and working outside the hegemonic system. Through this practical alternative to the hegemonic system, counter-hegemony can become incorporated and entrenched through daily practices.

The above mentioned steps must take place if a counter-hegemonic movement is to succeed in bringing about cultural change. Locating the source of hegemonic domination, destroying hegemony through an ideological attack on traditional intellectuals, the creation of “critical consciousnesses,” and finally the development and production of a counter-hegemonic ideology can be viewed as the stepping stones that

precipitate a “transformation of civil society”⁸⁵ that is fundamental in order for civil society to break from its potential of being a breeding ground for the perpetuation and reinforcement of hegemony. As civil society thus begins to “reclaim political society” as the terrain once dominated by a hegemonic group,⁸⁶ cracks and ruptures are produced as a counter-hegemonic movement begins to deconstruct hegemonic ideology. To summarize, if hegemony is envisioned as a formidable wall made strong over time with the mortar of acquiescence, it is the counter-hegemonic movement, and specifically the organic intellectuals, who must slowly chip away at this wall. Opportunities for political activism are created in these fractures of hegemony, indeed the civilian politicization that the dominant group once sought to prevent. When the masses begin to reclaim this space as their own, organic intellectuals can encourage the further dismantling of hegemony until it is destroyed.

The reclamation of “political space” and the conversion of civil society from a breeding ground of hegemony to a medium challenging the hegemonic system take significant time, however.⁸⁷ Because counter-hegemonic movements involve many steps in order to successfully destroy deeply-rooted hegemony, it is logical why movements of this nature often are long in duration. Gramsci himself acknowledged that counter-hegemonic movements take time to become fully developed and accepted widely among the masses—to completely dismantle the hegemonic wall and promote the “progressive disaggregation of a civilization and the construction of another” around the new ideology.⁸⁸ Therefore, just as hegemony becomes slowly solidified over time, counter-

⁸⁵ Mouffe, 41.

⁸⁶ Mouffe, 41.

⁸⁷ Mouffe, 41.

⁸⁸ Laclau and Mouffe, 70.

hegemony must slowly work to disaggregate the various sources perpetuating this domination while simultaneously offering an alternative ideology that can be offered to the masses.

Chapter Two follows, which aims to relate Gramscian theories of hegemony and civil society to the case study at hand. It will be established that *Cosa Nostra* and the Italian state are two competing and linked “hegemons” that dominate the hegemonic bloc in Sicily. The symbiotic relationship between the mafia and state has perpetuated the solidification of this bloc over a period of nearly 150 years. Societal and institutional acquiescence to the mafia-state system has ensured its entrenchment that the antimafia movement has recently begun working to deconstruct beginning in the 1980s. It will be suggested that the antimafia movement, therefore, is counter-hegemonic in its aims and strategies as it seeks to dismantle a deeply-rooted hegemonic bloc that has long dictated Sicily’s politics, economy, and culture.

CHAPTER 2: The State-Mafia Hegemonic Bloc

This chapter aims to establish *Cosa Nostra* as a vital part of the state's hegemonic bloc within Sicily that has controlled the masses since the 1860s. By tracing the nature and evolution of the symbiotic relationship between *Cosa Nostra* and the Italian state, it will be demonstrated that these two institutions work in tandem with one another in such a way that has resulted in physical and ideological domination over Sicilians for nearly 120 years. The hegemonic nature of this partnership will be proven by demonstrating the political, economic, and cultural manifestations of this relationship that receive strengthening through hegemonic apparatuses within Sicily such as the Catholic Church, civil society, political parties, and traditional intellectuals. Gramscian theory will be employed to highlight the hegemonic bloc that exists as a result of state-mafia relations, which brings attention to the need for a counter-hegemonic movement to dismantle this system of hegemony that will work to challenge the state as the locus from which hegemony radiates, as well as the varied apparatuses within society that reproduce hegemonic ideals and practices daily.

REVISITING GRAMSCI:

Gramsci believed that the Italian state, with the help of institutions, civil society, the Catholic Church, and traditional intellectuals comprised the hegemonic bloc in 1930s Italy. The Marxist believed that the working class needed to dismantle this bloc in order to bring about cultural change in Italy. In Sicily, however, the Italian state never succeeded in establishing its dominance over the population following Italian unification in 1860. Consequently, the state has historically cooperated with *Cosa Nostra* to provide

essential services, enforce order, control violence, and extract electoral support in the region.

Thus, while Gramsci believed the Italian state to be the center from which hegemonic ideology and dominance radiated, in Sicily the Italian state has had to rely heavily on the mafia to strengthen its influence on the island. With these two powers working in conjunction with one another to enforce authority and control over the region, a hegemonic bloc in Sicily comprised of and made strong through the symbiotic relationship between the state and *Cosa Nostra* has developed that manifests in the physical and ideological domination over Sicilians. This represents a unique case study in hegemony, therefore, because while Gramsci explains that states rely on external institutions and non-state actors to enforce ideology and dominance over the masses, in the case of Sicily the state has had to rely on a criminal organization to control the masses and carry out its functions—setting the stage for important power contestations that have the potential to destabilize the hegemonic system upon which these powers both rely.

UNDERSTANDING SICILY’S HISTORY:

Before the state and mafia can be understood as constituting a hegemonic bloc within Sicily, it is important to explain the origin and nature of this symbiotic relationship on the island. In 1860, the Italian state succeeded in joining Sicily with mainland Italy despite incredible opposition against unification.⁸⁹ Sicilians—with their long history of foreign rule, domination, and subjugation—considered unification with the Italian state to be yet another instance of unwarranted foreign control.⁹⁰ Sicilians believed themselves to possess no cultural, linguistic, or historical commonalities with mainland Italy, and thus

⁸⁹ John Dickie, *Cosa Nostra* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 34-6.

⁹⁰ Dickie, 57.

looked unfavorably upon unification with an unfamiliar entity.⁹¹ This popular opposition in Sicily never was addressed or quelled effectively by the Italian state, and consequently presented notable obstacles to effective state-building in the region.⁹² The Italian state's inability to successfully establish its authority over the island had tremendous ramifications for Sicily's future. In order to understand the implications that arose from ineffectual state-building in Sicily, it is imperative to visit the ideas of Charles Tilly who describes how a state should engage in state-building in order to establish its legitimacy and authority over a population, and the consequences that result if these steps are not carried to fruition.

It is useful to first delineate the notion of the "state" before proceeding with an analysis of Tilly, as his ideas on state-building are grounded within a particular conception of the state. While a wealth of definitions abound, this thesis will operate on two widely accepted and interlinked understandings of the state. Because the state is a complex entity composed of various parts, Skocpol's definition is particularly helpful. She suggests that the state is "a set of administrative, policing, and military organizations headed, and more or less well coordinated by, an executive authority."⁹³ In the following discussion of the Italian state, Skocpol's definition will be beneficial in advancing the notion that the state is not a monolithic body, and that its various parts do not always work in congruence with one another. In addition, Max Weber's definition of the state will also heavily be drawn upon in this thesis. Weber defines the state as "a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of force within

⁹¹ Jeremy Boissevain, "Patronage in Sicily," in *Political Corruption*, ed. Arnold J. Heidenheimer (Transaction Books: New Brunswick, 1978), 139.

⁹² Dickie, 63.

⁹³ Neera Chandhoke, *State and Civil Society* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1995), 52.

a given territory.” Based on this conception, Weber emphasizes the state as the only actor that has the “right” to utilize this control of force, as it is understood that this force is used to advance the public good.⁹⁴ Combining these two conceptions, the state can be understood as a complex entity composed of a variety of apparatuses and agencies that, in theory, works in harmony in order to serve and protect public interests.⁹⁵ Utilizing these understandings of the state, Tilly’s notions of state-building can now be explicated.

Charles Tilly offers a compelling theoretical framework from which to analyze how state-building must transpire in order for a state to establish its legitimacy and authority over a region. Tilly builds from the Weberian definition of the state, and outlines the following four roles an effective state must carry out: “war making to eliminate outside competitors, state making to eliminate rivals within the territory, protection, and extraction.”⁹⁶ The state’s ability to perform these four functions, Tilly maintains, dictates its ability to constantly enforce and maintain a monopoly of violence—indeed, a fundamental determinant of state authority.⁹⁷ If a state proves capable at performing one of these roles, its ability to perform the others is greatly enhanced.⁹⁸ Conversely, failing to perform one or all of these roles jeopardizes state authority and legitimacy.

The state-making process is thus a formative time in which a state must establish its monopoly of violence and force, or otherwise risk empowering and encouraging other actors who desire to carry out these roles. Tilly suggests that the way in which state-

⁹⁴ Bradley E. Starr, “The Structure of Max Weber’s Ethic of Responsibility,” *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 27, no. 3 (1999): 413.

⁹⁵ Timothy Mitchell, “The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and Their Critics,” *The American Political Science Review* 85, no. 1 (1991): 84.

⁹⁶ Charles Tilly, “War Making and State Making,” in *Bringing the State Back In*, eds. Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 181.

⁹⁷ Tilly, 181.

⁹⁸ Tilly, 181.

building is carried out in terms of the pacification of competitors is a determinant of whether the state attains a “territorial monopoly of legitimate violence,” or whether organized crime and illegality are fostered.⁹⁹ War-making is seen as a fundamental step to effective state-making and attainment of a monopoly of violence,¹⁰⁰ but this study will focus more on attempts to quell internal as opposed to external threats to state power, as it was challenge from local actors in Sicily during state-building that posed the greatest threat to the Italian state’s ability to solidify its power.

Because control of territory and resources is vital to a state’s ability to establish and centralize its authority, and a state’s legitimacy ultimately depends on the approval of its citizens,¹⁰¹ states have to decide whether to utilize or challenge the existence of local, external actors who have already established authority and control in a particular region.¹⁰² States that construct a monopoly of violence without the help of external authorities are best able to centralize and streamline their own authority without challenge from these outside actors. This ideal scenario is not always possible, however. Tilly describes that it is common for a variety of actors to possess claims to violence in the early years of state-building.¹⁰³ Through state-building efforts, however, all non-state actors who possess claims to violence should be delegitimized, while the state must in

⁹⁹ Fabio Armao, “Why is Organized Crime so Successful?” in *Organized Crime and the Challenge to Democracy*, eds. Felia Allum and Renate Siebert (London: Routledge, 2003), 30.

¹⁰⁰ Achilles Batalas, “Send a Thief to Catch a Thief: State-Building and the Employment of Irregular Military Formations in Mid-Nineteenth Century Greece,” in *Irregular Armed Forces and their Role in Politics and State Formation*, eds. Diane E. Davis and Anthony W. Pereira (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 149.

¹⁰¹ Sayaka Fukumi, “Drug Trafficking and the State,” in *Organized Crime and the Challenge to Democracy*, eds. Felia Allum and Renate Siebert (London: Routledge, 2003), 95.

¹⁰² Armao, 30-1.

¹⁰³ Tilly, 172.

turn elevate itself in the minds of the citizenry as the sole possessor of a legitimate monopoly of force working in the interest of the public good.¹⁰⁴

The eradication of rival actors that successful state-building necessitates is not always an easy task.¹⁰⁵ In circumstances where state-building transpires over previously incongruous and remote areas, rival actors initially may be utilized in order to bolster the state's ability to rule indirectly over distant populations.¹⁰⁶ This reliance on other actors for state-making need not be perpetual; it is a hard tradition to break from, however, unless the state can adopt other means to enforce its authority and power through alternative mediums that will not compromise the state's attempts at monopolizing force. This can be done through state-backed institutions like a police force, for instance, that supplement state authority instead of challenging it.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, if a state depends upon the assistance of local actors to construct state authority, the state recognizes and promotes the existence of "a plurality of political actors" that effectively weaken the legitimacy of the state as the sole provider of protection and security.¹⁰⁸ This allows Tilly to conclude that the existence of organized crime stems not from a lack of state presence, but rather the deliberate will of the state to attain assistance in and ease the process of state-making.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, while challenges to state authority are highly probable during early phases of state-building, a state's monopoly on violence in a region is dependent upon its ability to effectively respond to and dismiss such challenges going forward.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ Tilly, 172.

¹⁰⁵ Tilly, 172, 174.

¹⁰⁶ Tilly, 174.

¹⁰⁷ Tilly, 175.

¹⁰⁸ Armao, 30-1.

¹⁰⁹ Armao, 30.

¹¹⁰ Batalas, 152.

The state's capacity to provide protection in a territory is a necessary aspect of state-building that conditions its ability to attain a legitimate monopoly on violence. States have a dual role in providing and selling protection to the citizenry. Thus, effective and capable states are often deemed as possessing a "protection racket," or the ability to control violence through security measures that can then be sold to others.¹¹¹ In order for a state to possess a protection racket, it "requires a monopoly of the means of coercion," for it cannot hope to extract support and legitimacy from the citizenry if other actors are competing for the ability to carry out the role of providing protection.¹¹² Therefore, it becomes clear how intertwined state functions are; if the state fails at performing one of its four main roles, its ability to perform the others is severely diminished. The state must ensure that it establishes itself as a "legitimate form of protection racket" in a given region.¹¹³ Similarly to how the state must delegitimize other actors who possess claims to violence, an effective state must also destabilize alternative non-state actors who claim the ability to protect against such violence.

Finally, Tilly suggests that states must also be able to obtain extractions from their citizenry in order to effectively solidify their presence and authority in a region. The state must succeed in creating "compliant national populations" that recognize the state's legitimacy and grant approval to its monopoly of violence.¹¹⁴ Compliant populations that acquiesce to state power demonstrate their approval through acquiescing to state extractions through instruments such as bureaucracy, conscription, and taxation.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Felia Allum and Renate Siebert, eds., *Organized Crime and the Challenge to Democracy* (London: Routledge, 2003), 33.

¹¹² Batalas, 149.

¹¹³ Batalas, 149.

¹¹⁴ Craig Calhoun, *Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 67.

¹¹⁵ Calhoun, 67.

What happens, however, when a state fails at performing these four imperative roles that allow it to enforce its authority and legitimacy in a given territory? As Tilly proposes, organized crime groups develop “only in certain states and in particular historical circumstances.”¹¹⁶ Simply put, organized crime is encouraged when the state fails or proves ineffectual at performing and establishing its authority and legitimacy to carry out the four roles that Tilly outlines: war making, state making, protection, and extraction. Failure in performing these functions effectively encourages other actors to supplement state ineffectuality. It is pertinent to turn to the specific case at hand, applying Tilly’s theories to Sicily to demonstrate how early state failings on the island after unification in 1860 set the stage for dependence on rival actors in the form of *Cosa Nostra* in order to establish domination over the population.

RELATING TILLY TO SICILY:

In Sicily at the time of unification, particular conditions on the island posed significant difficulties to the Italian state as it attempted to “build a new state virtually from scratch.”¹¹⁷ Under the varied powers that controlled Sicily prior to 1860, it was customary for foreign rulers to involve and empower a variety of individuals in the stabilization of the empire in order to ensure the perpetuation of their indirect rule. As a result, many Sicilians at the time of unification were in positions of informal authority that allowed them to control affairs typically reserved to a state, such as extracting taxes and quelling unrest.¹¹⁸ As Tilly suggests, it is not uncommon for a variety of local actors to exist prior to state-building, but if the Italian state was to effectively establish its

¹¹⁶ Armao, 30.

¹¹⁷ Dickie, 63.

¹¹⁸ Dickie, 57.

authority and legitimacy in Sicily, it would have to delegitimize these local actors while asserting its sovereign ability to rule and control the population.

Coupled with Sicily's history of foreign domination and indirect rule that had empowered local non-state actors on the island, feudalism also presented difficulties for state-building. This system of subjugation and unequal land control and distribution was characteristic throughout Sicily's history of domination by French Normans, Spaniards, Austrians, and finally Bourbons.¹¹⁹ Feudalism ensured unequal access to land and disparate opportunities for wealth and resources, which therefore encouraged Sicilians to depend on familial networks to obtain necessary resources for survival that otherwise could not be easily acquired.¹²⁰ Feudalism helped promote systems of "mutual aid" and reliance on others for basic needs, which is recognized as having provided fertile ground for patronage politics to flourish that would become an engrained feature of Sicilian politics and culture for the next 150 years.¹²¹

Under unification, when the Italian state sought to improve Sicily's "backwardness" and consolidate state rule, feudalism came to an end, but the framework for informal networks and illegality was already established.¹²² Moreover, the need to parcel up and redistribute land and property required heavy-handed involvement the nascent state in Sicily did not have the time or resources to oversee. This redistribution of land and resources in the wake of feudalism encouraged the involvement of local actors who eased the pace of privatization by granting property rights and resources through

¹¹⁹ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 5-8.

¹²⁰ Boissevain, 140-1.

¹²¹ Boissevain, 141.

¹²² John Dickie suggests that the end of feudalism came in 1812 when the British occupied Sicily and began to challenge the feudal system on the island. While this is important to note, the strongest challenge to feudalism did not come until unification with Italy in 1860. Costanzo Ranci, "Democracy at Work: Social Participation and the 'Third Sector' in Italy," *Daedalus* 130, no. 3 (2001): 77.

corrupt dealings or entrenched practices instead of the state.¹²³ These local actors possessed claims to violence as well as claims to the authority to act in typically state-dominated roles. Many of these local actors were wealthy Sicilians who had also been empowered and utilized by foreign rulers prior to unification. The Italian state's failure to delegitimize these actors sowed the seeds for a history of state ineffectuality marked by a plurality of actors in Sicily working in competition with one another to provide necessary services to the population.¹²⁴

Moreover, as previously noted, a significant amount of unrest and discontentment plagued Sicily in unification years, as many Sicilians resented being incorporated with mainland Italy with whom they believed to possess no communal ties. This resistance did not stop after unification, but rather gained steam, culminating in an anti-government protest in 1866 in Palermo.¹²⁵ Discontentment and resistance to state domination was so severe that the Italian state declared martial law twice in Sicily before 1870, but this action had little effect amongst a population that already distrusted and resented the Italian state's right to rule.¹²⁶ Prior to and in the years following unification, therefore, Sicilians frequently showcased their dislike of being hastily integrated into Italy.¹²⁷ While manifestations of state power came to Sicily in the 1880s in the form of institutions such as national banks and courts, these were essentially facades of state legitimacy that suggested the Italian state had streamlined its authority and power in the region more so than it actually had succeeded in doing at this time.¹²⁸ Uneven development, patronage

¹²³ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 26.

¹²⁴ Dickie, 57-9.

¹²⁵ Dickie, 34-6.

¹²⁶ Dickie, 36-7.

¹²⁷ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 27.

¹²⁸ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 28-9.

networks left from feudalism, and inadequate political representation in Sicily were testaments to the extent to which state-building was not fully completed. Sicily's hasty incorporation into mainland Italy during the late 1880s, therefore, would continue to have devastating repercussions on Sicily's economy, politics, and culture through the present day.

Due to the varied problems the Italian state faced in state-building, it was prudent to turn to local actors in Sicily for assistance in overcoming and mitigating these hindrances.¹²⁹ "Starved for credibility," the Italian state began to look to *Cosa Nostra* as an organization that would help in state-building and overcoming obstacles such as linguistic and cultural barriers, popular opposition, underdevelopment, and the incredible unrest and chaos on the island.¹³⁰ Therefore, during these formative state-building years, local actors were utilized by the state instead of delegitimized. During the years after unification in particular, the mafia arose as a capable criminal organization that gained prominence by offering protection to Sicilians against bandits that engaged in theft of land, property, and livestock.¹³¹ As Blok explains, banditry was so widespread during the late 1800s that it "constrained those who had property to buy protection."¹³² While bandits were looked down upon as a sign of southern Italy's "backwardness," *Cosa Nostra* in contrast was coveted as an organization that could help carry out state functions including enforcing order, controlling violence, and offering protection to Sicilians in the absence of a strong state in the region.¹³³ With state backing, *Cosa Nostra* quickly

¹²⁹ Dickie, 63.

¹³⁰ Dickie, 63.

¹³¹ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 30-1.

¹³² Anton Blok, *Honour and Violence* (Malden: Polity Press, 2001), 4.

¹³³ Louise I. Shelley, "Review: Mafia and the Italian State: The Historical Roots of the Current Crisis," *Sociological Forum* 9, no. 4 (1994): 667.

developed a protection racket over the island, where Sicilians paid a *pizzo* tribute to the mafia in exchange for protection from banditry.¹³⁴ Therefore, the absence of an effective and legitimate state presence in Sicily provided the mafia with a lucrative void in which to fill as “entrepreneurs of violence,” allowing the criminal organization to gain commanding power in the years after unification through capitalizing on pervasive violence and disorder.¹³⁵ In short, the late 1800s saw the beginnings of a long tradition of *Cosa Nostra* solidifying “a dense interweaving with the state.”¹³⁶

During unification before the Italian state entered into a dependent relationship with *Cosa Nostra*, “the ruling class was thus only dominant, not hegemonic” as a result of its inability to foster respect for its authority and power among Sicilians who resented being ruled from outside actors.¹³⁷ As noted, local and regional sentiments inhibited the ability of the state to develop a pervasive ideology to control the masses. However, when the state began its contractual relationship with the mafia in the late 1800s, dominance turned into hegemonic control over the masses, as *Cosa Nostra* over the following decades would come to enforce its authority to the degree that it came to control and dominate Sicily’s economy, politics, and society.

During the early years of the state-mafia partnership, some disapproving state authorities voiced their hope that mafia collaboration would be “on a short-term basis,” carried out only until the Italian state could “take the violence out of Sicilian society” itself.¹³⁸ The nature of this hegemonic relationship would only strengthen over time, however, with *mafiosi* gaining commanding political positions within the government

¹³⁴ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 31.

¹³⁵ Dickie, 58.

¹³⁶ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 32.

¹³⁷ Cohen and Arato, 144.

¹³⁸ Dickie, 53.

and extracting impunity from the state in exchange for its services rendered in Sicily.¹³⁹ As a result of state support, therefore, by 1890 *mafiosi* had solidified “powerful political connections and an international reach.”¹⁴⁰ As *Cosa Nostra* proved incredibly efficient and adept at providing protection and enforcing order—more effective than the nascent state was able to be in this region—the state had little reason to reevaluate this relationship. The Italian state’s reliance on *mafiosi*, therefore, and failure to delegitimize these actors early on ensured the beginnings of a long-term, symbiotic relationship that would continue well beyond the period of unification.

The Italian state had a second opportunity following World War II to engage in state-building in Sicily, but failed at solidifying its authority and delegitimizing *Cosa Nostra* as a provider of protection and security just as it had in the years after unification. Similarly to unification, the turmoil and instability of the time encouraged the state to again recognize, legitimize, and depend on a plurality of actors in the form of *Cosa Nostra* to help control the region. It was precisely the political, social, and economic shakeup of the postwar years that offered the state a prime opportunity to extend its legitimacy—an opportunity that instead was capitalized on by the mafia.¹⁴¹ As Catanzaro aptly concludes, “instability has always been the essential dynamic of Mafia power.”¹⁴²

The instability ushered in through WWII came about as a result of Allied involvement in the region and the political shakeup the war produced. Allied attacks on Sicily greatly dismantled infrastructure and forced the relocation of thousands of Sicilians who were targeted as Axis allies, despite the unacknowledged fact that most Sicilians

¹³⁹ Dickie, 15.

¹⁴⁰ Dickie, 15.

¹⁴¹ Dickie, 196.

¹⁴² Raimondo Catanzaro, *Men of Respect: A Social History of the Sicilian Mafia* (New York: The Free Press, 1988), 38.

favored the Allied effort.¹⁴³ In addition, because WWII brought the overthrow—and subsequent death—of Mussolini, Sicily’s political structure and state leadership was dismantled during this time, as well. During occupation at the conclusion of the war, Allies organized through the Allied Military Government of Occupied Territory (AMGOT) sought to rebuild Sicily and Italy as a whole, engaging in state-building efforts to establish a new political order in the wake of fascism.¹⁴⁴ The challenge was too great and the needs too immediate, however, for the Italian state who historically had never been powerful in the region. *Cosa Nostra* again aptly recognized the weakness of the political system during this time, and was able to capitalize on state ineffectuality during rebuilding by providing security and protection to citizens that the state could not.

The mafia’s resilience was greatly enhanced by AMGOT, which encouraged an intimate relationship between the mafia and state through recognizing *Cosa Nostra*’s unique ability to offer services to a population under threat of noncompliance.¹⁴⁵ The Allies effectively undid what little antimafia progress had been made under Mussolini, who inconsistently advanced a hardened stance against the mafia as evident by the hundreds of *mafiosi* arrests he ordered during his reign. Mussolini’s antimafia stance sprang from his resentment of *mafiosi* as non-state actors operating in state roles, who compromised the state’s efforts to become a totalitarian and all-pervasive power.¹⁴⁶ In the wake of the war, however, this commitment fell by the wayside as rebuilding and restructuring took priority, and *Cosa Nostra* offered its services in order to bring stability to the chaotic region. Thus, while Calhoun suggests that the role of a state is to “pacify

¹⁴³ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 14-15.

¹⁴⁴ Dickie, 196.

¹⁴⁵ Joshua Hammer, “In Sicily, Defying the Mafia,” *Smithsonian*, October 2010, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/people-places/In-Sicily-Defying-the-Mafia.html>, 2.

¹⁴⁶ Dickie, 144-7; Shelley, “Review,” 668.

life within its territory,” this responsibility and authority was granted to non-state actors in the form of *mafiosi* in the wake of WWII.¹⁴⁷ Delegating state responsibilities to *Cosa Nostra* was considered favorable because it meant a lesser role for Allied troops whose time commitment to the region was never expected to be anything more than temporary, until local authorities (or competing actors) could take control of affairs for themselves.

In addition, the vast destruction of Sicilian cities resulting from Allied bombing created the need for construction and economic revitalization—a need that the mafia rushed in to fill, and indeed was encouraged to fill through the ease in which mafia interests attained state-issued business contracts during this time.¹⁴⁸ “The Sack of Palermo” of the 1950s-80s refers to the mafia’s total control of construction in the postwar period—a period of corrupt contracts and political favors that enveloped Palermo in concrete and illegality.¹⁴⁹

While Tilly notes that it is common during stages of state-building for a plurality of actors to operate in state functions, unfortunately this continued to be the reality in Sicily as the Italian state never consolidated a monopoly of violence in the postwar years or at any other time in Sicily’s history.¹⁵⁰ During unification and again in the post-WWII years, the Italian state failed to differentiate itself as the sole legitimate possessor of a monopoly of violence by failing to delegitimize *Cosa Nostra’s* claims to violence in the region, setting the stage for a long history of state dependence and acquiescence to the mafia.

¹⁴⁷ Calhoun, 67.

¹⁴⁸ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 14-5.

¹⁴⁹ Dickie, 221.

¹⁵⁰ Dickie, 57.

ESTABLISHING THE PRAGMATISM OF STATE-MAFIA RELATIONS:

The reasons why the Italian state found it prudent to delegate responsibility and state functions to *Cosa Nostra* in the periods of unification and WWII stem from the many similarities between the criminal organization and the state. Because *Cosa Nostra* and the Italian state both seek to provide similar services, simply through dissimilar means, it is logical that the state has historically relied on the mafia as a result of the mafia's proven ability to carry out imperative functions. This is the theory of instrumental rationalism, where organized crime succeeds because it "provides what the state is unable to provide—jobs, protection, goods and services."¹⁵¹

On a basic note, the principle motive driving the actions of both states and organized crime is the same. Both entities work towards the pursuit of power and profit, which often manifests in a desire to establish control over the economy and lucrative industries.¹⁵² This shared motivator also leads to another similarity, where both states and organized crime seek to enforce order and control violence. In order to quell disorder and enforce legality, the state utilizes mediums such as the army and police to patrol any deviation from law and order.¹⁵³ Therefore, the state is seen as enforcing an impersonal rule of law that seeks to protect all civilians universally and equally. The state ideally ensures, therefore, that "everyone is equal before the law, or that the state should serve the interests of all its citizens rather than the friends and family of whoever happens to wield power."¹⁵⁴ Consequently, states bear the burden of proving their impersonality in order to attain legitimacy in the eyes of their citizens.

¹⁵¹ Allum and Siebert, 2.

¹⁵² Dickie, 22.

¹⁵³ Allum and Siebert, 17.

¹⁵⁴ Dickie, 293.

In contrast, *Cosa Nostra* relies on intimidation and violence as tools for pacification, lacking the legitimate mediums that the state possesses to carry out these functions.¹⁵⁵ Therefore, unlike the state, organized crime enforces rule of law personally on the basis of who supports and submits to the organization's authority. *Cosa Nostra* does not need to offer its services universally or in an unbiased manner because the organization does not depend on mandates or grants of legitimacy from citizens to support its right to rule. Rather, the mafia relies on coercion and violence to extract compliance, enacting harsh forms of retribution if necessary as a result of its ability to disregard civilian approval. While both states and organized crime groups are driven by the desire to control a territory, therefore, these entities do so through different means.

Both state and mafia also attempt to establish protection rackets over the population, providing and selling security to the masses. The definition of a racketeer is "someone who creates a threat then charges for its reduction."¹⁵⁶ Based on this understanding, it is clear to surmise how both state and mafia can be considered protection racketeers; as Tilly suggests, the state sells protection on the basis of real threats from external actors, for instance, but can also create threats in order to solidify its role and authority as a security provider, such as creating the perceived threat of war.¹⁵⁷ *Cosa Nostra* also engages in racketeering through creating fear about social conditions—such as banditry in the 1860s—and subsequently coercing civilians into paying protection tributes out of threat of force.¹⁵⁸ Therefore, state and mafia both attempt to possess a protection racket over Sicilians, but the state does so by taxation through legal and

¹⁵⁵ Vadim Volkov, "Violent Entrepreneurship in Post-Communist Russia," *Europe-Asia Studies* 51, no. 5 (1999): 743.

¹⁵⁶ Tilly, 171.

¹⁵⁷ Tilly, 171.

¹⁵⁸ Dickie, 58.

legitimate mediums to support the army and defense, whereas the mafia does so in the form of *pizzo* extracted through fear and violence if necessary.¹⁵⁹ Thus, because both the mafia and state perform essentially the same functions and have the same aims, according to instrumental rationalism it is logical that the state would delegate its functions to the mafia if *Cosa Nostra* proved more adept and effectual at providing protection, enforcing order, and controlling violence in a territory.

EVOLUTION OF STATE-MAFIA RELATIONS:

Once a state becomes reliant on organized crime in order to carry out certain functions and enforce its authority and legitimacy, it is incredibly difficult to break this relationship of dependence and mutual benefit.¹⁶⁰ Peter Lupsha describes three evolutionary phases that explain how organized crime groups can come to possess intimate relations with a state. The more phases state-organized crime partnerships proceed through, the more entrenched mutual reliance becomes, and the harder these ties of dependence are to sever. The “predatory stage” marks the first phase, in which a criminal group establishes itself within a territory and creates its own practices and methods for gaining control, such as how *Cosa Nostra* offered protection from banditry and thievery in the 1860s for a fee.¹⁶¹ Once organized crime establishes its presence in a market, the “parasitical” phase follows, when organized crime begins to pervade “legal businesses and local and regional politics.”¹⁶² *Cosa Nostra* entered into this phase when it began to dominate legitimate industries such as sulfur and citrus, and started “acting as an

¹⁵⁹ Dickie, 22

¹⁶⁰ Louise I. Shelley, “Transnational Organized Crime: An Imminent Threat to the Nation-State?” *Journal of International Affairs* 48, no. 2 (1995): 470.

¹⁶¹ Peter Lupsha, “Transnational Organized Crime versus the Nation-State,” in *Organized Crime and the Challenge to Democracy*, eds. Felia Allum and Renate Siebert (London: Routledge, 2003), 115.

¹⁶² Wyn Rees, “TOC, Security, and the EU,” in *Organized Crime and the Challenge to Democracy*, eds. Felia Allum and Renate Siebert (London: Routledge, 2003), 116.

instrument of local government” as early as 1876 through attaining placement within political institutions and governing bodies in Sicily.¹⁶³ Political appointments became an early practice of rewarding the mafia’s support of state functions on the island. Finally, after establishing this level of prominence and infiltration, organized crime then moves to the third phase, entering into a “symbiotic” relationship with the state, where organized crime becomes “fully integrated into the political and economic structure of a region.”¹⁶⁴ This is the phase that represents state-mafia relations today, and has reflected the state of relations between these two powers since the years following WWII. From the postwar years through the contemporary period, the mafia has become fully emerged in Sicily’s politics and economy through legal grants of impunity, political alliances with powerful politicians, and relations with authorities in charge of controlling business contracts and licenses.¹⁶⁵

Because *Cosa Nostra* and the state have existed in this “symbiotic phase” for decades, therefore, the mafia is in a position of formidable influence where it is able to place demands upon and extract support from the state relatively easily as a result of the mutual dependence between these two entities. Shelley refers to states that enter into “symbiotic relationships” with organized crime groups as “criminalized states,” which have the effect of encouraging criminal groups through their favorable treatment and policies.¹⁶⁶ Even in circumstances where the citizenry becomes committed to dismantling and eradicating these intimate ties to crime, it is difficult for a state to withdraw from this

¹⁶³ Dickie, 39-40, 69.

¹⁶⁴ Rees, 116.

¹⁶⁵ Dickie, 53.

¹⁶⁶ Shelley, “Transnational Organized Crime,” 469.

relationship.¹⁶⁷ This is because mutual extractions are relied upon by both entities to the extent that dependence becomes entrenched through daily transactions. The fact that there exists a symbiotic relationship between *Cosa Nostra* and the Italian state is reflective of the challenge the antimafia movement faces in bringing an end to this deeply historical alliance.

ESTABLISHING STATE-MAFIA RELATIONS AS A HEGEMONIC BLOC:

The Italian state and *Cosa Nostra* entered into a hegemonic partnership in the years following unification, creating a hegemonic bloc that would work to perpetuate the strength of the state-mafia system and the ability of *Cosa Nostra* to act as a fundamental pillar of state authority without receiving challenge. These two powers worked in congruence with one another until total dominance over the economy, politics, and culture of Sicily was achieved. By 1890, a controversial report by policeman Ermanno Sangiorgi attested to the hegemonic power of the mafia, illustrating the “brutality and labyrinthine complexity of mafia influence at every level of Sicilian society.”¹⁶⁸

According to Gramsci, a hegemonic bloc must meet two criteria: 1) the bloc must manifest in total physical and ideological domination over the masses to the extent that its power infiltrates all levels of society and discourages any challenge to the hegemonic system, and 2) external “hegemonic apparatuses” within society continually must work to reproduce and maintain this system. It will be demonstrated that the state-mafia system attends to both these ends, and thus constitutes a hegemonic bloc that has controlled the masses in Sicily since the 1860s.

¹⁶⁷ Shelley, “Transnational Organized Crime,” 470.

¹⁶⁸ Dickie, 91-3.

The state-mafia system fulfills Gramsci's condition of total physical and ideological domination over the masses, and therefore can be conceptualized as representing a hegemonic bloc. Physical support of the state-mafia system manifests in the form of the mandatory *pizzo* tribute, which suggests that to do business in Sicily, one must respect and go through the state-mafia system.¹⁶⁹ Through the *pizzo*, the mafia has found a method of indirectly controlling businesses that it does not own. The physical domination over the masses by *Cosa Nostra* is also evident in the direct ownership the mafia possesses over many industries and markets in Sicily. This control over restaurants, drug trafficking, garbage disposal, and agricultural production, for instance, reinforces the idea that Sicilians have no other choice but to participate in the hegemonic system. When support is not granted, the mafia has historically responded with a host of strategies to extract consent. In the absence of spontaneous consent, threats of violence are utilized; if threats prove insufficient, the mafia polices any deviation from the state-mafia bloc through a variety of demonstrations of physical violence, including but not limited to: "poisoning guard dogs, burning cars, vandalizing citrus fruit trees...sending threatening letters with skulls drawn on them, placing bombs in offices, damaging machinery on building sites, and a great deal of hanging around."¹⁷⁰ Non-consent is therefore constantly curbed so as to discourage and limit any deviation from granting physical support to the state-mafia system.

The state-mafia system also produces ideological domination over the masses, further indicative of the fact that this relationship manifests in a hegemonic bloc that reigns over Sicilians. The hegemonic bloc advances the ideology that *Cosa Nostra* exists

¹⁶⁹ Dickie, 59.

¹⁷⁰ Dickie, 267.

neither as an oppressive criminal organization on the island nor as an essential collaborator upon which the state depends. *Cosa Nostra* supplements weak and ineffectual state authority on the island, therefore, by creating a culture of fear and apathy in order to discourage denouncement of the illegal tactics the mafia uses in order to provide security, enforce order, and control violence in Sicily. Threats of and actual demonstrations of violence are again imperative in maintaining ideological domination over the masses. Through this coercion, the mafia limits the desirability of civilian denouncement against pervasive illegality and criminality that *Cosa Nostra* embodies. As Saviano describes, the general thinking under the hegemonic system discourages deviation: “Among the many reasons for keeping quiet, for pretending nothing happened, for going home and living as before, are the fear of intimidation and, even more, futility—one killer arrested was just one out of many.”¹⁷¹ As a result, acquiescence to power structures in place since the 1860s is strongly, and forcibly, encouraged.

Through physical and ideological domination over Sicilians, the state-mafia bloc limits the expression of any alternatives outside the hegemonic system. *Cosa Nostra*, through violence if necessary, ensures that Sicilians believe that playing by the rules of the system is the only way to live and work. The benefits derived from the hegemonic system, including protection and the guarantee of safety against mafia violence, encourages Sicilians to make sense of their realities by participating in and furthering the system through their everyday actions. This is why total domination over the masses is imperative to the state-mafia bloc: the stability of this symbiotic relationship depends upon keeping the masses ignorant about the extent of state-mafia relations so they do not realize that this system ultimately only serves the two hegemons, while effectively

¹⁷¹ Saviano, 279.

oppressing society as a whole by limiting how they conduct their lives and conceive of the realities in which they function. Consequently, this hegemonic bloc ensures that Sicilians' "perception of themselves as oppressed is impaired by their submersion in the reality of the oppression...they have no consciousness of themselves as persons or as members of an oppressed class."¹⁷² *Cosa Nostra* and the state represent a hegemonic bloc in Sicily as a result of the physical and ideological domination it imposes over Sicilians, and the all-encompassing system it develops where individuals do not perceive another alternative to the hegemonic system and therefore contribute to its perpetuation believing it to be a normal state of affairs.

HEGEMONIC APPARATUSES AT WORK IN SICILY:

True to the nature of a hegemonic bloc, the state-mafia system relies upon "hegemonic apparatuses" within society that work to maintain and entrench hegemonic ideology within the Sicilian mentality. As Gramsci theorized in 1930s Italy, the Catholic Church, civil society, institutions like political parties, and traditional intellectuals all participated in solidifying the hegemonic system in Sicily. Through examination, it is evident that the same apparatuses work in Sicily to perpetuate the hegemonic bloc and solidify the state-mafia system.

Historically, the Catholic Church largely has acted as a hegemonic apparatus in Sicily, furthering the hegemonic ideology of the state-mafia system that denied the existence of the mafia and its involvement with the Italian state. While the Church arguably has taken steps to renege on this acquiescence and support in recent years,¹⁷³ and it would be inaccurate to conclude the Church as a whole has historically supported

¹⁷² Freire, 27-8.

¹⁷³ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 183.

the mafia,¹⁷⁴ it is indisputable that many elements of the Church have possessed a convoluted relationship with *Cosa Nostra* for much of Sicily's history. Indeed, Pope John Paul II was the first pope to state the word "mafia" in a public address, and this did not occur until 1981—despite the fact that *Cosa Nostra* was a dominant organization on the island since the late 1800s.¹⁷⁵ This reference, therefore, can be viewed as rather anomalous in an otherwise complex history of the Church's relationship with *Cosa Nostra*, where most church affiliates remained silent about the mafia issue for decades.

The reason for this silence can be attributed to the fact that at various times in Sicily's history, and particularly in the 1950s, the Church benefitted from state-mafia hegemony because the mafia proved adept at delivering electoral support to the Church's favored political party—the Christian Democratic Party. The Church supported this party because it was considered to be the only viable party against socialism.¹⁷⁶ The fact that the Church and mafia had "common ideological ground in their hatred of socialism," therefore, provided fertile ground for the development of a relationship of mutual benefit.¹⁷⁷

Because most Sicilians are practicing Catholics and consider the Church to be a moral authority on the island, frequent denials of the existence of *Cosa Nostra* radiating from prominent Church officials helped keep Sicilians in the dark about the nature of state-mafia relations for many decades—a lack of awareness that effectively stifled any attempts to challenge this relationship.¹⁷⁸ In the 1960s, Ernesto Cardinal Ruffini—at the

¹⁷⁴ Jamieson, 135.

¹⁷⁵ Jamieson, 137.

¹⁷⁶ Dickie, 203.

¹⁷⁷ Dickie, 140.

¹⁷⁸ Enzo Lo Dato, "Palermo's Cultural Revolution and the Renewal Project of the City Administration," *Trends in Organized Crime* 5, no. 3 (2000): 14.

time the preeminent official of the Church in Sicily—contributed to solidifying the hegemonic bloc by suggesting to his followers that “the mafia exists only in the minds of those who wish Sicily ill.”¹⁷⁹

Examining the intertwining of religious and political hegemonic apparatuses within Sicily sheds light on the role the Christian Democratic Party (DC) as a powerful political organization in Italy also played in supporting the hegemonic bloc prior to the 1980s. At the same time Ruffini was publicly advancing the hegemonic mentality that denied the existence of the mafia, Ruffini held an intimate relationship with Salvo Lima—a DC politician with indisputable mafia connections in the 1950s. Indeed, *Cosa Nostra* considered Lima to be such a strong ally that *mafiosi* ordered his murder in the wake of the Maxi Trial after he failed to protect the organization from judicial prosecution.¹⁸⁰ Refusals to acknowledge *Cosa Nostra* as a formidable problem requiring attention were a “great help to the illegal organization known as the mafia when people thought it did not exist,” as this allowed the hegemonic bloc to continue to solidify without challenge or protest.¹⁸¹ Denials of the existence of the mafia as “no more than a suspicion, a theory, a point of view,” were highly characteristic of the Sicilian mentality up until the 1980s-90s as a result of the work of hegemonic apparatuses like the Church and the DC.¹⁸² Therefore, despite recent mafia denouncements, the Catholic Church as a result of its relationship with the Christian Democratic Party historically has acted as a “hegemonic apparatus” helping to solidify the mafia-state system in Sicily.

¹⁷⁹ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 163-4.

¹⁸⁰ Dickie, 320.

¹⁸¹ Dickie, 16.

¹⁸² Dickie, 16.

The state-mafia hegemonic bloc has also received support from the diligent work of “traditional intellectuals” working in a variety of capacities in Sicily. Traditional intellectuals exist in a variety of capacities and occupations—a further testament to the strength of the hegemonic bloc that receives strength from multifaceted mediums in society. Local and national politicians who denied the existence of while simultaneously allying with and benefiting from *Cosa Nostra* are one such example. The mayor of Palermo—the Sicilian city most pervaded by the mafia—perpetuated hegemonic ideology in the late 1960s by claiming that the early Antimafia Commission was unnecessary and had overstated “the mafia phenomenon which was, he claimed, ‘nonexistent.’”¹⁸³ The questionable stance of many politicians was further elucidated when those who would refuse to acknowledge *Cosa Nostra* as an oppressive force in Sicily could be found participating in funeral marches for mafia members while maintaining their reasoning for doing such was grounded in the fact that said *mafiosi* was “just a friend,” and not a fundamental political ally.¹⁸⁴ *Mafiosi*, as well, have been a more obvious form of traditional intellectuals, who work to further perpetuate the system by upholding the code of *omertá*—helping to keep Sicilians largely in the dark about the oppressive effects of and the extent of state-mafia relations through their silence and conspicuousness.

Schoolteachers historically perpetuated the hegemonic bloc and a “culture of silence”¹⁸⁵ in Sicily, as well, preventing education from becoming a medium for challenging the creation of acquiescent masses by refusing to teach about *Cosa Nostra* in the classrooms. The agendas of these educators were dictated by the Italian state’s

¹⁸³ Jane Schneider, “Educating Against the Mafia,” *Trends in Organized Crime* 4, no. 2 (1998): 10.

¹⁸⁴ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 227.

¹⁸⁵ Freire, 12.

Ministry of Education, which worked hard to keep mafia topics out of the classrooms until the 1980s.¹⁸⁶ Indeed, before changing mentalities of the mid-1980s demanded educational reforms, the mafia was left out of history textbooks, and was not a subject breached by educators out of an understandable fear of foreseeable repercussions.¹⁸⁷

In addition, many media reporters can also be viewed as traditional intellectuals who contributed to the hegemonic bloc by selectively publishing news pieces in deference to *Cosa Nostra*. The *Giornale di Sicilia*, for instance, was historically manipulated by *mafiosi* interests who attempted to dictate its agenda, publishing stories of the questionable credibility of *pentiti* as well as tainting the image of several prominent antimafia activists—actions that suggested to many that *Giornale di Sicilia* was “the newspaper of the mafia.”¹⁸⁸ While several media sources deserve credit for deviating from this trend, such as *La Repubblica*, the mafia worked diligently to patrol sentiment not supportive of hegemony, firing or even killing those who sought to use the press as a medium for expression and challenge against the state-mafia bloc.¹⁸⁹ It is worth noting that even today, with Prime Minister Berlusconi in control of many media networks in Italy, it is hard for Sicilians to come across the truth through these outlets and learn of the current nature of mafia power and antimafia efforts.

Traditional intellectuals, no matter their positioning in society, help to create a culture that discourages an informed citizenry and promotes acquiescence to the hegemonic system by limiting the ability of alternative systems to be conceived. By aiding the mafia’s desire to “peddle falsehoods for a century and a half” about its true

¹⁸⁶ Lo Dato, 20.

¹⁸⁷ Pier Franco Rizzo, “School and Culture Against Mafia in Sicily,” *Scuola e Cultura Antimafia*, <http://scuolaantimafia.org/Sicily/default.htm>.

¹⁸⁸ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 201-3.

¹⁸⁹ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 201-3.

nature and relationship with the state, traditional intellectuals in conjunction with other hegemonic apparatuses in society have thereby helped entrench the state-mafia system deeply within Sicilian society and culture.¹⁹⁰ Therefore, by patrolling any deviation from hegemonic ideology, hegemony has become embedded within daily practices to the extent that such ideals and practices became self-producing and natural. The fear of force and violence against deviation effectively curbed any expression that went against the state-mafia hegemonic bloc until the 1980s.

Gramsci suggests that another variable indicative of the strength of a hegemonic bloc is the extent to which a hegemonic system results in the existence of “double consciousnesses” within the minds of the masses. The pervasiveness of the state-mafia hegemonic system is reflected in the “double-consciousnesses” present among many citizens during the height of the mafia’s symbiotic relationship with the Italian state. The diligent work of non-state actors to reinforce and constantly reproduce hegemony led to the inability of the masses to see how their actions and apathy were furthering hegemony, domination, and the lack of control Sicilians possessed over their own lives. By examining cultural manifestations of hegemonic domination present in the 1980s, the strength of the state-mafia bloc will be made clear. These examples will also highlight the imperativeness of a counter-hegemonic movement that would work to deconstruct the detrimental effects the state-mafia system produced in Sicilian society.

The cultural manifestations of hegemonic domination were evident particularly in the violence and chaos of the 1980s, when “as many as 1,000 people were murdered,” often very publicly in the streets of Sicily in broad daylight, and few eyewitnesses would

¹⁹⁰ Dickie, 16.

come forward to denounce the *mafiosi* perpetrators.¹⁹¹ In addition, this domination is reflected by the fact that nearly 80% of businesses in Sicily paid the *pizzo* tribute to the mafia until antimafia efforts in the late 1990s began to discourage this form of mafia submission.¹⁹² The state-mafia hegemonic system ensured that business owners “have had to accept the oppressive presence of *mafioso* business partners,” with *Cosa Nostra*’s success at extortion becoming “so widespread that no town or village is spared.”¹⁹³ Many Sicilian business owners thereby demonstrated their symbolic support of the mafia, either because they believed it to be natural and conceived of no other alternative in order to ensure the protection of their business and interests, or did so out of legitimate fear of mafia repercussions.

Furthermore, domination by the mafia over the minds of Sicilians became apparent when Falcone and Borsellino initially had limited success in incensing and mobilizing ordinary Sicilians to participate in the antimafia cause through denouncing known *mafiosi* and pervasive criminality. The “double consciousnesses” within many Sicilians in the 1980s that the hegemonic system had fostered were apparent in the fact that many verbally claimed to be opposed to *Cosa Nostra*, but would not participate in the antimafia fight in any tangible way. This conflict between actions in “theory and practice” directly perpetuated hegemony.

Gramsci suggests that a hegemonic bloc exists to the extent that the bloc is able to “enforce invisible, intangible, and subtle forms of power, through educational, cultural,

¹⁹¹ Dickie, 16.

¹⁹² Hammer, 1.

¹⁹³ Ernesto U. Savona, ed. *Mafia Issues: Analyses and Proposals for Combating the Mafia Today* (Milan: International Scientific and Professional Advisory Council of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Program (ISPAC), 1993), 43.

and religious systems and institutions.”¹⁹⁴ The state-mafia system constitutes a hegemonic bloc, therefore, because state-mafia relations have historically manifested in the form of the bloc’s control and influence over society, creating norms and acceptable behaviors that discourage deviation from the system, over politics by working to enforce the mentality that state-mafia alliances are a natural occurrence, and over economic production by extracting monetary submission from businesses and by dominating many legal and illegal markets and industries alike. This total physical and ideological domination that pervades all aspects of life, therefore, which is continually reinforced by “hegemonic apparatuses” in Sicily reflects the existence of the hegemonic bloc created by the symbiotic relationship between the state and *Cosa Nostra*.

While there are many similarities between the aims and function of *Cosa Nostra* and the Italian state that has allowed for the development of a symbiotic relationship between these two hegemons, it is important to note that these same similarities are also responsible for creating a tenuous relationship culminating in potential “endogenous fissures” that can compromise the stability of the hegemonic bloc.¹⁹⁵ Because *Cosa Nostra* is more effective at performing functions normally reserved to the state, *Cosa Nostra* jeopardizes the authority and legitimacy of the state in the eyes of the masses.¹⁹⁶ The historical dependence of the state on the mafia, therefore, can create a fissure in the sense that it prompts the masses to lose confidence in the ability of the state, setting the stage for the state to perhaps question this symbiotic relationship if it begins losing vestiges of its power and legitimacy that the mafia was supposed to reinforce.

¹⁹⁴ Neera Chandhoke, *State and Society*, 149.

¹⁹⁵ Levy and Egan, 5.

¹⁹⁶ Hume N. Johnson and Joseph L. Soeters, “Jamaican Dons, Italian Godfathers, and the Chances of a ‘Reversible Destiny,’” *Political Studies* 56, no. 1 (2008): 166.

Cosa Nostra has proven particularly adept at addressing societal problems like unemployment and poverty that the Italian state historically has inefficiently mitigated. Because the mafia has been able to guarantee basic necessities to Sicilians, this paints a picture of state ineffectuality, where citizens turn to the mafia at the expense of the state, believing the mafia to be “more efficient and even ‘fairer’ than the state.”¹⁹⁷ As Borsellino explained, “if the mafia pays, you, finds and keeps you in work, helps you win contracts, get promotion or run your business, then you won’t reject it” because the mafia ensures things the state cannot.¹⁹⁸ Moreover, because the mafia unabashedly has historically demonstrated its power through violence, the masses came to fear and thus respect *Cosa Nostra*, as they began to realize that real and retributive power in Sicily stemmed from the mafia and not the state. Consequently, Sicilians historically have been more likely to turn to the mafia for their needs out of fear and based on the recognition that *mafiosi* have a greater ability than a weak state to coerce individuals into compliance and enact punishment for defiance.¹⁹⁹ *Cosa Nostra* therefore represents a medium that bypasses state authority and institutions, where *mafiosi* exist as “powerful alternate authorities which are giving a social basis to political order and disorder” in Sicily.²⁰⁰

Thus, while similarities between the mafia and state represented the reason the Italian state found it prudent to delegate its functions to *Cosa Nostra* in the first place, these similarities also create a potentially fragile relationship between these two hegemonies, particularly because the mafia detracts legitimacy from and encourages circumvention of legal state institutions that exist to bolster state authority. As a result,

¹⁹⁷ Dickie, 65.

¹⁹⁸ Jamieson, xxi.

¹⁹⁹ Volkov, 743.

²⁰⁰ Johnson and Soeters, 166.

citizens have preferred to go through *Cosa Nostra* to obtain what they need, and instead do not trust in the power of the police or court systems for instance to mitigate their problems. These are among the many repercussions of ineffective state-building post-unification in Sicily; while this symbiotic relationship was initially enacted to help solidify authority and order on the island, the mafia's efficacy over the years has weakened the state in the eyes of Sicilians, thereby compromising the state's influence and legitimacy as a service provider and possessor of a legitimate monopoly of violence to act in the interest of the public good. Tensions between the state and mafia will be further explicated in Chapter Three. What is imperative to note, however, is that despite the tenuous nature of state-mafia relations, these interlinked hegemons depend on each other in a substantial way, helping to continually reinforce the hegemonic system and rendering any challenging to this deeply-rooted bloc very difficult.

Chapter Three follows, which attempts to fully delineate the history of the antimafia movement. Now that the symbiotic relationship between *Cosa Nostra* and the Italian state has been established as a hegemonic bloc reinforced by various apparatuses within Sicilian society, Gramscian theory can be utilized in order to understand what must be done to challenge this system of affairs on the island, and why the early 1980s presented an opportunity for a challenge of the state-mafia hegemonic bloc. In order to dismantle a hegemonic bloc, Gramsci states that a counter-hegemonic movement is needed. Chapter Three, therefore traces the early history of the antimafia movement to show its counter-hegemonic nature. During the 1980s-early 1990s in the midst of a mafia war, new intellectuals arose within Sicily that began attending to the first phase of counter-hegemony: dismantling hegemonic ideology by calling attention to state-mafia

relations and how Sicilians were oppressed by the hegemonic bloc that manifested in physical and ideological dominance over the island. This chapter will show how the movement in its nascent form targeted the state to initiate reforms that would end its accommodative practices towards *Cosa Nostra*. Gramscian theory will help to offer an understanding of why simply targeting the state was not enough to dismantle hegemony, however, as various hegemonic apparatuses within society contributed to the perpetuation of the state-mafia system. Therefore, Chapter Three will highlight the antimafia strides made during the 1980s-early 1990s, but also will show why political reforms were insufficient at delivering Sicily from *Cosa Nostra*, and why the movement realized the need to work at the societal level in the mid-1990s.

CHAPTER 3: The History of the Antimafia Movement

As Chapter 2 established, the Italian state historically delegated imperative state functions to *Cosa Nostra*, a criminal organization that helped bolster state authority in Sicily by controlling violence and enforcing order. During the early years following unification, this nascent partnership went unchallenged by Sicilians, as the amount of chaos and disorder in the region made it difficult to see clearly the oppressive power structures developing. Moreover, the fact that *Cosa Nostra* offered vital services during this time made its presence harder to question and discourage; protecting Sicilians against widespread banditry and thievery as well as distributing land brought order and safety to many who could not guarantee such things for themselves in a region dominated by instability. Thus, denial, acquiescence, and passive support throughout Sicilian society manifested in approval of early state-mafia relations.

When acquiescence was not “spontaneously” granted through consent to this structure of rule, the mafia obtained compliance through violence and force. Sicilians learned early on, therefore, that resistance was futile and acquiescence to status quo power structures was a mechanism of survival. Moreover, acquiescence was reinforced through the benefits granted to those who consented to state-mafia hegemony. When hegemonic apparatuses such as the Catholic Church, political parties, and traditional intellectuals began reinforcing the state-mafia system, challenges to hegemony became even more infeasible. This culminated in the solidification of a pervasive physical and ideological domination over the masses in Sicily, allowing the Italian state and *Cosa Nostra* to solidify a mutually-dependent relationship that served their respective needs for power and authority.

If Sicilians began protesting against this state of affairs, and recognized *Cosa Nostra* for what it really was—an oppressive and criminal organization—the hegemonic bloc would crumble, and the Italian state would lose any semblances of authority and legitimacy it was able to derive as a result of its partnership with the mafia in this region. Therefore, the stability of the hegemonic bloc depended on Sicilians' ignorance of the state-mafia system so they would not recognize their ability to challenge this hegemony. As Gramsci states, civil society represents a medium that can either reinforce or challenge hegemony. However, as the state-mafia system succeeded in ensuring Sicilians did not realize how their actions perpetuated hegemony, this prevented the understanding of how relinquishing this approval would deal a divisive blow to state-mafia relations. Thus, the ideology the state, mafia, and hegemonic apparatuses worked to spread during from the 1860s onward was a denial of the existence of *Cosa Nostra* as the pillar of state legitimacy and efficacy in Sicily. This ideology became so entrenched in the Sicilian mentality that any challenges to the system were effectively stifled before attracting any widespread support. Because Sicilians could not challenge a system that hegemonic forces ensured they did not become aware of, state-mafia hegemony became an everyday part of life. The Italian state and *Cosa Nostra*, with the help of hegemonic apparatuses, worked diligently to maintain this symbiotic relationship for over a century.

As Gramsci suggests, in order to dismantle a hegemonic bloc, civil society must recognize its counter-hegemonic potential, producing a widespread movement that attends to two essential tasks. Counter-hegemonic movements must 1) dismantle hegemonic ideology by capitalizing upon existing, while also creating their own, fissures within the hegemonic bloc, and then the movement can 2) offer a new, counter-

hegemonic ideology to the masses that provides a new way of conceptualizing their realities and delivers them agency in a new realm outside the hegemonic system. I will propose that in the 1980s-early 1990s, the antimafia movement was able to attend to the first step of counter-hegemony, creating new and organic intellectuals that dismantled hegemonic ideology to which Sicilians long acquiesced. The way in which to do this was through legislative and political reforms that would force the Italian state to end its accommodative history with *Cosa Nostra*, while also providing for a penal framework from which to fight the mafia.

This chapter, therefore, will focus on the unique conditions in 1980s Sicily in order to understand what factors jeopardized tenuous fissures in the state-mafia hegemonic bloc—allowing civil society to begin working to finally dismantle a hegemonic system that had reigned dominant in Sicily for nearly 120 years. This chapter will describe how “new intellectuals” capitalized on state-mafia fissures in order to create an opportunity for Sicilian civil society to recognize its ability to “reclaim political society” by challenging instead of reproducing state-mafia hegemony.

Antimafia efforts and ensuing state and mafia responses will be broken down into two different time periods, describing activism from the 1980s-early 1990s compared to efforts after 1992. It is important to differentiate between these two different periods because the nature of the movement changed fundamentally following the deaths of magistrates Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino in 1992. It will be demonstrated that during the 1980s-early 1990s, the antimafia fight was largely magistrate-driven with limited civilian involvement, composed of efforts that were state-centric and politically motivated. The importance of the year 1992 will be stressed, as this was the formative

year in which the widespread, civilian-dominated antimafia movement was finally born. Political reforms were still the primary goal of the movement during this time, until the mid-1990s when it became clear that *Cosa Nostra* represented much more than a political problem.

Political work targeting the state from the 1980s-mid 1990s was an imperative first step of counter-hegemony before the second phase of counter-hegemony—working amongst society through cultural work to offer a new, counter-hegemonic ideology to the masses—could be carried out. This second step came about only after political reforms proved insufficient in fully uprooting hegemony; in the mid-1990s, the state had initiated important political reforms and had developed a full penal legislation capable of attacking *Cosa Nostra*'s perceived impunity, yet the mafia still reigned dominant over the island. This suggested that *Cosa Nostra* represented much more than solely a political problem. Therefore, the antimafia movement beginning in the mid-1990s recognized the need for cultural work amongst society to create a new counter-hegemonic mentality.²⁰¹

Gramscian theory offers an understanding of the prudence of changing focus from state to society, as it is not enough to target a hegemonic state when apparatuses throughout society work diligently to ensure the daily reproduction of the hegemonic system. The second phase of the counter-hegemonic movement that materialized in the mid-1990s—working culturally to advance a new counter-hegemonic mentality among Sicilians—will be the focus of Chapter 4.

²⁰¹ While I acknowledge that cultural initiatives occurred in Sicily prior to the mid-1990s, I believe that the focus of the early movement was primarily on political work to change relations between the state and *Cosa Nostra*. During this early phase, cultural projects had limited support and funding, and thus were limited in scope. This focus on cultural work after the mid-1990s in no way is meant to demean the cultural projects that did occur in the 1980s, but rather to place emphasis on how after the mid-1990s, cultural initiatives dominated the antimafia agenda like never before as political reforms declined in importance.

STATE-MAFIA RELATIONS IN THE 1970s-80s:

As described in Chapter Two, the reason the Italian state found it prudent to enter into a partnership with *Cosa Nostra* in the 1860s was a result of the similarities in aims and purposes between these two hegemons. Simply put, the mafia was capable at performing the same functions that the state was inefficient at carrying out in Sicily. These similarities, however, also had the potential to create natural fissures within the hegemonic bloc. The state and mafia continued their symbiotic relationship for decades without disruption, relying on one another for things that they could not guarantee themselves. State-mafia relations resembled something of a balancing act, consequently, where both hegemons remained content to the extent that they possessed a certain amount of power and authority derived from the partnership. This tenuous relationship began to change, however, from the 1960s-80s when *Cosa Nostra* began to acquire unprecedented wealth and jeopardized the balance of power between the state and mafia by failing to uphold its end of the hegemonic bargain.

By nature of this relationship, where power is shared between *Cosa Nostra* and the state, and each depends upon the other for specific functions, it is evident that the hegemonic bloc is far from a stable entity.²⁰² Moreover, the methods for state and mafia power, including “extortion, threatening, and protection will always produce turbulence” because these are lucrative realms in which at any given time a plurality of actors seek to dominate.²⁰³ Natural fissures within the hegemonic bloc thus result from the tenuous hold that the state and mafia possess over these instruments of power that they both seek to dominate, merely in different ways. It is a relationship that has persisted for over a

²⁰² Johnson and Soeters, 169.

²⁰³ Johnson and Soeters, 180.

century, to be sure, but not without contestation and renegotiation in order to stabilize the bloc and limit the spread of cracks within it over time.

During several periods in Sicily's modern history, the state and mafia have had to renegotiate the terms of their relationship in order to maintain the hegemonic bloc. For instance, under fascism, Mussolini began eliminating *mafiosi* whom he accurately perceived to be a threat to state power.²⁰⁴ While it seemed for a time, therefore, that the state fundamentally might reconsider its relationship with *Cosa Nostra*, in the 1950s following WWII the relationship was solidified once more. Emerging strong and prosperous in the wake of WWII, when *mafiosi* received political appointments and virtually all construction contracts during rebuilding, *Cosa Nostra* was increasingly relied on by the state which again failed to engage in effective state-building after this tumultuous period. Moreover, the mafia acquired considerable strength during this time from the emergence of the Christian Democratic political party that was intent on fostering close ties with *Cosa Nostra* in order to maintain electoral domination in Sicily.²⁰⁵ Exchanging electoral guarantees for promises of public works and construction contracts, *Cosa Nostra* helped ensure the continuation of its symbiotic relationship with the state.²⁰⁶ Thus, during fascism and in the postwar years following WWII, the state had to renegotiate the terms of its symbiotic relationship with the mafia, recognizing the mafia's growing power and ability to dictate the direction of the hegemonic bloc upon which they both depended, but this renegotiation never culminated in the state's withdrawal from its partnership with *Cosa Nostra*.

²⁰⁴ Jamieson, 14.

²⁰⁵ Shelley, "Review," 669.

²⁰⁶ Jamieson, 14, 16.

Such renegotiations between state and mafia were possible during Sicily's history because there was not yet pressure from a counter-hegemonic source acting to put strain on these fissures. As Johnson and Soeters succinctly surmise, each entity had an interest in maintaining the hegemonic bloc because this "matted coexistence resulted from the symbiotic interdependent relationship fostered between both 'sovereignties.'" Due to the mutually beneficial nature of this relationship, "each force would therefore only attack its political competitor as a response to an initial attack," not wanting to threaten an otherwise lucrative affiliation.²⁰⁷ The nature of a hegemon, however, is the desire for and attainment of total physical and ideological domination over the masses. Thus, it can be inferred that the moment this tenuous balancing act between these two competing, yet 'interdependent' hegemons is thrown into question, compromising cracks will appear within the bloc.

As a result of the Italian state's historical reliance on *Cosa Nostra*, the criminal organization began to possess inflated notions of its impunity. Especially with the state's dependence on the mafia for electoral support, *Cosa Nostra* rightly recognized itself to be a fundamental pillar supporting the state's authority in Sicily. As Lupsha describes, when states and organized crime groups enter into symbiotic relations, it is easy for criminal groups to begin placing heavier demands upon the state and extracting what it desires to gain more power. While power contestations had been mitigated between these two hegemons in the past, a fundamental change occurred in the 1970s that threatened the tenuous fissures between the Italian state and *Cosa Nostra*. The mafia's entrance into the drug trafficking industry in the 1970s represented a significant event that forced the state to begin re-evaluating its symbiotic relationship with the criminal organization.

²⁰⁷ Johnson and Soeters, 169.

Through entering the drug market in the 1970s, *Cosa Nostra* families gained unprecedented wealth as they began ushering heroin shipments from South America through Europe and the United States.²⁰⁸ The mafia already controlled a number of lucrative businesses and industries in Sicily, such as citrus and sulfur, but heroin represented a new venture with incredible monetary benefits and global markets.²⁰⁹ Consequently, during the 1970s “the mafia was at the height of its power, boundlessly rich, and so certain of its status that it acted with impunity.”²¹⁰

While the drug market brought considerable monetary gains, it also brought about violent intra-organizational power contestations that began to threaten *Cosa Nostra*'s loose, hierarchical structure.²¹¹ The mafia is characterized by a number of regional families falling within a pyramidal structure, with one family and head *capo*, or boss, always reigning supreme. During the 1970s, the head family was the Corleonesi from Corleone, who quickly earned a reputation for unprecedented brutality and “overwhelming violence” to secure their hold on power in the face of increasing inter-familial conflict.²¹² While *mafiosi* families compose a collective entity and benefit from one another's successes, factions and contestations between families have been a common characteristic of *Cosa Nostra*'s history. These frequent conflicts reached a climax first in the 1960s during the “First Mafia War.”²¹³ In the 1970s, violence culminated in a Second Mafia War, reflective not only of the unresolved tensions from the first war, but more importantly the strong desire among families to dominate the

²⁰⁸ Jamieson, 24-5.

²⁰⁹ Dickie, 277-8.

²¹⁰ Lo Dato, 12.

²¹¹ Dickie, 277.

²¹² Dickie, 260-3.

²¹³ Dickie, 248-9.

boundlessly-rich *Cosa Nostra* empire.²¹⁴ Because the Corleonesi believed they had benefitted unequally from drug profits, the family sought to end this inequality through violence that would unequivocally demonstrate its ability to dominate the mafia empire.²¹⁵

Mafia wars are known for their violent and brutal tactics. As Roberto Saviano has described, during mafia wars “the hint of kinship or physical resemblance is all it takes to become a target...what matters is to concentrate as much pain, tragedy, and terror as possible” against rival factions.²¹⁶ The Second Mafia War was different than the first in several notable respects, however. For one, the stakes in controlling the *Cosa Nostra* organization increased the determination of competing families to emerge victorious from the battle. Moreover, because entrance into the drug market and the mafia’s growing riches gave *Cosa Nostra* inflated perceptions of its impunity in relation to the state, the mafia in the 1980s abandoned some of its old tactics that had long been responsible for helping to alleviate the tenuous fissures between the state and mafia.

Prior to the 1980s, *Cosa Nostra* had taken deliberate strides to avoid unnecessarily implicating ordinary Sicilians in mafia conflicts. While intra-mafia conflicts had occurred before the 1980s, civilians were rarely affected and violence was contained within family factions. Moreover, the mafia rarely used violence against the state in order to extract more from this symbiotic relationship, not wanting to disrupt this lucrative relationship.²¹⁷ The largely isolated nature of mafia violence allowed the state to turn a blind eye to *Cosa Nostra* conflicts over the years, therefore, because this

²¹⁴ Dickie, 277.

²¹⁵ Dickie, 288.

²¹⁶ Saviano, 119.

²¹⁷ Dickie, 295.

aggression did not jeopardize the security of Sicilians or rule of law on the island. In the 1980s, however, these tactics governing mafia violence were abandoned;²¹⁸ the war became more brutal and increasingly public, with the goal being total domination at any cost. As violence spilled into the streets, it became apparent that the state was beginning to lose remaining vestiges of its authority in Sicily.

The Italian state first found it prudent to enter into a contractual relationship with *Cosa Nostra* because the mafia proved adept at enforcing order and offering security to Sicilians post-unification. However, the Second Mafia War demonstrated that *mafiosi* cared more about solidifying their power than fulfilling these functions upon which the state depended. With the mafia not performing its intended role, it became clear that this symbiotic relationship increasingly was benefitting only one hegemon. This symbiotic relationship rapidly was transforming into a parasitic partnership, therefore, where the mafia served to benefit from the declining power of the state.

The primary factor that most significantly threatened fissures between the state and mafia was the fact that the state failed to protect the security and lives of ordinary Sicilians in the 1980s amidst increasingly violent power contestations. As Chandhoke describes, “the basic function of every state is to maintain law and order.”²¹⁹ However, because the state historically relied on the mafia for this function, the Italian state had never developed its own ability to act in this regard. When the mafia failed to perform the functions of maintaining order and controlling violence, Sicilians began to fall victim to the mafia’s haphazard tactics. The state’s influence in the region declined as *Cosa Nostra*’s grew, and it became clear which hegemon reigned dominant as violence erupted

²¹⁸ Dickie, 296.

²¹⁹ Chandhoke, *State and Civil Society*, 51.

and the Italian state proved powerless to stop it. It is clear, therefore, that a deep, natural fissure was widening between the state and mafia. Because both these hegemon desired power and profit, when the mafia began to profit more from this relationship than the state, the state feared the total loss of its authority in the face of *Cosa Nostra's* desire for supremacy.

The state's fear of losing authority to its competing yet supplementary hegemon seemed a very real possibility in the 1970s-80s. In an interview with a retired *Guardia di Finanza*, or Sicilian Customs Officer, he painfully recalled this period of unchecked illegality and disbelief in the state's authority in Sicily. Because it was well-known throughout the island that state power in Sicily was fallacious, he commonly would be laughed at and even spit upon in public areas while wearing his uniform.²²⁰ This is particularly significant because *Guardia di Finanza* represents the state body responsible for regulated and patrolling drug trafficking; the disrespect this officer faced, therefore, is reflective of general sentiments in the 1980s that acknowledged the growing power of *Cosa Nostra* as a result of the heroin industry and the state's relative ineffectuality in doing anything to prevent this progression of events.²²¹ During the mafia war, therefore, more so than at any other point in Sicily's history, many state authorities realized they were beginning to lose completely their historical ability to dictate the terms of state relations with *Cosa Nostra*.

Believing it could prevent the state from withdrawing from the symbiotic relationship that had allowed *Cosa Nostra* to become so powerful in the first place, the mafia began demonstrating its determination to wage war against anyone that threatened

²²⁰ Interview with *Guardia di Finanza* Officer, November 22, 2010.

²²¹ Dickie, 280.

the organization's growing power and influence. As a result, the 1980s claimed the lives of several "eminent corpses," as no attempt was made to contain mafia violence within the organization.²²² These murders left a bitter taste in the mouths of once apathetic Sicilians, as the mafia's disregard for law and order began to jeopardize the lives of Sicilians who had no involvement or stake in *Cosa Nostra*.²²³ Moreover, beginning in the 1970s and early 1980s *mafiosi* showcased their disregard for the rights of Sicilians and legality through the public murdering of political allies who broke the trend of accommodative state policies towards *Cosa Nostra*. This was exemplified in the murder of General Carlo Alberto dalla Chiesa, the Sicilian whom the Italian state hired as "high commissioner against the mafia" in Sicily.²²⁴ His murder would be one of several assassinations that highlighted a changing tide in *Cosa Nostra* that no longer respected the Italian state's right to direct mafia operating procedures or curb the organization's expression of its power.²²⁵

It was in this climate of increasingly public brutality that individuals within the state began devoting their lives to *Cosa Nostra* prosecution, fighting against the impunity the mafia believed itself to possess as a result of its long relationship with the state. It is important to revisit Skocpol's definition of the state, however, as she states that by nature the state is not a monolithic entity, and is rather composed of a variety of offices and institutions that contribute to its power.²²⁶ During the 1980s, magistrates Falcone and Borsellino highlighted the divergent nature of the various apparatuses of the Italian state with their decision to stand apart from other recalcitrant state actors by using their

²²² Dickie, 295.

²²³ Dickie, 295-6.

²²⁴ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 69.

²²⁵ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 174.

²²⁶ Chandhoke, *State and Civil Society*, 52.

political positioning to wage a significant attack against *Cosa Nostra*. These magistrates recognized that they “could not stand back and accept open warfare” on Sicilian territory and turn a blind eye as the mafia made a mockery of the state on the island—the same state whose authority these magistrates were supposed to represent and uphold.²²⁷

Falcone and Borsellino refused to remain passive as they watched the mafia showcase its resolve to brutally “attack the symbols and representatives of the state.”²²⁸ In a sense, *Cosa Nostra* had “declared an open war on the state with a long spate of assassinations” which suggested that the state would lose all credibility if its authority was not reaffirmed quickly.²²⁹ While the state and mafia were able to frequently renegotiate their symbiotic relationship since the 1860s, and were thus able to mitigate pressures that threatened the fissures between the two hegemonies, the true success of the hegemonic bloc over time was the absence of any counter-hegemonic force putting pressure on and attempting to widen this fissure. In the 1980s, with the Italian state losing all ability to restrain *Cosa Nostra*, key magistrates within the state therefore began putting pressure on these noticeable fissures in hopes of encouraging ordinary Sicilians to take up the fight to dismantle the hegemonic system.

THE ROLE OF THE ANTIMAFIA MOVEMENT: Widening the Fissures

As Gramsci explained, natural fissures are present within a hegemonic bloc, either created over time or as a natural development of insufficiently being able to completely dominate a society and its institutions ideologically and physically. The role of a counter-hegemonic movement is to capitalize on existing—while simultaneously creating new

²²⁷ Anton Blok, “Reflections on the Sicilian Mafia: Peripheries and Their Impact on Centres,” in *Organized Crime: Culture, Markets, and Policies*, eds. Dina Siegel and Hans Nelen (New York: Springer, 2008), 10.

²²⁸ Johnson and Soeters, 179.

²²⁹ Savona, “The Mafia—What to Do Next?” 41.

fissures that threaten the hegemonic bloc. It will be demonstrated that Falcone and Borsellino, by capitalizing on the tenuous relations between the state and mafia, but also by creating their own fissures threatening the stability of the state as a whole by breaking away from the state's trend of dependence on the mafia, launched a counter-hegemonic attack against *Cosa Nostra*. This movement, by drawing attention to the vulnerability of the state-mafia system, encouraged Sicilians to reclaim "political space" away from the hegemonic bloc and begin attending to the first task of counter-hegemony: dismantling hegemonic ideology that had dominated Sicilians since the late 1800s.

As state actors, Falcone and Borsellino's decision to break from an accommodative state is indicative of the fissures between *Cosa Nostra* and the state, where not all state authorities wished to continue relations with the mafia after seeing the dangerous implications of the mafia's ability to compromise law and order in the 1980s. The mafia war can be seen as not only creating fissures between the state and mafia, but also *within* the Italian state itself. Falcone and Borsellino were able to capitalize on a classic political opportunity structure created from national legal reforms in the late 1970s, which granted magistrates greater independence and authority from the state to carry out their own investigations.²³⁰ This allowed these new intellectuals to break from other state authorities who were "never likely to have the animus required to tackle organized crime," and instead launch their own attack against *Cosa Nostra* despite the presence of a largely obstinate state body.²³¹ As a former Customs Officer described, the maneuverability of magistrates is one of the greatest attributes of the Italian Constitution. Because the Constitution grants magistrates with their own power independent of party

²³⁰ Dickie, 270.

²³¹ Dickie, 270.

affiliation, and are thereby theoretically impartial and not influenced by external actors, these judges have had more flexibility than other state actors to pursue a hard stance against the mafia.²³² These early leaders utilized this unique political positioning within the state to play upon and create fissures within the state-mafia system in a way that began mobilizing Sicilians to recognize their opportunity to dismantle the hegemonic bloc that had long seemed impregnable.

According to Gramsci, a counter-hegemonic movement must produce “new intellectuals” that will combat the power and efforts of traditional intellectuals working to reproduce hegemonic ideology. While Falcone and Borsellino undoubtedly stimulated the widespread antimafia movement of today, it is important to recognize that “new intellectuals” within Sicily first appeared on the island decades before these magistrates began attacking state-mafia relations. The inability of these early activists to challenge the state-mafia system prior to the 1980s is telling of the extent to which state-mafia hegemony had become entrenched by the mid-1900s, but also reflects the need for counter-hegemonic initiatives if *Cosa Nostra* were to be successfully challenged.

ACKNOWLEDGING PRIOR EFFORTS: The Antimafia’s New Intellectuals Prior to the 1980s

Particularly in the 1950s—when state-mafia relations illustrated by electoral manipulation and judicial clemency became harder to conceal—authorities and civilians displeased with this state of affairs and domination began to protest against the state-mafia system. These early efforts were carried out by individual, isolated activists in a time period that was not yet ready to turn against a trend of decades of acquiescence to state-mafia hegemony. For example, in the 1960s a young man named Giuseppe

²³² Interview with *Guardia di Finanza*, Siracusa, Italy, November 22, 2010.

“Peppino” Impastato, who lived “within one of the most mafia-saturated” towns outside of Palermo, began using his independent radio show to protest and denounce *Cosa Nostra*.²³³ Despite the fact that a powerful mafia boss lived merely *i cento passi* (a hundred steps) away from his home, he continued his public attack against hegemonic forces and encouraged awareness among his neighbors who had historically denied the existence of *Cosa Nostra* among them. Peppino’s own father was a *mafioso*, and membership in the organization was common in his familial tree; through his public denunciations, demonstrations, and incendiary articles Peppino described the mafia to be a “mountain of shit,” not something to be worshipped or supported.²³⁴ Through this bold rhetoric, Peppino hoped to rally other Sicilians under similar circumstances who were raised to either deny the existence of the mafia or to join in the system’s perpetuation.²³⁵ Because of his lack of support among local Sicilians under the trance of hegemony who feared disrupting the state-mafia system, however, Peppino stood alone and was easily silenced by *Cosa Nostra* through his brutal murder.

In addition, important antimafia events occurred at the state level in the late 1950s-60s which attested to budding antimafia sentiment in Sicily. The first Antimafia Commission came about at this time, created in the hopes of coming to a larger understanding of the mafia phenomenon and how to address it. The early commission mostly represented a “study body,” however, with little clout, as it primarily aimed to gather more information about *Cosa Nostra* and the unique political problems it presented.²³⁶ It is equally important to note that several prominent authorities worked in

²³³ Dickie, 271.

²³⁴ Dickie, 272.

²³⁵ Dickie, 271-3.

²³⁶ Savona, “The Mafia—What to Do Next?” 93.

Sicily prior to 1980 to address the mafia problem, such as General dalla Chiesa and Pio La Torre, to name only a few.²³⁷ These early activists represented “solitary heroes” who stood alone in a sea of Sicilians that failed to join behind these individuals either out of fear or because the strength of the hegemonic state-mafia bloc had succeeded in creating the mentality that *Cosa Nostra* was not a real phenomenon, let alone a problem requiring addressing.

The early commission and the courageous efforts of these authorities prior to the 1980s were largely ineffectual due to fundamental misunderstandings about the mafia and an insufficient penal framework from which to launch a substantial attack. This is apparent in the fact that the Antimafia Commission in the 1960s-70s found it prudent to forcibly relocate known *mafiosi* outside of Sicily, reflecting the commission’s lack of knowledge about the larger underlying political issues that perpetuated *Cosa Nostra* power during this time.²³⁸ The most substantial reason that these early antimafia efforts failed to challenge hegemonic ideology, however, was a result of limited knowledge about how the hegemonic system operated and achieved its strength. While these new intellectuals attempted to begin to “publish links between mafia crimes and political patronage,” at this time little was known of the nature and extent of state-mafia ties.²³⁹ Consequently, these new intellectuals knew not how to effectively capitalize on the state’s fear of losing power and influence to *Cosa Nostra*.

In addition, in the 1950s-60s when these early antimafia efforts occurred, little was known about the apparatuses that worked to reinforce hegemony in Sicilian society. The strength of new intellectuals is contingent upon their ability to call attention to the

²³⁷ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 69.

²³⁸ Savona, “The Mafia—What to Do Next?” 14.

²³⁹ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 99.

actors working to reinforce hegemony in order to dismantle their influence over the masses. Because knowledge of these hegemonic forces and state-mafia relations would not become apparent until Falcone and Borsellino began working with mafia *pentiti* in the early 1980s, the efforts of these early new intellectuals—while important to pay tribute to—did not bring about the desired challenge to state-mafia relations.

Working with *pentiti*, magistrates Falcone and Borsellino were able to acquire an unprecedented wealth of information about *Cosa Nostra*, its structure, operating procedures, and relations with the Italian state. These committed magistrates arose as the prominent faces of the antimafia fight from an “antimafia pool,” a group of four magistrates headed by magistrate Antonino Caponnetto.²⁴⁰ These magistrates shared information amongst one another in the hopes of creating “an organic and complete picture of the mafia problem,” dedicated to uncovering the truth about *Cosa Nostra* and the varied sources of its strength.²⁴¹

A major reason *Cosa Nostra* perpetuated for decades and succeeded in remaining highly elusive was the code of *omertá*. This code held *mafiosi* to strict expectations of secrecy, imposing brutal and harsh repercussions on members who failed to stay silent about the organization and its tactics. *Omertá*—along with promises of immunity from the state beginning in the 1950s when state-mafia political ties were strong—kept authorities in the dark about *Cosa Nostra* since its origins in the 1860s and rendered earlier efforts to repress the organization largely ineffectual.²⁴²

²⁴⁰ Dickie, 299.

²⁴¹ Dickie, 299.

²⁴² Blok, “Reflections on the Sicilian Mafia,” 8.

By creating a witness protection program and rewards for *pentiti*, magistrates encouraged *mafiosi* to come forward and renounce *omertá*.²⁴³ This cooperation with state authorities began in the early 1980s. One *pentito* in particular, Tommaso Buscetta, provided Falcone with incriminating information against *mafiosi* that had infiltrated powerful political positions within Sicily, as well as prominent politicians who had dependent relationships with *Cosa Nostra*.²⁴⁴ Therefore, *pentiti* like Buscetta were able to provide new intellectuals of the 1980s with knowledge about state-mafia hegemony that allowed Falcone and Borsellino to understand how state-mafia domination had come to pervade all levels of society.

During the early 1980s, Falcone and Borsellino also learned through *mafiosi* testimonies the nature of non-state actors that historically functioned as hegemonic apparatuses within Sicily, such as the Christian Democratic Party and the Catholic Church. With this knowledge, these new intellectuals were better able to target the traditional intellectuals and members of the hegemonic bloc in order to limit the continual reproduction of hegemonic ideology and practices. Falcone and Borsellino were effective at beginning to capitalize on state-mafia fissures, therefore, because they came to possess intimate knowledge of the functioning of the hegemonic bloc, and thus knew how to direct their energies to best dismantle hegemony. As Roberto Saviano explains, *pentiti* are of vital importance to the fight against the mafia, because without their testimonies, the truth—facts, details, and mechanisms—is only discovered ten, twenty years later, as if a man were to understand how his vital organs worked only after he is dead.”²⁴⁵ Before *pentiti* testimonies, it was not known that the mafia represented a collective system,

²⁴³ Hammer, 3.

²⁴⁴ Dickie, 17-19.

²⁴⁵ Saviano, 274.

whose power and influence was reproduced daily through a variety of apparatuses within society that acted as “organs” sustaining the state-mafia system. *Pentiti* thereby provided evidence of the organs crucial in supporting the state-mafia bloc in society—the apparatuses that would need to be tackled in order to dismantle hegemony in Sicily. A counter-hegemonic movement was born, and with critical knowledge of the functioning of the hegemonic bloc, Falcone and Borsellino worked to ensure that state-mafia fissures would not be able to be smoothed over as they had for nearly 120 years.

THE EARLY NATURE OF THE ANTIMAFIA FIGHT: 1980s-Early 1990s Sicily

From *pentiti* testimonies, Falcone and Borsellino came to conceptualize *Cosa Nostra* as a fundamentally political problem, believing that the mafia was “only interested in its own power, and is affected only when the sole other real power that can threaten it, the state, takes action.”²⁴⁶ After learning intimate and previously unknown details of state-mafia ties, these magistrates held the Italian state responsible for the unchecked power of *Cosa Nostra* they saw openly and unashamedly demonstrated in Sicily in the 1980s. As a result, the magistrates believed in the need for legislative reforms that would end *Cosa Nostra*’s domination over Sicily by forcing the state to withdraw from symbiotic alliances with the mafia.

Falcone and Borsellino hoped to rally Sicilians to cultivate their potential to dismantle hegemony by publicizing discoveries of state-mafia ties that were brought about through *pentiti* testimonies. The magistrates encouraged Sicilians to pressure the recalcitrant Italian state to withdraw from its ties to *Cosa Nostra* and adopt antimafia reforms that would weaken the criminal organization. One early way Falcone demonstrated to the public that the mafia was a real criminal organization with

²⁴⁶ Savona, “The Mafia—What to Do Next?” 29.

formidable international power was through publishing reports about *mafiosi* linked to heroin trafficking and extortion in Sicily.²⁴⁷ By providing irrefutable evidence that *Cosa Nostra* existed as an oppressive force within Sicilian society, Falcone encouraged Sicilians to question power structures on the island and overturn the mentality that the mafia merely represented a suspicion or myth. As Falcone's former friend and fellow magistrate, Ignazio De Francisci said, "Falcone was like Christopher Columbus. He was the one who opened the way for everyone else. He broke new ground."²⁴⁸ This task was significant, however, as Sicilians in the 1980s "seemed to have accepted with resignation the idea of not mounting any resistance and even adapting to the situation, especially when failure to do so would have created problems of survival."²⁴⁹ Through their emotive calls to action, these magistrates encouraged Sicilians to overturn decades of acquiescence by showing how hegemonic ideology that had long denied the existence of state-mafia relations had oppressed Sicilians into passivity to and ignorance of their realities.

Falcone and Borsellino employed a variety of strategies in the hopes of educating Sicilians about the hegemonic state-mafia system that oppressed them. By suggesting how state apparatuses and institutions within society were compromised as a result of their affiliations with *Cosa Nostra*, these new intellectuals attempted to show Sicilians that it was up to them to demand more from the government and to not accept this state of affairs. They promoted awareness of *Cosa Nostra* and its political ties to the state through public speeches and court trials of the need to destroy the hegemonic system that was

²⁴⁷ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 136-7.

²⁴⁸ Hammer, 3.

²⁴⁹ Rita Borsellino, "In Spite of Everything, The Poplar Anti-Mafia Commitment in Sicily," *Trends in Organized Crime* 5, no. 3 (2000): 59.

responsible for compromising their safety. In a number of regional courtroom trials throughout the 1980s, state-mafia relations became indisputable, as politicians like the former mayor of Palermo Vito Ciancimino were among those imprisoned for their role in perpetuating mafia power.²⁵⁰ Outside the courtroom, these magistrates drew from real events from the 1980s—such as the death of state authorities like Judge Chinnici and dalla Chiesa—as evidence of the state’s inability to provide security to its citizens because of its historical delegation to the mafia.²⁵¹ Moreover, in a speech to Sicilians in Agrigento in 1988, Borsellino brought attention to state-mafia alliances by suggesting that this relationship of accommodation was responsible for the state’s refusal to sufficiently support the antimafia efforts of the 1980s, which had led to the state’s lack of protection of authorities who consequently became antimafia martyrs as a result of their lack of support.²⁵² Falcone and Borsellino hoped to dismantle the pervasive idea state that state-mafia alliances were natural and acceptable, therefore, calling on Sicilians to expect and demand more from their state.

Falcone and Borsellino also advanced a counter-hegemonic movement by working to raise awareness about the various hegemonic apparatuses within society that were responsible for perpetuating state-mafia power. These apparatuses included the Catholic Church and political parties, but most importantly Sicilians themselves. Borsellino preferred going into schools to raise awareness about the apparatuses in Sicilian society working to advance state-mafia hegemony.²⁵³ He also had aspirations to utilize television as a medium to promote awareness of Sicilians’ oppression under the

²⁵⁰ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 69.

²⁵¹ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 69.

²⁵² Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 146.

²⁵³ Jamieson, 127.

hegemonic system, creating a show where he would guest-star as a lecturer and knowledgeable authority on state-mafia ties. Borsellino was killed before this ambition could come to fruition, however.²⁵⁴ Nonetheless, these magistrates succeeded in drawing attention to the institutions in Sicily that reinforced hegemonic ideology, while also raising awareness about how Sicilians furthered the hegemonic bloc by their grants of acquiescence to status quo power structures on the island—something that individuals under the trance of hegemony could not properly conceive of prior to this time.

The already tenuous relationship between the two hegemonic powers of state and mafia, therefore, was capitalized upon by Sicily's "new intellectuals" who pushed for a restructuring of power and for reclamation of state authority in order to delegitimize the mafia.²⁵⁵ Most importantly, these individuals sought to reaffirm the state's authority in the eyes of the citizenry by showing the extent to which the magistracy—as an element of the state—was devoted to prosecuting *mafiosi* and bolstering the ability of the state to protect its citizens and uphold justice.

A major reason Falcone and Borsellino succeeded in extracting legislative concessions from the state in the early 1980s was because the state realized during the "mafia war" and *Cosa Nostra*'s subsequent, relentless attack against state authorities that something needed to be done to check the mafia's growing sense of indestructibility. It was clear that the state was no longer able to carry out its most basic function—protecting civilians—as a result of the mafia's growing power. Falcone and Borsellino framed the necessity of state reform in a way that resounded with the state's fears of its perceived loss of hegemony to *Cosa Nostra*, which was a very possible reality in the

²⁵⁴ Jamieson, 127-8.

²⁵⁵ Johnson and Soeters, 179.

brutality and chaos of the 1970s-80s when it became clear just how powerless the state had become in Sicily. Putting pressure on this fissure that the state already recognized and feared, magistrates succeeded in encouraging the adoption of a stricter penal code against *mafiosi*—thereby representing a break from decades of state grants of impunity towards *Cosa Nostra*.

EARLY STATE RESPONSE: Early Legislative Reforms of the 1980s

Falcone and Borsellino had succeeded in linking the detrimental mafia power of the 1980s to the Italian state and its historical trend of accommodation and leniency towards *Cosa Nostra*. The state had little option but to adopt much needed reforms in this time, as the most vocal and prominent calls to action radiated from within the state itself, in the form of magistrates Falcone and Borsellino. Increasingly, however, civilians also began asserting pressure on the state to reevaluate its dependence on the mafia. Thus, in the 1980s the Italian state could not afford to lose any more credibility among Sicilians by failing to make important political concessions that were widely demanded. This growing pressure for reform made it difficult for the state to ignore what it realized during the mafia war—that the symbiotic relationship upon which the state had long depended was now only benefiting one hegemon. Thus, because of the work of these new intellectuals and growing civilian discontentment against the hegemonic bloc, “after 130 years, the Italian state had finally declared to Sicilian mafia to be an organized and deadly challenge to its own right to rule.”²⁵⁶ The implications of such a declaration only become evident when one considers that state authorities long played a hand in perpetuating hegemonic ideology that refused to acknowledge the existence of *Cosa Nostra* in the Sicilian landscape, let alone the organization’s role as a critical state ally.

²⁵⁶ Dickie, 309.

The most significant manifestations of the state's reevaluation of *Cosa Nostra* were the legislative reforms of the 1980s. The need for antimafia legislation became glaringly apparent not only due to the ease in which *mafiosi* had infiltrated and corrupted political offices, but also due to the "judicial jungle" and "lack of coordination between local and national authorities"²⁵⁷ that made it nearly impossible to effectively and quickly prosecute mafia-related criminals even after their elusive identities were revealed. The ineffectuality of Sicily's criminal legislation was a major roadblock to the first stringent antimafia efforts of the Antimafia Commission in the 1960s-70s. Because of the clandestine nature of *Cosa Nostra*, where hierarchical levels of authority made it impossible to discern who controlled the infinite number of puppet strings within the mafia empire, magistrates and other prosecuting authorities faced a formidable challenge in arresting mafia criminals. If the state was serious about taking a harder stance against the mafia—and pressure from magistrates and civilians allowed the state little alternative—new laws were needed to criminalize *Cosa Nostra*.

One of these crucial early reforms was the *Rognoni-La Torre* Law, which officially made it illegal to be a member of *Cosa Nostra*, no matter how small that involvement. The importance of this law cannot be overemphasized, as this marked the first time in which the mafia was finally recognized as a criminal organization.²⁵⁸ This law also ensured harsher and longer prison sentencing for *mafiosi*. Previously, even in the rare instance that an important *mafioso* was imprisoned, cushy sentencing and lax treatment ensured that incarcerated *mafiosi* could still operate with considerable influence, issuing orders and initiating lucrative business deals from behind bars. For

²⁵⁷ Savona, "The Mafia—What to Do Next?" 8.

²⁵⁸ Dickie, 298.

example, in the 1970s before such legislative reforms came about, prominent mafia boss and eventual *pentito* Tommaso Buscetta “spent his entire imprisonment in the hospital wing where he was able to receive friends, family, and lawyers and telephone all over the world.”²⁵⁹ The *Rognoni-La Torre* Law, however, which guaranteed a minimum sentence of 3 years for convicted *mafiosi*, represented a crucial step towards a harder antimafia stance at the state level. Also of importance was the fact that this law allowed for state seizure of mafia property.²⁶⁰ This suggested the recognition of the need to end symbolic manifestations of *Cosa Nostra*’s power—where sprawling multi-million dollar estates served to enforce not only the dominance the mafia had over the Sicilian landscape, but also the success and respect that was afforded to any member of *Cosa Nostra*.

These early legislative reforms against organized crime finally provided magistrates Falcone and Borsellino with the legal framework from which to launch an unprecedented judicial attack against *Cosa Nostra* that showcased the wealth of incriminating information the magistrates had gained through working with *pentiti*. With *mafiosi* membership illegalized and *Cosa Nostra* finally recognized as a criminal organization, Falcone and Borsellino had the penal code they needed to utilize *pentiti* testimonies compiled over several years to weaken the mafia through the court system. Falcone and Borsellino launched their attack in 1986-7 in the form of the Maxi Trial, which led to over 300 *mafiosi* arrests and seemed to suggest a changing tide in Sicily’s future.²⁶¹ Demonstrating to Sicilians that notable state authorities would no longer deny the existence of *Cosa Nostra* or acquiesce to its domination, the seeds of a civilian-based

²⁵⁹ Jamieson, 25.

²⁶⁰ Savona, “The Mafia—What to Do Next?” 25.

²⁶¹ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 140.

movement against the mafia were cultivated in the soil outside of the newly constructed, bomb-proof courthouse in Palermo.

POLITICAL SOLUTIONS: Attending to the First Track of the Antimafia “Train”

The Italian state irrefutably adopted important reforms in the 1980s as a result from the pressure new intellectuals and Sicilians began to place upon fissures separating these hegemons. It is important to note, however, that because Falcone and Borsellino conceptualized *Cosa Nostra* as a political problem, this directly influenced how the state began re-evaluating its relationship with the mafia. In the 1980s, the Italian state focused exclusively on political reforms that could be enacted to weaken *Cosa Nostra*.

By examining events occurring in Sicily’s capital during this time, it is clear the extent to which a select number of political authorities began to reevaluate *Cosa Nostra*, but also the extent to which their antimafia efforts centered on political solutions to combating the mafia problem. Leoluca Orlando, Palermo’s antimafia mayor during the 1980s-early 1990s, demonstrated his resolve to fighting the mafia in numerous ways that broke from a history of corrupt Palermo politicians who fostered and depended on ties with *Cosa Nostra*. While Orlando advocated for and initiated a handful of important cultural efforts during this time to fight mafia hegemony, including renaming city streets and parks to honor fallen antimafia heroes,²⁶² antimafia efforts in Palermo prior to 1992 were largely politically-based and state-centric. This focus on the political solutions to address *Cosa Nostra* that were championed until the mid-1990s was the general sentiment among antimafia activists during this time. Orlando’s primary focus during the late 1980s centered on removing mafia influence from politics, and also working to end

²⁶² Schenider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 180-1.

mafia-infiltration of government and public works.²⁶³ Therefore, while there were important cultural projects initiated during this time that should not be ignored, it is indisputable that antimafia activists and political authorities alike in the 1980s and early 1990s focused predominantly on political solutions and pressuring the state to break from its accommodative history with *Cosa Nostra*.

The full realization of the importance of cultural reforms would not come to fruition until the mid-1990s, and indeed could not have been realized until political reforms were initiated. This state-centric focus of the early antimafia movement, therefore, was a necessary stepping stone to the socially-centered focus the movement came to harbor in subsequent years. Similarly to a metaphor Mayor Orlando made in a speech to the Sicilian public, the antimafia movement can be described as a train dependent on two separate tracks in order to move forward.²⁶⁴ One train track represented a state-focused approach, initiating legislative and political reforms needed to address state relations with the mafia.²⁶⁵ The other track, which could only be fully developed after the first, represented societal work to change Sicilian mentalities. This second track, whose construction began in the late 1980s, would not be focused on fully until the mid-1990s when it became clear that a single track of political reforms was not enough to make the train “go forward” towards a future no longer determined by *Cosa Nostra*.²⁶⁶

It is also imperative to note that—despite these important concessions in the 1980s that represented a notable break from the state’s history of leniency towards the

²⁶³ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 181.

²⁶⁴ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 160.

²⁶⁵ In this metaphor, I draw from the proposed “antimafia cart” that Schneider and Schneider reference, of which Orlando first alluded to in a public speech in the late 1980s. Because I offer my own interpretation of what each track represented—one of political reforms, and the second of cultural reforms—I propose a new metaphor to carry this interpretation. Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 160.

²⁶⁶ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 160.

mafia—the Italian state did not come to a decisive “turning point” when it fully withdrew from its relationship with *Cosa Nostra*.²⁶⁷ While things looked hopeful based on the legislative reforms in the 1980s, the most promising and dedicated antimafia efforts were initiated by the “virtuous minority” of primarily magistrates and law enforcers, whose efforts were supported by another “virtuous minority” of “politicians, administrators, journalists, and members of the public.”²⁶⁸ The majority, therefore—within the state and also society—“remained ambivalent.”²⁶⁹ Thus, the state did adopt important antimafia platforms during the 1980s, but this should not be mistaken for widespread support of and steadfast dedication to the antimafia movement. The movement, in the face of uncertain state support, would consequently need to be fought primarily by civil society.

CIVILIAN RESPONSE PRE-1992:

The first demonstration of changing mentalities among Sicilians was evident in the public funeral for antimafia martyr General dalla Chiesa, which produced a visible “wave of emotion” among attendees.²⁷⁰ With the help of new intellectuals, Sicilians were becoming attuned to their oppression under the state-mafia system, coming to realize that respectable authorities who committed themselves to the fight against *Cosa Nostra* should not face isolation and threats against their lives merely for challenging state-mafia hegemony. The start of a society that was beginning to question power structures in Sicily was apparent by the fact that funeral attendees voiced “their suspicions that the politicians were complicit in what had happened,” where dalla Chiesa easily was

²⁶⁷ Dickie, 298.

²⁶⁸ Dickie, 298.

²⁶⁹ Dickie, 298.

²⁷⁰ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 174.

eliminated as a threat to mafia power due to lack of state protection.²⁷¹ Therefore, Sicilians began to appreciate that the state was complicit in many mafia-related events that occurred, and they voiced their concern that the state should have done more to protect one of their own—and anyone brave enough to challenge *Cosa Nostra*.

However, because these beliefs in the interweaving of state-mafia actions and interests were mere “suspicions” among Sicilians at this time attests to the counter-hegemonic work that remained to be done before state-mafia hegemony would be uprooted and Sicilians would come to realize the full manifestations of the state’s 120 year relationship with *Cosa Nostra*. Nonetheless, civilian response at dalla Chiesa’s funeral reflects the beginning of civil society’s recognition of its ability to “reclaim political society” away from the state-mafia system, choosing to challenge instead of reproduce hegemony through their interest in actively understanding and questioning the power structures that shaped and determined their realities.

Falcone and Borsellino worked diligently to take advantage of this changing sentiment prompted by an environment of growing mafia violence. These new intellectuals worked tirelessly to mobilize Sicilians to join in the antimafia fight before and especially during the Maxi Trial, therefore, fearing that this sudden discontentment in society might lose its steam if the mafia was able to rebound from this judicial assault and demonstrations against its violent attacks on state authorities.²⁷² While civilian outrage was undoubtedly present in the streets outside dalla Chiesa’s funeral and again outside the Palermo courthouse in 1986-7, the scope of civilian involvement was limited during this time compared to what it would become following 1992. Civil society, therefore, had

²⁷¹ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 174.

²⁷² Jane Schneider, “Educating Against the Mafia,” 9.

not yet fully realized its potential to dismantle the state-mafia hegemonic bloc. This can be attributed to the strength of mafia hegemony that worked to discourage any challenge that went against the hegemonic system and did not manifest in ‘spontaneous consent’ to *Cosa Nostra* and the state. Civilian response can be broken down into two periods, therefore: initial efforts encouraged by Falcone and Borsellino that came to fruition prior to 1992, and the increasingly dedicated civilian-led antimafia movement after 1992.

The nature of early civilian responses to the growing antimafia fight can be characterized as politically-motivated. As previously mentioned, Falcone and Borsellino as state actors advocated for a movement that was state-centric: addressing the Italian state to extract legislative concessions to dismantle state-mafia ties. Thus, civilian efforts in the late 1980s primarily manifested in attacks against the state calling for an end to state-mafia alliances now that the true nature of this symbiotic relationship had come to light through events like the Maxi Trial. It was during this time that many of Sicily’s most powerful antimafia organizations were established, and these organizations began by working to challenge the state and its role in perpetuating *Cosa Nostra* influence over the island. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, civilians also worked to pressure the state to remove corrupt and mafia-associated politicians from power.

The Association of Women against the Mafia in Palermo was a formidable female organization during the early 1980s whose efforts exemplify the antimafia’s early focus on the need for political reforms to destroy *Cosa Nostra* power.²⁷³ The Association of Women represented “the first permanent antimafia association in Italy.”²⁷⁴ This group lobbied the state to ensure the adoption of the *Rognoni-La Torre* Law, but also provided

²⁷³ Johnson and Soeters, 181.

²⁷⁴ Jamieson, 130.

financial support to women of mafia victims who took mafia-related cases to court.²⁷⁵

This association, therefore, hoped to end the trend that those brave enough to stand against the mafia had to stand alone.²⁷⁶ By putting pressure on the Italian state to withdraw from its contractual relations with the state, early antimafia organizations also helped to bring about Law No. 56 in 1990, which enacted harsh retribution against “businesses, public administration, and state employees found working in collaboration with the mafia.”²⁷⁷ While these early efforts accomplished much, the real face of the civilian-led antimafia movement in operation today did not develop until 1992.

MAFIA RESPONSE:

It was not like *Cosa Nostra* to lay dormant as the state and civil society launched an attack against its empire that left some of the mafia’s most powerful bosses behind bars, with their once elusive identities now broadcasted across international media networks. During the 1980s and particularly in the wake of the Maxi Trial—when the Italian state publicly reevaluated its accommodating relationship with the mafia in important ways—*Cosa Nostra* was very publicly suffering from “the worst defeat in the entire history of the world’s most famous criminal organization.”²⁷⁸ The mafia believed it could depend on allies within the state solidified over decades to thwart this judiciary offense to its power, as it had been able to do since the late 1800s.²⁷⁹ When prominent mafia allies failed to protect top mafia bosses from prosecution, the mafia was determined to demonstrate its strength, independent of state support. Salvatore Lima, a member of the Christian Democratic Party and long-time mafia ally was murdered as a

²⁷⁵ Jamieson, 130.

²⁷⁶ Jamieson, 130.

²⁷⁷ Savona, *Mafia Issues*, 44.

²⁷⁸ Dickie, 309.

²⁷⁹ Jamieson, 4.

result of his failure to insulate *Cosa Nostra* from judicial attack.²⁸⁰ Thus the state-mafia war waged heavy, as the mafia continued to murder its enemies within the state, killing those who “believed in the power of the state against the power of the mafia”—exactly what *Cosa Nostra* needed to stand up against to protect its long-unchallenged influence in Sicily.²⁸¹

As Falcone and Borsellino spearheaded state antimafia efforts and continued to acquire more information and incriminating testimonies from *pentiti*, the mafia believed itself to possess two more enemies in need of immediate attention.²⁸² For years, *Cosa Nostra* had engaged in smear campaigns against the magistrates, hoping to discredit their influence and incriminating knowledge.²⁸³ Hegemonic apparatuses like the media controlled by mafia bosses were instrumental in these attempts to strengthen the ideology that suggested *Cosa Nostra* was not a real phenomenon that dictated Sicily’s politics, economy, and culture. While these campaigns undoubtedly discouraged many Sicilians from joining the antimafia fight, it did not dissuade the magistrates from continuing their lonely battle.²⁸⁴ Thus, in 1992 the mafia responded with the brutal executions of Falcone and Borsellino. Members of the international community felt that Sicily consequently had lost its antimafia fight for good, with its two most effective and vocal activists executed. These brutal murders led many prominent and once hopeful Sicilian authorities to surmise “it’s the end, it’s all over now.”²⁸⁵ What was not expected, however, was the amount to which civil society would react in the wake of these murders, determined to

²⁸⁰ Lo Dato, 16.

²⁸¹ Savona, “The Mafia—What to Do Next?” 29.

²⁸² Jamieson, xix.

²⁸³ Dickie, 294-5.

²⁸⁴ Dickie, 294-5.

²⁸⁵ Jamieson, xx.

collectively organize in an antimafia movement that would challenge *Cosa Nostra's* perceived impunity.²⁸⁶

National symbols for the antimafia cause, Sicilians now elevated Falcone and Borsellino to the ranks of martyrs, worshipping their efforts and channeling their anger at this injustice in the form of stronger and more organized antimafia efforts at the civilian level.²⁸⁷ Remembering the now immortalized words of these men, Sicilians banded together in increasing numbers to strengthen the power and influence of the antimafia movement.²⁸⁸

THE IMPORTANCE OF 1992:

Ordinary Sicilians were not enticed in large numbers to join in the antimafia movement until after the deaths of Falcone and Borsellino.²⁸⁹ This can be explained in Gramscian terms; while these new intellectuals worked diligently to incense Sicilians to fight *Cosa Nostra* in their daily lives, the primary role of new intellectuals is to tackle the presence and influence of traditional intellectuals. It is not their function to work amongst society to ensure the adoption of a counter-hegemonic ideology. This step in dismantling hegemony must be carried out by “organic intellectuals”—individuals who stay within the level of society from which they arose, helping to perpetuate a new way of conceptualizing the world for the masses that discourages their acquiescence to the hegemonic system in place. Thus, Falcone and Borsellino undoubtedly spearheaded the antimafia movement that began in the 1980s, but their efforts prior to the 1992 only solicited a limited response because organic intellectuals—ordinary Sicilians

²⁸⁶ Jane Schneider, “Educating Against the Mafia,” 9.

²⁸⁷ Shelly, “Review,” 665.

²⁸⁸ Rita Borsellino, 61.

²⁸⁹ Jane Schneider, “Educating Against the Mafia,” 9.

themselves—would need to carry on the antimafia fight if Sicilians were to be recruited in large numbers to the movement.

The imperative need for organic intellectuals to provide the fodder for a broad-based, civilian-driven antimafia movement can be explained further by Paulo Freire. Freire suggests that calls to action against oppressive ruling groups must radiate from individuals within society, intimately connected and affected by hegemony just as the masses, because “no pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from among the oppressors.”²⁹⁰ While Falcone and Borsellino in their role as new intellectuals worked to dismantle hegemonic ideology, they did not mobilize the masses in large numbers to join the movement in the 1980s because they were state actors, and by nature of this position—despite their involvement in Sicilian communities and genuine antimafia commitments—were fundamentally disconnected from the Sicilians masses most prominently suffering under hegemony’s daily repercussions.

An indisputable change came in 1992, however, that forever changed the face of the antimafia movement. Widespread rage against the magistrates’ murders culminated in a far-reaching commitment to end *Cosa Nostra* among the Sicilian masses, creating a plethora of organic intellectuals who hoped to prompt a widespread recognition of Sicily’s oppression under *Cosa Nostra*. Witnessing other individuals from similar societal backgrounds courageously fight against hegemonic forces helped rouse the masses towards counter-hegemony following the violent year of 1992. These organic intellectuals succeeded in rallying ordinary Sicilians because “those who recognize, or begin to recognize, themselves as oppressed must be among the developers of this [new]

²⁹⁰ Freire, 36.

pedagogy” in order to encourage the realization that the masses possess the ability to dismantle hegemony.²⁹¹ While the composition of the antimafia movement changed during this time, its focus did not. Following 1992, the state remained as the primary target of these increasing antimafia efforts. Sicilians had first been made to recognize the state-mafia hegemonic system by Falcone and Borsellino, and in their honor, civilians carried on the antimafia fight in the best way they knew.

Antimafia organizations still worked to solve the mafia phenomenon through political solutions, employing unique strategies to continue to capitalize on the fissures within the state-mafia hegemonic bloc. In the wake of the deaths of Falcone and Borsellino, public memorials and street demonstrations were a common tactic used to coax otherwise apathetic and acquiescent Sicilians into pressuring the state to reform.²⁹² Most importantly, perhaps, is the “moral support” the antimafia movement offered to the politicians and authorities willing to denounce state-mafia relationships²⁹³—a powerful statement of encouragement that helped to ensure antimafia heroes would never again have to stand alone like they had in the past. Falcone fearfully predicted the need for collective action to defeat the mafia: “You are killed generally because you are alone or else because you have gotten into a game that is too big. You are often killed because you don’t have the necessary alliances, because you are without support.”²⁹⁴ By generating a widespread movement in the wake of 1992, the antimafia movement had the support it

²⁹¹ Freire, 36.

²⁹² Schneider and Schneider, “Suggestions from the Antimafia Struggle in Sicily,” 156.

²⁹³ Rita Borsellino, 62.

²⁹⁴ Jamieson, xvi.

needed to ensure it could not be quickly eliminated or swiftly “cancelled out like a foreign body.”²⁹⁵

Another important way in which the antimafia movement helped create a climate of pressure for state reforms was through effective protesting to dismantle political alliances and systems that were known to have mafia ties. The end of blurred boundaries between state and mafia could be permitted no longer, Sicilians believed, if *Cosa Nostra* were to be eradicated. As a result, many corrupt politicians in power were implicated as a result of their relations with *mafiosi*, including then Prime Minister Andreotti.²⁹⁶ While never fully convicted, the infamous *mafiosi* turned *pentiti*, Tommaso Buscetta, testified to the extent to which the prime minister had political ties and associations with *Cosa Nostra* during his time in office.

Women’s groups continued to have a dominant presence on the antimafia stage following 1992, as well, and adopted innovative ways of challenging state-mafia hegemony. The Association of Women continued to remain prominent, and in 1992 launched a public protest and hunger strike in the heart of Palermo. The female activists proclaimed “we are fasting because we are hungry for justice.”²⁹⁷ This association continued to push for political reforms, demanding that the state remove from office corrupt politicians with known mafia affiliations. Furthermore, these female activists called upon the state to play a larger role in investigating the deaths of Falcone and Borsellino in order to discern which state authorities were responsible for failing to protect these martyrs from their tragic end.²⁹⁸ Even women not necessarily linked to an

²⁹⁵ Jamieson, 26.

²⁹⁶ Johnson and Soeters, 181.

²⁹⁷ Jamieson, 131.

²⁹⁸ Jamieson, 131.

antimafia organization took direction from organizations like The Association of Women, gaining the courage to speak out at the funerals of loved ones murdered by *Cosa Nostra*. Rosario Schifani, the wife of one of Falcone's bodyguards (who died with Falcone in 1992), shook the crowd at her husband's funeral with her demands for justice to be served. Schifani directed her speech towards *mafiosi* whom she knew were in attendance, as she proclaimed "they're here, yes here, inside this church!"²⁹⁹ These incredible demonstrations of female courage in a bleak and violent period in Sicily's history were responsible for encouraging several *mafiosi* to become *pentiti*, roused by these emotive calls to destroy *Cosa Nostra*.³⁰⁰

Another female-dominated antimafia organization arose following the murder of Falcone and Borsellino called "The Sheets Committee." This loosely-based organization of twenty angered women (and later, six men), mobilized Sicilians into action by hanging sheets with messages from their urban dwellings in Palermo.³⁰¹ The sheets were scrawled with words such as "*Basta!*" calling on the state to "stop" its alliance with *Cosa Nostra* and to end the injustice that had culminated in the murder of Falcone and Borsellino.³⁰² The Committee furthered its campaign of awareness through creating and selling t-shirts to Sicilians with antimafia slogans and even through creating antimafia commercials that aired on Sicilian television in the mid-1990s.³⁰³ In these varied ways, "The Sheets Committee" assisted in pressuring the state to sever its ties and political alliances with the mafia.³⁰⁴

²⁹⁹ Jamieson, 132.

³⁰⁰ Jamieson, 132.

³⁰¹ Jamieson, 131.

³⁰² Jamieson, 131.

³⁰³ Jamieson, 131.

³⁰⁴ "The Sheets Committee" also engaged in a unique cultural effort in 1992, producing a pamphlet of a "code of behavior for opposing criminality in daily life." This can be seen as an early example of the type

Other notable antimafia groups began actively working during this time, as well. *Libera*, an antimafia organization established in 1995,³⁰⁵ successfully lobbied the state to initiate many of the important legislative reforms of the 1990s, particularly in terms of creating a new law that would allow organizations to reconvert former mafia property into space for community projects.³⁰⁶ As a result of *Libera*'s efforts at the state level, Law 109/96 was passed, allowing for mafia property to be turned over to social cooperatives furthering antimafia ideals.³⁰⁷

Along with launching an assault on corrupt politicians and pressuring the state for legislative reforms, the antimafia movement also elevated its own political candidates in an attempt to promote a new era of transparency and the end of state-mafia relations in Sicilian politics. *La Rete* was the political party of the antimafia that arose on the political scene in the 1990s.³⁰⁸ While *La Rete* was a young party, it succeeded in electing Orlando as Mayor of Palermo in 1993 by 70% of the popular vote.³⁰⁹ As a result, high expectations were put on the elections of 1994, where *La Rete* produced candidates at the local and national level. While strictly electoral considerations that likely contributed to *La Rete*'s defeat are important to note, such as the attractiveness of the new, more conservative party *Forza Italia*, this election nonetheless has been described as a "big

of cultural work that would take off in the mid-1990s once political reforms no longer became the primary focus of the movement. While this pamphlet deserves recognition as an example of cultural efforts that occurred prior to the mid-1990s, it is important to note that "The Sheets Committee" focused primarily on targeting the state to enact political reforms against the mafia in 1992, in line with other antimafia organizations of the time. Jamieson, 131-2.

³⁰⁵ Jaimeson, 144.

³⁰⁶ Rita Borsellino, 62.

³⁰⁷ Natasha Lardera, "Libera Terra. For a Sicily With No Mafia," *i-Italy*, July 3, 2009. <http://www.i-italy.org/10057/libera-terra-sicily-no-mafia>.

³⁰⁸ Patricia Clough, "Antimafia Movement Takes a Beating in Sicily," *The Independent*, April 1, 1994, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/antimafia-movement-takes-a-beating-in-sicily-the-rightwing-parties-triumph-at-the-polls-has-hit-the-oncepopular-alliance-against-organised-crime-and-may-have-let-the-mob-off-the-hook-writes-patricia-clough-in-rome-1367125.html>.

³⁰⁹ Clough, 1.

shame for Sicily”³¹⁰ because of the electorate’s decision to vote into office candidates who had largely remained mum about the mafia issue throughout campaigning.³¹¹ The electoral failings of *La Rete* in 1994, despite incredible expectations placed on its success as a result of growing popular antimafia sentiment, demonstrated at least in part that political reforms had only addressed one aspect of *Cosa Nostra*’s power, and that the mafia still remained deeply embedded within the minds and fears of Sicilians. Despite this setback, in the early years of the 1990s the antimafia movement still succeeded in elevating antimafia-committed politicians to several local offices, especially female mayors from female-dominated antimafia organizations.³¹²

STATE RESPONSE FOLLOWING 1992: Still Politically-Focused

The power of the Sicilian legislator was greatly strengthened in the 1980s-90s as a result of the antimafia’s focus on the need for political reforms to dismantle *Cosa Nostra*. Over the course of ten years, 161 criminal-related laws were created in the hopes of addressing the problem of organized crime in Sicily.³¹³ This rush of legislative reforms produced a new law on average every three weeks.³¹⁴ These laws produced dramatic results in terms of criminal prosecution. *Mafiosi* arrests skyrocketed under this nascent legal framework from 874 in 1991 to 2,136 in 1994.³¹⁵ The murder rate in Palermo also drastically decreased during this time under new penal legislation that provided harsh retribution for *mafiosi* whose affiliations with *Cosa Nostra* could be proven.³¹⁶

³¹⁰ Interview with Guardia di Finanza Officer, November 22, 2010.

³¹¹ Clough, 1.

³¹² Johnson and Soeters, 181.

³¹³ Savona, “The Mafia—What to Do Next?” 94.

³¹⁴ Savona, “The Mafia—What to Do Next?” 94.

³¹⁵ Johnson and Soeters, 179.

³¹⁶ Lo Dato, 32.

Inspired by increasing civilian pressure and the martyred magistrates, other state authorities stepped forward to carry the antimafia torch. Giovanni Spadolini, President of the Republic of Sicily, gave a stirring speech at a public memorial commemorating the judges' deaths in Sicily's capital.³¹⁷ The extent to which Sicilians continued to believe the mafia to represent a political problem requiring political solutions is evident in examining the rhetoric Spadolini utilized in this pivotal speech. Spadolini's public lecture was significant not only for its words, but for its symbolism; as President, Spadolini's willingness to publicly denounce *Cosa Nostra* stood in stark contrast to decades of acquiescence to and cooperation with the mafia, and suggested a new era where perhaps more than just a "virtuous minority" would join the antimafia fight.³¹⁸

The goal of Spadolini's speech was to "demonstrate the resolve of every Italian magistrate to carry out an ever more determined campaign to reinstate the rule of law and good order" on the island.³¹⁹ One way this resolve manifested was through increased efforts with *pentiti* in order to further investigate the extent to which the mafia had infiltrated the state.³²⁰ Pressure from civil society during this time succeeded in producing an indisputable echo throughout state levels, therefore, to end the "ignorance and underestimation of the *mafioso* phenomenon" by politicians and state authorities.³²¹ This newfound determination seemed to suggest a new era for Sicily. Spadolini recognized the state's role in leading the antimafia fight through reform and close review of how its policies were perpetuating mafia power. As he surmised, "the fight against organized

³¹⁷ Savona, "The Mafia—What to do Next?" 7.

³¹⁸ Dickie, 293.

³¹⁹ Savona, "The Mafia—What to do Next?" 7.

³²⁰ Shelley, "Review," 670.

³²¹ Savona, "The Mafia—What to Do Next?" 14.

crime is an emergency which involves the whole nation and calls for precise, calculated and also severe action on the part of the state.”³²²

It is clear that Falcone and Borsellino had begun to profoundly affect the Sicilian mentality, as prior to the 1980s the recognition of the state’s need to end relations with *Cosa Nostra* would not have been made publicly, let alone voiced by a prominent state authority. As a result of mafia infiltration within the government and the historically symbiotic relationship between state and mafia, the boundaries between *Cosa Nostra* and the Italian state were incredibly muddled and difficult to discern, making it nearly “impossible to tell where the legitimate state leaves off and the mafia begins.”³²³ Thus, Spadolini suggested his commitment to respond to civilian pressure to remove corrupt politicians from power and to advance a new era of transparency and accountability in government.

From examining speeches that transpired at the first antimafia convention entitled “The Mafia—What to Do Next?” in the wake of 1992 further points to the success civil society had in prompting state authorities in a variety of capacities to become highly motivated to addressing the political problems that were responsible for continuing state-mafia hegemony. This convention represented a collective gathering of numerous political authorities in Sicily who sought to address how to advance an antimafia platform when the movement’s most prominent leaders had died. These speeches highlight not only how civilian pressure was beginning to prompt a change in attitude at the state level, but also how political reforms were heavily referenced as the way to mitigate the *Cosa Nostra* problem during this time. As Italian politician Giorgio Napolitano (now the

³²² Savona, “The Mafia—What to Do Next?” 7.

³²³ Johnson and Soeters, 169.

President of the Italian Republic) voiced, “everyone must be aware of the need to halt and reverse the most negative and disturbing trends towards the degradation of political and civil life, towards the degeneration of the legal State.”³²⁴

Another attendee, Adolfo Beria di Argentine continued this rhetoric by referencing the deplorable position to which the Italian state had been demoted as a result of its historical dependence on *Cosa Nostra*. Argentine suggested that “a state relegated to purely economic functions has not only failed to produce a culture of legality, but has favored the culture of partiality, of doing favors for a friend, of trading interesting, of ignoring the law—of promoting mafia-type crime.”³²⁵ The Italian state, by delegating to the mafia its roles of controlling law and order and monopolizing violence, therefore, had created a scenario in which the mafia was able to trample upon state authority in 1990s Sicily to the extent that the state could no longer protect the public good and act impersonally in the territory.³²⁶ The symbiotic relationship between mafia and state ensured that all state institutions in Sicily had “no authority, even of a moral nature, attached to them.”³²⁷ While this convention reflects the pronounced effect early antimafia efforts at the magistrate and civilian level had on calling the state to reevaluate relations with *Cosa Nostra*, it is important to note that no mention as of yet was made of the cultural problems that equally contributed to the power and influence of *Cosa Nostra* in 1990s Sicily.

The role of ordinary Sicilians in pressuring for reforms during the 1980s-90s should not be underestimated. While magistrates and notable political authorities were

³²⁴ Savona, “The Mafia—What to Do Next?” 90.

³²⁵ Savona, “The Mafia—What to Do Next?” 21.

³²⁶ Johnson and Soeters, 169.

³²⁷ Savona, “The Mafia—What to Do Next?” 21.

instrumental in creating a climate of mafia intolerance within Sicilian politics, this time period saw the politicization and involvement of ordinary Sicilians who took to the streets demanding such reforms, demonstrating their stance against *Cosa Nostra* and against pervasive illegality. Spadolini himself praised Sicilians for their role in ushering in a new era for Sicily, stating that “we are witnessing a genuine mobilization of the public conscience, a revival of civic and moral values. It is a spontaneous movement, manifested in a thousand small initiatives.”³²⁸ Spadolini therefore accredited ordinary Sicilians with taking up the antimafia cause of their own accord. The antimafia movement would only continue to attract attention in the coming years.

THE BEGINNINGS OF A TRANSFORMED SICILY:

How much had really changed in the wake of state reforms brought about by pressure from new intellectuals and civil society? Examining events in Palermo at the end of the period of state reforms is telling of the need for a continued counter-hegemonic movement that would begin to work within society to challenge hegemonic domination at the cultural level.

Palermo, the capital of Sicily and the locus of mafia power,³²⁹ hosted a United Nations conference in 2000 in an attempt to show its new face to the international community.³³⁰ To be sure, long-term Mayor Leoluca Orlando deserves substantial credit for revitalizing Palermo during the 1990s in the wake of the murders of Falcone and Borsellino. When the Italian state was forced to re-evaluate its relationship with *Cosa Nostra* in the 1990s, substantial monetary assistance flooded into Palermo, helping

³²⁸ Savona, “The Mafia—What to Do Next?” 9.

³²⁹ Jane Schneider and Peter Schneider, “Mafia, Antimafia, and the Plural Cultures of Sicily,” *Current Anthropology* 46, no. 4 (2005): 503.

³³⁰ Stanley, 1.

Orlando to continue his “renaissance campaign” he had begun in the mid-1980s. This initiative involved a beautification campaign to erase the physical remnants of mafia power including old buildings, dirty streets, and dangerous neighborhoods that previously had contributed to the perpetuation of hegemonic ideology.³³¹ However, while notable strides were made under the state reforms of the 1980s-90s, the mafia was far from gone.

Rita Borsellino, sister of the immortalized magistrate, has worked to make sure that Sicilians and the international community do not forget that this is not the time for contentment or praise, as much work still remains to fully dismantle *Cosa Nostra*.³³² Speaking in the wake of the U.N. conference, as Palermo was being labeled as an “anti-crime success story,” Borsellino dissuaded fellow Sicilians and conference attendees from becoming overly optimistic: “I don’t want people leaving this conference thinking that the mafia no longer exists. It just hides itself more.”³³³ Borsellino believed that the antimafia movement was beginning to work in the right direction at the turn of the millennium, “working from the grassroots to resist the mafia.”³³⁴ The unavoidable reality, however, was that the antimafia movement had just begun to turn its attention to pervasive social and cultural problems responsible for perpetuating *Cosa Nostra* hegemony in the mid-1990s, a battle that would take decades to wage. Borsellino therefore stressed the need for more work at the cultural level after years of focusing solely on the political manifestations of the *Cosa Nostra* phenomenon. Through her public speeches, Borsellino sought to undermine the naïve assumptions voiced by many conference attendees that “we have taken the mafia out of people’s heads, and crushed its

³³¹ Stanley, 1-2.

³³² Stanley, 1.

³³³ Stanley, 1.

³³⁴ Stanley, 1.

hegemony.”³³⁵ While state reforms prompted by the antimafia movement may have taken *Cosa Nostra* in its most tangible and visible forms off of the streets, it was far from out of the minds or memories of Sicilians.

At the turn of the century, the state had proven committed to withdrawing from its symbiotic relationship with *Cosa Nostra* in notable ways, but this in no way implies that the relationship was severed. The state-mafia hegemonic bloc continued well into the 2000s, as it does today, because *Cosa Nostra* still has a powerful domination over Sicilian society and culture. At the turn of the century, therefore, at the same time as Palermo was being hailed for its “defeat of *Cosa Nostra*,” one had to look only through the façade of cleaner streets to find testament to the extent to which *Cosa Nostra* still dominated the landscape. While perhaps the most physical manifestations of its power had been removed, the mafia channeled its power into increasingly elusive and global markets and evolved its strategies to make its influence less visible to the untrained eye, but unquestionably still felt.

Ordinary Sicilian citizens still very much felt *Cosa Nostra*’s hegemonic control, not yet believing an alternative system outside the state-hegemonic bloc to exist. At the turn of the century, 80% of businesses in Palermo still paid the *pizzo*, either out of fear or because they were so accustomed to perceive this act of subordination as natural.³³⁶ Moreover, violence and murder were still tactics used against those few individuals brave enough to denounce the mafia in a public way. Murder rates had declined notably from the violence and brutality of the 1908s,³³⁷ but outspoken antimafia activists still had reason to fear mafia repercussions for their counter-hegemonic actions. In addition, the

³³⁵ Stanley, 1.

³³⁶ Hammer, 3.

³³⁷ Stanley, 2.

mafia continued to dominate incredibly lucrative, legal businesses ranging from garbage collection and construction to restaurants.³³⁸ This is not to mention the illegal channels that *Cosa Nostra* dominated, including drug trafficking and illegal immigration.³³⁹ The prevalence of drugs on the island and the increasing number of North African illegal immigrants at the turn of the century attested to the fact that, in many ways, the new millennium did not yet represent a “new dawn” for Sicily—an island that was still desperately trying to escape from under the oppressive shadow of *Cosa Nostra*.³⁴⁰

THE LIMIT OF POLITICAL REFORMS:

In the wake of the legislative rush of the 1980s-90s, it was widely held that Sicily finally had a “complete penal legislation” that could effectively challenge *Cosa Nostra*.³⁴¹ Why, then, was the mafia still so powerful? The mafia’s continuing prominence can be explained in part by the fact that static legislation could only do so much, as *Cosa Nostra* was fluid and ever-changing in nature, possessing the ability to reinvent itself and its operations in order to capitalize on volatile markets and political climates.³⁴² The laws, therefore, could not predict exactly which direction the mafia might take in the future to preserve their power and dominance.

The most significant reason why the mafia remained powerful, however, was due to the fact that *Cosa Nostra* was a deeply cultural problem, as Rita Borsellino attested to in her speech in 2000. Hegemonic ideology was still not dismantled; in the late 1980s, in the hub of mafia and antimafia activity, wealthy Palermo citizens of the upper class pretended to be in “complete ignorance of the mafia,” refusing to acknowledge such

³³⁸ Johnson and Soeters, 168.

³³⁹ Johnson and Soeters, 168.

³⁴⁰ Lo Dato, 17.

³⁴¹ Savona, “The Mafia—What to Do Next?” 15.

³⁴² Savona, “The Mafia—What to Do Next?” 16.

“unsavory aspects of Sicilian life.”³⁴³ Only attending to the political factors that perpetuated the mafia’s power would never fully challenge an organization whose right to rule over the island was deeply and historically entrenched within the minds of Sicilians. Hegemony was engrained through daily actions that went uncontested since the 1860s, and hegemonic apparatuses within society had long worked to promote the widespread uptake of an ideology that denied the existence of *Cosa Nostra*. Consequently, political reforms did not address this ideology that was a prominent feature in Sicily. Thus, beginning in the mid-1990s, it was realized that legislative mechanisms for curbing the mafia had gone as far as they could go,³⁴⁴ and that the next logical step was to attend to the second train track of the “antimafia train”; the antimafia movement needed to redirect its efforts to society, and work towards the development within Sicilian culture of a respect for and adherence to these newly created laws. In this way, the hegemonic ideology of *Cosa Nostra*’s historical right to dictate Sicily’s trajectory could be overturned fully, and a new way of conceptualizing the world could be offered to Sicilians through counter-hegemonic initiatives.³⁴⁵ True to Gramsci’s theories, the counter-hegemonic nature of the antimafia movement reared its head, in which to dismantle pervasive hegemony it became known that challenging the state-mafia hegemonic bloc did not “represent an enemy that is to be overcome once and for all with an extraordinary effort and campaign, but an enemy against which to wage a constant and ongoing daily struggle” using all means possible.³⁴⁶

³⁴³ Jamieson, 130.

³⁴⁴ Savona, “The Mafia—What to Do Next?” 90.

³⁴⁵ Savona, “The Mafia—What to Do Next?” 17.

³⁴⁶ Savona, “The Mafia—What to Do Next?” 29.

Chapter Four will address how the antimafia movement today is waging this long battle. The changes in the movement that have come about since the mid-1990s will be analyzed, as it was at this time when the movement changed from targeting the state to targeting society as the agent that could bring Sicily towards a future without *Cosa Nostra*. As Chapter Three established how the antimafia movement first worked to deconstruct mafia ideology and hegemony by waging a war against traditional intellectuals and manipulating fissures within the state-mafia bloc, Chapter Four will show how the counter-hegemonic movement has now begun attending to the second step of counter-hegemony: offering a new ideology for the masses and a new way for Sicilians to conceptualize their realities outside of the hegemonic state-mafia system. The efforts and tactics of four different organizations in Sicily will be examined in order to highlight the contemporary nature of the antimafia movement that now works among Sicilian society to produce a counter-hegemonic ideology that encourages Sicilians to reclaim their identity, their island, and their future.

Chapter Four: The Antimafia Movement Today and its Counter-Hegemonic Nature

THE MOVEMENT TODAY:

Chapter Three examined how the early antimafia movement was born in the 1980s from natural fissures between the Italian state and *Cosa Nostra* that “new intellectuals” in the form of magistrates Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino capitalized on in order to create a political opportunity for Sicilians to “reclaim political society” by no longer acquiescing to the hegemonic ideology of the state-mafia system which historically worked to deny the existence of *Cosa Nostra* as a Sicilian phenomenon and essential state collaborator. These magistrates broke the trend of state compliance with mafia power, and were able to draw attention to fissures in the hegemonic bloc as a result of their work with mafia *pentiti*. After learning from *pentiti* that *Cosa Nostra* possessed formidable power as a result of state dependence and delegation to the criminal organization, Falcone and Borsellino believed it was imperative to target the state as the locus of hegemony that could dismantle the mafia through withdrawing from its historical relationship with the criminal organization. Thus, Falcone and Borsellino spearheaded the antimafia movement, and began rallying Sicilians around the need for political reforms that would end symbiotic ties between the state and mafia.

Targeting the state to issue political reforms represented the primary focus of the nascent antimafia movement, therefore, which would continue to be the focus until the mid-1990s even when civilians began to take charge of the movement after the deaths of Falcone and Borsellino. With this political focus during the early 1980s-mid 1990s, many prominent *mafiosi* had been arrested, Sicily had developed a capable penal code to addressing the unique judicial problem posed by *Cosa Nostra*, and Sicilians began to

have success with removing corrupt politicians from office and creating a political climate that demanded accountability and transparency in Sicilian politics. Despite these notable improvements, *Cosa Nostra* was still a commanding presence that continued to dictate the island's politics and economy, and most importantly its culture.

Therefore, in the mid-1990s many Sicilians realized that targeting the state for political reforms was not enough to dismantle *Cosa Nostra*'s widespread influence. This can be explained in Gramscian terms; while the state was a locus of hegemony in Sicily, merely addressing this element of the hegemonic bloc failed to attend to the various hegemonic apparatuses in Sicily that worked to reproduce and entrench hegemonic ideology daily. Along with historical apparatuses such as the Catholic Church, political parties, and traditional intellectuals, Sicilian society represented a fundamental component of the state-mafia bloc. As Gramsci explained, civil society can either be a medium that reinforces or challenges hegemonic power structures. The ways in which Sicilian society reproduced hegemony were twofold: deliberately through paying the *pizzo* or supporting mafia-affiliated politicians, for instance, but also in numerous unintentional ways that had become so routine over time that many did not recognize the implications of these behaviors. Daily acquiescence, submission to the mafia system, denial of *Cosa Nostra*'s influence, and fear of speaking out against acts of criminality were responsible for solidifying hegemonic ideology that worked to discourage any challenges to the state-mafia system.

Through its focus on political reforms and the state, therefore, the antimafia had begun to attend to Gramsci's first step of counter-hegemony: dismantling hegemonic ideology. This was accomplished by new intellectuals Falcone and Borsellino by creating

awareness of state-mafia relations and encouraging Sicilians to overturn the mentality that such state of affairs should be accepted or perceived as natural. As Gramsci reminds us, however, there are two fundamental tasks to which a counter-hegemonic movement must attend if a deeply-rooted hegemonic system is to be deconstructed. The second task of counter-hegemony involves offering a new counter-hegemonic ideology to the masses to take the place of dismantled hegemonic ideals. This occurred during the second phase of the antimafia movement that came about in the mid-1990s. During this time, when it was clear that political solutions would only curb mafia power to a certain extent, Sicilians came to consider *Cosa Nostra* to be a fundamentally cultural problem requiring cultural work that would grant Sicilians agency in recognizing how they could participate in a new reality outside the hegemonic system. By encouraging Sicilians to think critically about their world and the role they play in that reality, antimafia activists are now working to challenge mafia “dominance over the mental attitude and spirit of the people that guaranteed the mafia absolute control over the island.”³⁴⁷ From the mid-1990s through today, therefore, the antimafia movement has attended to the second phase of counter-hegemony by offering a new ideology to Sicilians that emphasizes respect for legality and honest work, as well as denouncing *mafiosi*, criminality, and corruption.³⁴⁸

This chapter will explore the nature of the contemporary antimafia movement in order to demonstrate how *la lotta contro la mafia* has changed since its origins in the 1980s. By exploring the activities and strategies of four different antimafia organizations operating in Sicily, it will be demonstrated that each group has changed its primary focus over time from the Italian state to Sicilian society as the medium through which a cultural

³⁴⁷ Lo Dato, 12.

³⁴⁸ Schneider, “Educating Against the Mafia,” 12-13.

revolution can be brought to the island. Through an examination of these four organizations, it will be highlighted how each organization is attending to Gramsci's phases of counter-hegemony. An organization can be said to be counter-hegemonic if it attends to the following tasks: works to dismantle hegemonic ideology by challenging its remaining manifestations in society, produces organic intellectuals that promote a new reality outside the state-mafia system, works to challenge double-consciousnesses within Sicilians that contribute to their perpetuation of hegemony, and promotes institutions and activities that provide Sicilians with practical ways to incorporate counter-hegemony into daily behavior. While these organizations have different approaches to answering the mafia problem, they all are working to cultivate in Sicilians a counter-hegemonic mentality that grants them the power to challenge the state-mafia system and recognize how living and working outside the hegemonic state-mafia system can be not only practical but also lucrative. Because Arci, Libera, Addiopizzo, and the Red Diaries all attend to these four criteria, each organization can be said to be waging a counter-hegemonic attack against the state-mafia hegemonic system.

THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN THE ANTIMAFIA FIGHT TODAY:

As Chapter Three suggested, while the state made significant strides towards withdrawing from its symbiotic relationship with *Cosa Nostra* in the 1980s-early 1990s, these efforts were predominantly championed by a "virtuous minority" of authorities and politicians committed to eradicating *Cosa Nostra* from the Sicilian landscape. Consequently, the majority of state officials and Sicilians "remained ambivalent" to state-mafia hegemony, effectively supporting the continuation of an established system that had solidified its presence for over 120 years. Therefore, important progress that was

made in adopting legislative reforms against the mafia in the 1980s can be largely attributed to select magistrates and cultural leaders in Sicily who heavily lobbied the state during this time. Now that the state is no longer the primary target of antimafia efforts, however, and the movement from the mid-1990s through the present day instead has turned its attention to Sicilian society, it is important to examine the role the state plays in the counter-hegemonic antimafia movement today.

Because political reforms were ushered in by a “virtuous minority” in the 1980s, it is worth examining whether this absence of widespread commitment to the antimafia movement at the state level has continued into today. One does not need to look far to find evidence attesting to the fact that the Italian state continues to have a muddled relationship with the antimafia movement; while several prominent authorities have demonstrated their support of the movement through favorable legislation and antimafia platforms, others continue to carry on Sicily’s historical trend of state accommodation towards the mafia through political alliances and concessions to *Cosa Nostra*. The nature of the state as “an amorphous complex of agencies” makes it difficult to evaluate the state’s involvement in the antimafia movement today as a whole;³⁴⁹ some aspects of the state, such as the magistracy, remain devout supporters of the movement, but this commitment does not radiate equally throughout the varied levels and institutions that compose the Italian state. There is evidence, therefore, to support both contradictory claims about the extent of the state’s involvement in the contemporary antimafia movement.

Indisputably, there is important evidence attesting to the Italian state’s resolve to aid the antimafia movement since the mid-1990s when the movement redirected its focus

³⁴⁹ Mitchell, 77.

from state to society. In 1996, the state adopted significant legislation that now allows antimafia organizations to acquire former mafia assets, reconverting these properties into socially-beneficial projects.³⁵⁰ In addition, the state now guarantees financial assistance and protection to mafia denouncers, helping to create a culture that praises and supports those brave enough to condemn *Cosa Nostra*³⁵¹. These examples all serve to suggest that the Italian state has taken an active role in the contemporary phase of the antimafia movement and is seemingly committed to furthering *la lotta contro la mafia* through political methods. Moreover, the judiciary has demonstrated its commitment to utilize Sicily's nascent penal code to fight *Cosa Nostra*, which has led to high-profile mafia arrests such as Bernardo Provenzano's arrest in 2006.³⁵² However, this antimafia commitment is spread unevenly throughout various levels and institutions of the state, and there is substantial evidence to suggest that the state is not nearly as active in the antimafia cause as activists might hope.

While the state has undoubtedly taken a harder stance against *Cosa Nostra* in recent years as a result of civilian pressure and the budding counter-hegemonic movement that brought state-mafia ties to light, the state has not withdrawn completely from its dependence on the mafia. This is evident when one examines recent legislation that has been issued under Prime Minister Berlusconi. In 2010, Berlusconi dismantled wiretapping laws that were a primary method for obtaining incriminating evidence against *mafiosi* in the 1980s.³⁵³ Moreover, Berlusconi has also showcased his wavering commitments as head of the Italian state through his favorable legislation towards

³⁵⁰ Lardera, 1.

³⁵¹ Interview with Bruno Piazzese, November 26, 2010.

³⁵² Dickie, 264.

³⁵³ Hammer, 4.

overseas banking accounts. *Cosa Nostra*—a transnational organization with interests and investments scattered globally—directly benefits from such legislation that grants clemency to *mafiosi* maintaining substantial accounts outside of the country.³⁵⁴

In addition, other issues—such as national financial concerns—continue to trump antimafia commitments of the state.³⁵⁵ Some express concern that the Italian state is not ready to bear the financial responsibilities that a widespread fight against the mafia would require.³⁵⁶ This is exemplified in a recent bill that sought to generate income for the state by capping the number of days social organizations could engage in auctions over state-seized mafia assets.³⁵⁷ Because antimafia organizations do not possess the same financial latitude of powerful *mafiosi* backed by a multi-billion dollar criminal organization, this legislation created the fear that mafia properties could quickly be repossessed by *Cosa Nostra*, therefore inhibiting the efforts of antimafia organizations working to reconvert these lands into spaces for counter-hegemonic projects.³⁵⁸ These examples suggest that the Italian state as a whole is not fully committed to severing ties with the mafia, particularly at the national level. These initiatives are cause for discouragement, as they have been equated to represent “gifts to the mafia from the Italian state,” reminiscent of the tremendous gift of power and accommodation that the state first gave *Cosa Nostra* following unification.³⁵⁹

The state’s continued dependence on the mafia is perhaps best illustrated during elections, however. Historically, the Italian state and various political parties have

³⁵⁴ Hammer, 4.

³⁵⁵ Marianna Lepore, “The Gift to the Mafia from the Italian State,” *In Altre Parole*, November 24, 2009, <http://www.inaltreparole.net/en/news/liberamanifestazionecontrovenditabeniconfiscati241109.html>.

³⁵⁶ Shelley, “Review,” 665.

³⁵⁷ Hammer, 5.

³⁵⁸ Hammer, 5.

³⁵⁹ Lepore.

collaborated with *Cosa Nostra* in order to extract votes from the Sicilian population. This trend that started in the 1950s with the emergence of the Christian Democratic Party has continued into modern day; come election time, *mafiosi* can still be found working amongst the Sicilian population offering Euros or food in hopes of “buying” the votes of primarily apathetic, fearful, or impoverished Sicilians.³⁶⁰

Based on this realization that the Italian state continues to be intimately connected to *Cosa Nostra*, some antimafia activists have questioned the state’s genuine commitment to the cause. Some skeptically wonder whether the state is simply motivated to adopt an antimafia platform when there are clear benefits that can be derived from such political maneuvering. For example, while the state has established a legal framework that provides mafia denouncers with financial support and personal bodyguard protection, denunciations are not thoroughly investigated,³⁶¹ and consequently have become a medium for solving personal disputes and disagreements more than helping to bring *mafiosi* to justice.³⁶² This suggests that pressure from international bodies like the European Union, for instance, might be instrumental in encouraging the state to take a harder stance against organized crime, and the state’s commitment to the fundamental ideals behind the movement might be suspect.

Thus, it is clear that the state and the antimafia movement possess a convoluted relationship, not unlike the unclear relationship the state has historically possessed with *Cosa Nostra*. The Italian state occupies an unclear and complex position within Sicily, as on occasion it has both supported and hindered the efforts of the antimafia movement and *Cosa Nostra*, respectively. The antimafia movement has sought to end the state’s “double

³⁶⁰ Interview with *Guardia di Finanza* Officer, Siracusa, Italy, November 22, 2010.

³⁶¹ Jane Schneider, “Educating Against the Mafia,” 17.

³⁶² Interview with Ramzi Harrabi, Siracusa, Italy, November 24, 2010.

loyalty to the mafia's laws and the procedures of democracies," therefore.³⁶³ The fact that the state has never declared an unwavering commitment to the antimafia platform in the 1980s or even today allows the Italian state to continue to operate in an indefinable spatial position, benefiting by existing in this gray area posited between civil society and the mafia and not having to formally commit definitively to supporting either side. The state's irresolute support of the antimafia cause has manifested in an antimafia movement that now focuses almost exclusively on Sicilian society. Recognizing that the time for legislation and reforms has passed and the state has perhaps reformed as much as it ever will, the antimafia movement now focuses on society based on the belief that real change can best be delivered to Sicily through working with the "minds and bodies" of ordinary Sicilians.³⁶⁴ The counter-hegemonic nature of the movement is apparent, therefore, as throughout its history the antimafia has had to engage in a "war of positioning," working within and outside of the state in the face of uncertain state support of its initiatives and in recognition of the cultural manifestations of state-mafia hegemony that were responsible for fueling *Cosa Nostra's* power well into the new millennium.

THE MAFIA AND SOCIETY TODAY:

While much progress has been made in the antimafia fight since its origins in the 1980s, it is interesting to examine what conditions are like in modern day Sicily, and what evidences of mafia power and state-mafia ties are still prevalent today.

As previously stated, one of the main ways the mafia has managed to maintain a relationship with *Cosa Nostra* is through elections. Not wanting to break a beneficial and historical trend of dependence, the Italian state still relies on the mafia in order to gain

³⁶³ Savona, *Mafia Issues*, 52.

³⁶⁴ Interview with Arci Activist, Siracusa, Italy, November 22, 2010.

electoral support needed for political victory. A former Customs Officer in Sicily attested to the continuation of this symbiotic relationship, describing how he was approached by a mafia affiliate attempting to buy his vote in the most recent national elections:

“Are you free?” the *mafiosi* inquired.

“No, I’m married,” the former *Guardia di Finanza* claims to have responded.

“No, I mean did you promise someone with a vote? If not, I will tell you who to vote for.”³⁶⁵

The former Customs Officer claims that such occurrences are highly common, and that “70% of Sicilian votes are controlled by the mafia today.”³⁶⁶ As the Customs Officer explained, it is not uncommon for politicians to promise food or Euros in exchange for votes. While state-mafia ties have been relinquished in many notable ways, electoral manipulation thus remains an important way this symbiotic relationship has continued. A “culture of favors” pervades many levels of society, leading many Sicilians to feel indebted to giving their vote to *mafiosi* who provide them with security, income, and often employment. The Customs Officer expressed that “when this practice of exchanging favors changes, then the mafia will die.”³⁶⁷

Moreover, evidence of the extent to which mafia hegemony still permeates Sicilian society is apparent in an examination of business life in Sicily. When interviewing a prominent Sicilian businessman, he explained the extent to which his life has changed in the wake of his denunciation of *Cosa Nostra* and refusal to pay the *pizzo*. The man once owned a small bar in the small island of Ortigia. When he decided to denounce the mafia, young Sicilians from the neighborhood were paid off by *mafiosi* at

³⁶⁵ Interview with *Guardia di Finanza* Officer.

³⁶⁶ Interview with *Guardia di Finanza* Officer.

³⁶⁷ Interview with *Guardia di Finanza* Officer.

the price of fifty Euros to burn down his business. Sicilian youths burnt down this bar four times before the local businessman was forced to request state protection, rightfully fearing for his life after these unrelenting attacks.

Under new legislation, the state is required to provide protection and financial assistance to mafia denouncers whose lives inevitably change as a result of their courageous actions. For this local man, denouncing brought the need for 24-hour bodyguard protection, financial support from the state, and a new business in the neighboring city of Siracusa. While his new business—a children’s clothing store—is doing fairly well, he admitted sadly that many Siracusans prefer doing business elsewhere, at a different business that is not known for its owner’s tendency to speak out against *Cosa Nostra*. Customers fear coming into his store, as an armed car is permanently stationed outside, and one must pass through two armed bodyguards before entering the storefront. Conversely, however, it is important to note that many consumers come to his store solely because they believe it to be a symbolic act that conveys their desire to participate in collective action against *Cosa Nostra*.

This business owner’s experiences have taught him that much cultural work still remains before mafia hegemony will fully be uprooted. He recalled that Sicily has not fully been able to move beyond its history characterized by “solitary heroes,” as the media was quick to make him into a hero for his actions—a hero who stood alone and whose actions failed to mobilize other local businessmen to do similarly. He described how many friends and local consumers claimed to stand behind him in his bravery, but that this support only manifested in hollow words. Many of his friends and once dedicated customers did not support his new business initiative, nor were they enticed by

his example to participate in antimafia efforts themselves. Double consciousnesses clearly are still a feature of modern Sicily, where many Sicilians act very different in theory and practice in regards to the mafia. Sicily has very recently entered into a time in which mafia denunciations are voiced and praised, and thus it is understandable that it will take more time for other citizens to feel comfortable participating in an act that was long met with brutal and often lethal repercussions. This unfortunate reality, however, means that many mafia denouncers still feel ill-supported and unprotected. The business owner admitted to feeling very “isolated,” just as Falcone claimed to feel in the years before his death. Instead of empowered, since his denunciation he feels “impotent” knowing he is not as supported in his actions as he hoped.³⁶⁸

While Falcone urged for collective action and widespread antimafia support so activists would never feel alone, it is clear that a culture that truly values denunciation will take more time to come to fruition. As the businessman stated, “many people still don’t want an antimafia culture to become reality.”³⁶⁹ He believes that antimafia success “depends on whether Sicilians really want to change and if they really want a better future.”³⁷⁰ Noting that Italians harbor an incredible capacity for collective action when they are committed to a cause, he nonetheless questions just how widespread antimafia commitment remains in Sicily. Therefore, Sicilians must overturn their tendency to “accept a lot of bad things that transpire” if they are to realize their ability to move towards a future without *Cosa Nostra*.³⁷¹ Again, this attests to the strength and pervasiveness of mafia hegemony that serves to create reluctance to denunciation, as this

³⁶⁸ Interview with Bruno Piazzese, Siracusa Italy, November 26, 2010.

³⁶⁹ Interview with Bruno Piazzese.

³⁷⁰ Interview with Bruno Piazzese.

³⁷¹ Interview with Bruno Piazzese.

ideology became incorporated into daily mentalities due to the solidification of the hegemonic system for a period of nearly 140 years. Moreover, his need to live under constant protection highlights *Cosa Nostra*'s continued determination to maintain consent to the state-mafia system through threat or force.

IMPLICATIONS:

While many antimafia organizations now operate within Sicily and devote themselves to fighting *Cosa Nostra* through cultural work, it is clear that hegemonic ideology still remains in the mentalities of many Sicilians, and counter-hegemonic ideals have not fully taken root among the population. The mark of a completed counter-hegemonic movement is when counter-hegemonic ideals and practices are naturally reproducing and become incorporated without question into daily action and behavior—when all Sicilians are integrated into the “process of permanent liberation” from the hegemonic system that long dominated them.³⁷² This does not yet represent Sicily's reality. Contemporary antimafia organizations face an incredible battle in advancing counter-hegemonic ideology for many reasons. Much of the international spotlight and attention to the antimafia cause has faded since 1992, and consequently may have lost some of its appeal and popularity within Sicily. The island was a focus of the international community at this time due to the extent of mafia atrocities and lethal attacks against the state. While 1992 may have represented the height of the mafia's resolve to establish its supremacy through violence against the state, this signified the mere beginning of the widespread, civilian-driven antimafia movement in operation today. *La lotta contro la mafia* may no longer be a particularly salient focus of the international community today as it once was, but it is important to examine how

³⁷² Freire, 36.

antimafia organizations have continued to carry on their counter-hegemonic fight, as the mafia-state system is far from dismantled and Sicilians still suffer under the effects of a hegemonic system and ideology deeply rooted in the island's economy, politics, and culture.

Below is an analysis of the activities of four antimafia organizations I worked with in Sicily, Italy. Roughly thirty years since Sicilians first exhibited significant discontentment with *Cosa Nostra* outside of dalla Chiesa's funeral, these organizations continue working diligently to advance a counter-hegemonic movement that will remove all traces of state-mafia hegemony and demonstrate to Sicilians how they can reclaim their lives and identities by fighting the hegemonic system through daily, ordinary actions.

ARCI:

First established in 1957, Arci arose as a national anti-fascist organization committed to fighting ignorance and building a culturally-aware and active society. While Arci attends to many different societal problems, the organization's activities in Sicily revolve around a two-fold mission: to fight *Cosa Nostra*, and to address societal ills and discrimination on the island. These missions are not antonymous, but rather are intimately linked. Arci has established a community-centric and counter-hegemonic approach to dismantling *Cosa Nostra*. The organization views *Cosa Nostra* as a deeply cultural problem, and believes the mafia has acquired formidable strength as a result of its ability to prey upon and manipulate society. While this mentality drives contemporary Arci operations in Sicily, the organization has not always championed primarily cultural activities.

Reflective of the changing antimafia movement as a whole, in the early 1990s Arci first directed its antimafia efforts around more politically-focused initiatives. 1992 marked the beginning of Arci's heavy involvement in addressing the *Cosa Nostra* phenomenon—a focus that continues to dominate the organization's activities in Sicily. During this year, Arci collaborated with other antimafia organizations in order to create conferences and meetings where Sicilians came together to discuss and debate various political solutions to combating *Cosa Nostra* in the wake of Faclone and Borsellino's assassinations. However, continuing mafia power and influence within Sicily into the mid-1990s suggested that organizing conferences and lobbying the state for reforms were insufficient in prompting the widespread cultural change needed to fully uproot *Cosa Nostra*. The Arci Siracusa President explained that at these conferences in the early 1990s, too much time was devoted to dwelling on fallen antimafia heroes, without effectively challenging these sentiments into productive activities. The organization recognized, therefore, the need for cultural work and reforms to “fight mafia culture.”³⁷³ As the president described, Arci came to believe that “we must work with the people, with the younger generations, to address what happens when people don't have chances, when they don't believe in parties, government, and institutions, because otherwise people believe that the mafia boss is the only other solution.”³⁷⁴

Thus, over time Arci has redirected its efforts from targeting the state for political reforms to targeting society through cultural work in order to dismantle state-mafia hegemony. The evolution of thought from the mafia as a political to a cultural problem is

³⁷³ Interview with Arci Activist.

³⁷⁴ Interview with Arci Activist.

evident in how Arci operates and attempts to address the *Cosa Nostra* problem through its two-pronged focus of developing cultural centers and work camps in Sicily.

In the wake of the sweeping legislative reforms of the 1990s, Arci attempts to dismantle remaining semblances of state-mafia hegemony that still permeate the island. As previously noted, hegemonic ideology long worked to deny the existence of *Cosa Nostra* so as to keep Sicilians ignorant of the mafia's role in bolstering state authority in the region. One of the main ways Arci attempts to further an understanding of the detriments of the state-mafia system is through its "cultural centers" within different regions in Sicily. These centers are located strategically in areas of poverty, poor educational opportunities, and high unemployment. Knowing all too well that the mafia succeeds in "those areas where the moral judgment of public opinions may be ambivalent,"³⁷⁵ Arci attempts to establish centers of education and learning in at-risk areas that are suffering under conditions the mafia has proven adept at solving. Thus, Arci selects Sicilian regions where unemployment rates can be as high as 20% and dropping out post-secondary school is common, knowing that these are pervasive social problems upon which the mafia depends for its continued power and influence.³⁷⁶ Arci locates its centers where "future criminals are likely to be born,"³⁷⁷ and aims to target younger Sicilians from turning to the mafia as a solution to their multifaceted problems.

The purpose of these centers, therefore, is to deconstruct hegemonic ideals by raising awareness among Sicilian communities about the true nature and history of the mafia, and how its activities have directly contributed to the societal issues under which Sicilians now suffer. Indeed, high dropout rates can be attributed to the mafia's historical

³⁷⁵ Savona, "The Mafia—What to Do Next?" 8.

³⁷⁶ Jane Schneider, "Educating Against the Mafia: A Report from Sicily," 16.

³⁷⁷ Interview with Arci Activist.

control of school construction, which ensured that many educational buildings were poorly constructed and maintained and lacked necessary resources to encourage children to stay in school.³⁷⁸

In order to deconstruct hegemonic ideology in regions that have long depended upon the mafia for certain services, Arci works with youth and families at these cultural centers to educate Sicilians of the detriments of supporting *Cosa Nostra*, whether this support is deliberate or unintentional. Arci volunteers describe this to be a formidable task; one volunteer described a common mentality among many Sicilian mothers from impoverished regions who believe that *Cosa Nostra* is “good” because it provides their families with basic essentials like bread and money that the state cannot.³⁷⁹ Through these centers of education and awareness, Arci must work to dismantle deeply pervasive sentiments that mafia bosses are the most reliable medium through which to receive essential goods and services. Instead, Arci works to enforce the mentality that the state-mafia partnership has directly contributed to the state’s current inability to efficiently provide for its citizens. The organization therefore operates on the understanding that “as long as the oppressed remain unaware of the causes of their condition, they fatalistically ‘accept’ their exploitation.”³⁸⁰ Arci works to link Sicilians’ exploitation with *Cosa Nostra* by working in areas the mafia commonly preys upon, where “the citizen is weak, when he thinks he has no choice, where the institutions are inactive.”³⁸¹ Efforts are hindered, however, by a “culture of distrust” that has been fostered as a result of Sicilians historically not being able to rely on the state or institutions for the services they required.

³⁷⁸ Enzo Lo Dato, 21.

³⁷⁹ Interview with Arci Activist.

³⁸⁰ Freire, 46.

³⁸¹ Andrea Riccio, “Saying No to the Mafia: A Question of Dignity,” *i-Italy*, October 24, 2009, <http://www.i-italy.org/11593/saying-no-mafia-question-dignity>, 2.

These cultural centers, therefore, aim to provide Sicilians with a space where discussions of economic and social problems can be voiced, and where education about the truths of *Cosa Nostra* can be shared. Thanks to Arci, which operates these centers in a variety of regions throughout Sicily, Sicilians no longer need to be “alarmed by the lack of a neighborhood center where young people might congregate,” which was commonly cited as a problem in the 1990s that could continue to fuel mafia power if unaddressed.³⁸²

Arci cultural centers also serve a second counter-hegemonic aim, which involves producing organic intellectuals that reconstruct new conceptions of reality for Sicilians by providing them with ways to live and work outside the state-mafia system. Organic intellectuals are composed of Arci volunteers that arise from the same Sicilian communities where cultural centers are located. Arci also creates organic intellectuals within society through educational campaigns that encourage individuals to return to their homes and neighborhoods and share their knowledge of state-mafia relations and its oppressive ramifications. The organization hopes that Sicilians will promote Arci within their neighborhoods as a center that is dedicated in assisting these individuals in their efforts to “reclaim political society” and dismantle state-mafia hegemony. By creating cultural centers where Sicilians can voice their discontentment and come to understandings of their communal oppression, it is clear that Arci recognizes that “critical and liberating dialogue, which presupposes action, must be carried on with the oppressed at whatever the stage of their struggle for liberation” from hegemonic forces.³⁸³ Arci welcomes any and all into its centers, helping to cultivate the knowledge and awareness among Sicilians necessary before action against state-mafia hegemony can occur. It is

³⁸² Jane Schneider and Peter Schneider, “Civil Society Versus Organized Crime: Local and Global Perspectives,” *Critique of Anthropology* 21, no.4 (2001): 429.

³⁸³ Freire, 47.

imperative that these conversations and realizations are brought about by organic intellectuals arising from similar communities and circumstances as the Sicilians they attempt to educate, as “the oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption” from participating in the hegemonic system if counter-hegemonic ideals are to be demonstrated as practical and logical.³⁸⁴

An instrumental task before these organic intellectuals is to provide Sicilians with an alternative way to live and prosper outside of *Cosa Nostra*. A frequently referenced hope in Sicily is that “no one would go with the Mafia if they had an alternative.”³⁸⁵ Through its cultural centers, Arci hopes to test this hypothesis by demonstrating to Sicilians viable economic opportunities outside the mafia system. Arci does this by investing in the social capital of Sicilians through professional and occupational training at its cultural centers throughout the island. At the center in Siracusa, for instance, Sicilians are trained in repairing bicycles—a common means of transportation on the island. Imperative professional skills are also fostered through hands-on work and lectures; by fostering skills that Sicilians can derive a living from, Arci demonstrates how working in a legitimate and dignified job outside of the mafia system can be lucrative.

Arci thereby challenges the mentality among many discontented Sicilians that “the mafia gave us work, and now the antimafia has taken this work away.”³⁸⁶ It is important for Arci to prove that the fight against the mafia does not need to imply declining economic opportunities for Sicilians. Through its cultural centers, Arci works to provide a place they can go to and rely upon instead of the mafia—not as a service provider, but simply by demonstrating to Sicilians that they can rely on themselves and

³⁸⁴ Freire, 36.

³⁸⁵ Riccio, 2.

³⁸⁶ Jane Schneider, “Educating Against the Mafia: A Report from Sicily,” 17.

their own abilities instead of *mafiosi*. By “working with the hands, and not just the minds of Sicilians,” cultural centers attend to a two-fold task of dismantling hegemonic mentalities and putting Sicilians to work in legitimate occupations outside the realm of the mafia system.

Along with cultural centers, Arci also works through another medium in order to dismantle mafia hegemony and offer counter-hegemonic alternatives to Sicilians. Thanks to the early efforts of antimafia organizations, Law 109/96 ensured that antimafia organizations like Arci would have the opportunity to obtain confiscated mafia assets from the state in order to reconvert them into socially-beneficial properties.³⁸⁷ Many *mafiosi* possess vast, showy estates often sitting upon hundreds of acres of land. Mafia estates stand in sharp contrast to many urban neighborhoods of concrete that are plagued by unemployment and poverty. This tangible evidence of mafia power and influence is highly symbolic, and serves to perpetuate mafia hegemony by suggesting that *Cosa Nostra* is the only medium through which Sicilians can attain such a commanding amount of monetary success and respect. This fallacy is exactly what Arci tries to dismantle with their seizure of former mafia property. As Roberto Saviano explains, if mafia assets are not repossessed, “the villas continue to bear the mark of the bosses who built and lived in them. Even abandoned, they remain symbols of sovereignty.”³⁸⁸ The importance of Law 109/96 as a mechanism to defeat mafia power becomes clear, therefore. Through this legislative reform, Arci has acquired a substantial amount of mafia property that the organization has converted into “work camps” in various regions of Sicily.

³⁸⁷ Lardera.

³⁸⁸ Saviano, 244.

In 2006, Arci came in possession of a vast estate formerly owned by infamous mafia boss Bernardo Provenzano—the “reigning boss of bosses” of the post-millennial mafia.³⁸⁹ This property was in Corleone, a rural area outside of Palermo that has historically been a mafia-stronghold. Indeed, Corleone was selected as the Sicilian setting for *The Godfather* as a result of this notoriety. This exemplifies Arci’s determination to establish counter-hegemonic initiatives in at-risk areas; an important testament to the strength of the antimafia movement is whether organizations like Arci can prove adept at dismantling mafia hegemony in areas long under control by *Cosa Nostra*, where Sicilians did not believe there to be any alternative to the state-mafia system, and thus granted consent to these power structures believing them to represent the normal way of things in Sicily.

These work camps not only dismantle hegemonic ideology, but also help conceptualize and forward a new ideology that encourages Sicilians to cultivate their ability to live outside the state-mafia system. This is a huge task to accomplish in areas like Corleone where *Cosa Nostra* has long succeeded in enforcing the mentality that granting consent to the state-mafia system guarantees the benefits of employment, income, and other essential services. Individuals come to work on the camps typically for a period of ten to fifteen days. During this time, education is a large component of the experience. After work each day, participants attend informative lectures, often led by prominent antimafia activists. These lectures, by tracing the history of the mafia and describing state-mafia relations over the years that still continue today, Arci volunteers help to create more organic intellectuals who return to their home communities after this

³⁸⁹ Dickie, 264.

experience and share the knowledge they receive from participating in these cultural programs.

Through these work camps, Arci also aims to demonstrate how a legitimate and respectable living can be made outside of the state-mafia system. On these repossessed lands, Sicilians are able to work in cooperatives, producing agricultural goods and learning that *Cosa Nostra* need not represent the only medium through which to find employment. The individuals who attend these camps are often—but not always—mentally disabled individuals, troubled youth, and immigrants who otherwise have few opportunities for employment or education and consequently are often more vulnerable and likely to turn to *Cosa Nostra*. These work camps therefore “give people the opportunities to work and live without having to thank anybody,” encouraging them to cultivate their own skills, as Sicily’s history has been characterized by favors and depending upon others for success and opportunities for too long.³⁹⁰ Arci hopes to overturn this historical trend of feeling indebted to others for opportunities and services that have been difficult to attain outside of patronage networks and clientelism.

At cultural centers and work camps alike, Arci forces Sicilians to grapple with their double-consciousnesses, requiring them to evaluate the ways in which they individually contribute to mafia power through their dependence or passive acquiescence to status quo power structures. The mafia’s persistent power can be attributed in part to the fact that many Sicilians continue to act differently in theory versus practice in regards to *Cosa Nostra*. Through education, Sicilians are made to see how acquiescence need not be granted to a hegemonic system that delivers them more harm than benefit. Arci hopes to encourage the development of critical consciousnesses, as it is when an individual is

³⁹⁰ Interview with Arci Activist.

made to evaluate their reality that “he or she comes to a new awareness of self, has a new sense of dignity, and is stirred by a new hope.”³⁹¹ By deconstructing false notions of the benefits of the state-mafia system, Arci hopes to cultivate hope in Sicilians that their own actions can bring about a new future for Sicily no longer under the oppression of *Cosa Nostra*.

At Arci work camps, several goods are produced that can be sold at local markets for profit. Tomatoes, wine, olive oil, and flour are among the products bearing Arci’s name and mission statement that find their way to store shelves across Sicily. These products encourage Sicilians to be conscientious consumers by providing them with a sure way to avoid perpetuating mafia power by not having to purchase goods like tomatoes from companies that historically have been mafia-controlled. Through selling these products, most importantly, Arci is able to derive a profit that can then be reinvested into the camps. In addition, the sale of these products provides camp workers with a salary that proves that a living can be made outside of *Cosa Nostra* through honest and hard work. This also offers Sicilians with an easy way to contribute to furthering counter-hegemonic initiatives through daily activities like buying groceries at the market.

While Sicily has made notable progress towards a future that is no longer dictated by *Cosa Nostra*, the threats Arci activists face as a result of their antimafia initiatives attest to the amount of cultural work that still remains to be done in order to dismantle mafia hegemony at the societal level. These demonstrations of violence are also reflective of the mafia’s attempt to cling to its declining ability to obtain consent to the hegemonic system through threat and force. While Arci activities have not gone unchallenged by the

³⁹¹ Freire, 15.

mafia, it is important to note that the ability of *Cosa Nostra* to quell activism with fear is becoming limited as antimafia organizations grow in number and prominence.

In the first year of Arci's work camp in Corelone, the mafia did not threaten workers and activists because the criminal organization did not yet fully appreciate what Arci was aiming to accomplish in the region. The camp merely seemed to be producing agricultural goods, not furthering an antimafia consciousness or awareness that would challenge the influence of mafia families living in the area. Nonetheless, within Arci's first year in Corleone no local residents were willing to participate out of fear of retaliation by *mafiosi* who lived adjacent to the camp. However, over the years as Arci's antimafia and counter-hegemonic goals became more well-known within Sicily, Arci has had to turn away participants as its popularity has grown considerably. Unfortunately, though, this growing recognition and popularity of Arci's community work has resulted in violence and threats from *mafiosi* who still reside in Corleone and resent how mafia assets that once strengthened *Cosa Nostra* domination are now helping to weaken mafia influence. *Cosa Nostra* therefore began responding to this challenge by attempting to weaken Arci's ability to carry out its counter-hegemonic aims.

In 2008, the vineyards at the Corleone work camp were cut down to destroy the productivity and profitability of the antimafia property. Consequently, this camp was not able to produce wine—one of its most lucrative products—for over a year. The Arci program manager of the Corleone camp has faced personal attack, as well, including having his car incinerated. Violent retaliation by the mafia is not limited to work camps. One of Arci's community centers has been a mafia target in recent years, as well, where angry *mafiosi* smashed the windows of the center as an indicator that *Cosa Nostra* was

not afraid of this challenge to its authority in the region. Within days, however, women and children within the community painted murals alongside the building and helped to repair the damage, attesting to the influence and respect these centers are beginning to have in at-risk communities. It is clear that *Cosa Nostra* still relies on the same scare tactics that the criminal organization relied on in the 1970s-80s to dissuade activists from challenging mafia power. What is different now, however, is that Sicily is progressing away from a history largely characterized by “solitary antimafia heroes,” and collective antimafia action has made it harder for *Cosa Nostra* to swiftly eliminate and silence enemies and activists as it once could. Therefore, unlike decades prior, antimafia activities now garner much attention and support and are not stifled by the mafia before they achieve any tangible results.

Because Arci is a volunteer-based organization, it is interesting to examine from what sources it obtains funding to carry out its admirable initiatives. While products from work camps result in some profit that can be reinvested back into the organization’s cultural projects, this income is not enough for Arci to carry out its varied goals. Arci is affiliated with the Leftist Party in Italy, and through this affiliation the organization attains modest funds from the government. Arci has petitioned the state on several occasions for funds to purchase the farming equipment necessary for its work camps, for instance. Arci has also received funding from the European Union which has helped to buy and repair necessary machinery. Local governments such as Corleone have also provided funds to Arci, recognizing the organization’s ability to raise awareness and antimafia sentiment through events and lectures. Thus, governmental funding is put towards furthering Arci initiatives already in place, and does not pay off Arci workers in

a way that could potentially compromise their initiatives. Nonetheless, Arci's tendency to attract financial support from outside actors has caused some to critique the organization. In reality, however, many antimafia organizations must rely on some form of external financial support in order to carry out their cultural projects.

Many Sicilians would prefer antimafia organizations like Arci to not have any party or state connections, as there is considerable distrust around political parties as a result of the historical role the Christian Democratic Party played in advancing state-mafia hegemony. These anxieties are well-founded, as the state historically has occupied a muddled relationship with the mafia and the antimafia movement. Most importantly, these anxieties represent ramifications of state-mafia hegemony, where many now distrust the state and political parties as a result of their historical role in solidifying the state-mafia hegemonic bloc. It is also important to note however, that just like the state, antimafia organizations are not monolithic, and have different needs based on their unique approaches to the *Cosa Nostra* problem, which can culminate in the need for external financial assistance in order to successfully carry out their cultural activities.

Arci has changed from targeting the state to targeting society over time to bring cultural change to Sicily. Helping to advance the counter-hegemonic antimafia movement, through cultural centers and work camps Arci works to dismantle mafia hegemony, provide Sicilians with alternatives to living and working outside of the state-mafia system, attack double-consciousnesses still present within many Sicilians, and create activities and centers that allow Sicilians to easily participate and help advance counter-hegemony through incorporating these activities into their daily lives.

LIBERA:

Libera is another antimafia organization operating within Sicily that was established by priest Don Ciotti in 1995.³⁹² Libera has also changed how it views the *Cosa Nostra* problem over time. In line with the general thinking of the 1980s-90s, Libera was instrumental in petitioning and pressuring the state to enact certain legislative reforms in the 1990s that would require the state to take a larger role in fighting *Cosa Nostra* power in Sicily. Libera was heavily involved in ensuring the passage of Law 109/96, which has helped community antimafia organizations challenge the mafia. This antimafia organization also was instrumental in lobbying the state to create a national holiday honoring fallen antimafia martyrs.³⁹³ The organization now views the mafia as a cultural problem, however, that requires more than political efforts to successfully address. Libera carries out counter-hegemonic cultural work through a dual focus of work in Sicilian schools and the development of work camps in Sicily.

Working within Sicilian schools is a crucial way Libera attempts to dismantle remaining hegemonic ideology within Sicilians. Libera's founder Don Ciotti believed strongly in the importance of using education as a medium to dismantle mafia power. This is reminiscent of Gramsci's notion that schools can be a vital medium for advancing counter-hegemonic ideals.³⁹⁴ Ciotti based his organization's initiatives off of the words of Judge Chinnici—an antimafia martyr in the 1980s—who said to Sicilian youth before his death that “we can't make it alone, we can't make it without you.”³⁹⁵ While educational

³⁹²Ciotti's background as a Catholic priest is particularly interesting, as in his antimafia activism he has clearly declared himself to be separate from a historical trend of murky and convoluted relations between the Catholic Church and *Cosa Nostra* in Sicily. Jamieson, 143-4.

³⁹³ Jamieson, 144.

³⁹⁴ Gottlieb, 117.

³⁹⁵ Libera's work in the schools is not a new idea. Chinnici, Falcone, and Borsellino advocated for such cultural efforts in the 1980s. Indeed, legislation was passed during this time to incorporate antimafia work

efforts occurred prior to the mid-1990s, it was in 1995 that they most ardently picked up steam and received the funding and civilian support they needed to continue. The national Antimafia Commission finally required “education in legality” to enter school curriculums throughout Sicily in 1993.³⁹⁶ Libera became involved in these initiatives in 1995; because Libera represents an umbrella organization of sorts that coordinates activities with a variety of other socially-conscious groups,³⁹⁷ Libera’s involvement in educational campaigns against the mafia ensured that by 1998 “620 schools had undertaken this type of programme and 1000 projects were underway, involving 8,000 teachers and 800,000 students.”³⁹⁸

Libera school lectures involve a handful of volunteers going into various schools in regions of Sicily under the effects of poor educational systems and poverty. These activists are college-educated, fairly young, and usually from the same communities in which they teach. At a school lecture I attended in Siracusa, the internet and projector screens were among the varied mediums employed to deconstruct hegemonic ideology. Video clips and YouTube segments were projected upon the classroom wall in an attempt to raise awareness about Sicily’s history under the mafia, the history of the antimafia, and the extent to which the mafia is still powerful today in hopes of showing why it is the imperative responsibility of every young Sicilian to denounce and fight the mafia. Each

into Sicilian schools, including Act 51 in 1980 but this legislation had “no teeth” and antimafia work in the schools was not mandatory under this legislation (Schneider “Educating against the Mafia,” 1998, 11). What is different now is that this is the first time an organization has focused nearly exclusively on cultural work in order to promote the antimafia cause. Moreover, Libera’s work in the schools stands apart from past initiatives of a similar nature because it is not happening alongside pushes for political reform. Also, Libera has the backing and support it needs to successfully carry out such educational initiatives—which hindered similar efforts that first started in the 1980s. Marina Melchionda, “The Struggle Against the Mafia in Sicily and the U.S. After Petrosino,” *i-Italy*, October 24, 2009, <http://www.i-italy.org/11561/struggle-against-mafia-sicily-and-us-after-petrosino>, 3.

³⁹⁶ Jamieson, 149.

³⁹⁷ Rita Borsellino, 62.

³⁹⁸ Jamieson, 149.

activist spoke at the lecture, delivering his or her own interpretations of the mafia problem today and what still needed to be done, while also entertaining an array of questions from the young audience. This open question-and-answer format allowed young Sicilians to voice their concerns about the mafia phenomenon and its contemporary manifestations; in this way, Libera created a comfortable space where these young adults could recognize their ability to “reclaim political society,” working to challenge instead of reproduce mafia hegemony. By listening to testimonies and appeals from individuals who grew up under similar socioeconomic conditions and pressures as the students, the young audience saw visible proof that they too possessed an inherent ability to fight the mafia through simple daily actions and behaviors, such as remaining vigilant to evidence of corruption or criminality, and reporting any such activity to the police.

While Libera activists do not claim to structure their school activities based on any particular pedagogy, the organization’s teaching methods possess many similarities to Freire’s ideas about the “pedagogy of the oppressed.”³⁹⁹ Libera works to create awareness around the suffering of Sicilians under the state-mafia hegemonic system, and utilizes organic intellectuals from the same communities in which the students live in order to help guide them into counter-hegemony by “fighting by their side to transform the objective reality which has made them ‘beings of another.’”⁴⁰⁰ Libera activist Davide described these lectures as “a risk,” because getting Sicilian youth to acknowledge their disempowerment under the oppressive state-mafia system and then mobilizing them to

³⁹⁹ Freire, 35.

⁴⁰⁰ Freire, 31.

recognize their ability to challenge hegemony can be incredibly difficult.⁴⁰¹ Davide noted the importance of being passionate and pragmatic when encouraging the students to participate in counter-hegemonic initiatives.⁴⁰² Practicality is crucial in order to overcome the “fear of freedom,” where individuals long under hegemonic forces are tentative to claim agency outside of a hegemonic system to which they had no choice but to acquiesce.⁴⁰³ In order to do overcome this fear, Libera strives to provide the students with real-life, everyday examples of when and how to fulfill their civic duties of furthering the antimafia cause and suggesting that a community stands behind them to support and encourage this action. It is clear that Libera operates on the realization that “it is always through action in depth that the culture of domination is culturally confronted.”⁴⁰⁴ Young Sicilians need to be shown how exactly to incorporate counter-hegemony into their lives and dismantle hegemonic forces, as these practices and ideals do not appear natural within a population that has long been subjected to a hegemonic system.

A central aspect of Libera’s school initiatives is to suggest that Sicilians have a civic responsibility to fight the mafia, urging them to overturn centuries of acquiescence and apathy to power structures they believed themselves to possess no ability to fight or challenge. Libera thus must work against the hegemonic ideology that long conceptualized the mafia as “not only invincible but indeed untouchable.”⁴⁰⁵ Libera also works to deconstruct the notion of *sicilianismo*. This historical fallacy, which suggests that the mafia exists in Sicily because Sicilians are inherently criminal-minded, has

⁴⁰¹ Interview with Libera Activist, Siracusa, Italy, November 20, 2010.

⁴⁰² Interview with Libera Activist.

⁴⁰³ Freire, 28.

⁴⁰⁴ Freire, 36.

⁴⁰⁵ Jane Schneider and Peter Schneider, “Mafia, Antimafia, and the Plural Cultures of Sicily” *Current Anthropology* 46, no. 4 (2005): 509.

manifested in further consent to state-mafia hegemony.⁴⁰⁶ At the lecture in Siracusa, a YouTube clip was shown of two comedians debating about why they are “Proud to be Sicilian,” thereby challenging the idea that Sicilians possess something rudimentary that has culminated in their suffering under *Cosa Nostra*.

During the 1980s, Sicilian writer Leonardo Sciascia discouragingly voiced his disbelief in the capacity of ordinary Sicilians to organize for change. Sciascia consequently implied that Sicilians would be forever oppressed under the mafia phenomenon because “in any Sicilian, the residuals of mafia feeling are still present and alive, so that fighting the mafia is like fighting against myself... a split, a laceration.”⁴⁰⁷ In doing so, Sciascia voiced sentiments that had been continually expressed since Italian unification in 1860.⁴⁰⁸ At this time, two Italians, Franchetti and Sonnino wrote an early account of the state of Sicily meant to inform state authorities and northern Italians. In this account, the men suggested that Sicilians were akin to “the ‘savages’ of North America, incapable of civilization unless guided by outsiders,” where the “smell of rotting corpses” enveloped what would otherwise be a picturesque island.⁴⁰⁹ It also was widely held for many years that Sicilians possessed a natural disregard for legality and were naturally inclined to criminal tendencies.⁴¹⁰ All of these individuals failed to appreciate the extent to which state-mafia hegemony had limited the ability of Sicilians to collectively organize and redirect their futures, not any inadequacy inherent to Sicilians.

⁴⁰⁶ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 109.

⁴⁰⁷ Schneider and Schneider, “Mafia, Antimafia,” 505.

⁴⁰⁸ Schneider and Schneider, “Mafia, Antimafia,” 504.

⁴⁰⁹ Schneider and Schneider, “Mafia, Antimafia,” 504.

⁴¹⁰ Schneider and Schneider, “Mafia, Antimafia,” 504.

Thus, Sicilians have had to overcome centuries of prominent individuals not believing in their ability to overturn apathy and actively work for change.⁴¹¹

Consequently, Libera faces a significant battle in attempting to convince young Sicilians that the mafia does not represent an “irreversible destiny” of Sicily. Instead, the organization works to suggest that every Sicilian possesses the ability, and indeed the responsibility, to join in the fight against the mafia. Central to Libera’s ability to make these requests of the student exists in demonstrating to the young audience that the hardest antimafia efforts have already been accomplished. Thanks to courageous individuals like dalla Chiesa, Impastato, Falcone, and Borsellino—to name a few—ordinary Sicilians no longer have to sacrifice their lives on behalf of the antimafia cause. In short, the groundwork has already been laid for future generations to continue the fight against *Cosa Nostra*. Libera therefore works to highlight the practicality of contributing to the antimafia movement, by showing that small efforts can be effortlessly incorporated into daily activities and behaviors without requiring any substantial sacrifices. Encouraging the students to remember the efforts of Falcone and Borsellino, Libera activists passed out a quote from Falcone that read “yes I am afraid, but we all should be more courageous.” Libera hopes to dismantle mafia hegemony to the point of no return, therefore, fearing that Sicily’s historical trend of largely not standing up to mafia power might relapse if future generations are not actively incorporated into the antimafia fight.⁴¹²

Libera encourages students to engage in critical and independent thinking in order to see the truths about *Cosa Nostra* and how the state-mafia hegemonic system has

⁴¹¹ Schneider and Schneider, “Mafia, Antimafia,” 504.

⁴¹² Jane Schneider, “Educating Against the Mafia,” 9.

exploited them. Libera activists persuade young Sicilians to look beyond the media and instead turn to investigative journalism outlets outside of Italy and literature by authors such as Roberto Saviano that offer a clearer understanding of the contemporary fight against *Cosa Nostra*. As a former Customs Officer suggested, “in Italy it is hard to find the truth, and the media makes it hard to find out how strong the mafia still is” because the major media networks are owned and controlled by Berlusconi.⁴¹³ Libera pushes Sicilian youth to look past the confines around which they have grown up and been educated, and to look for truth about how *Cosa Nostra* does not benefit them, and historically has only served the ends of the mafia itself and the Italian state. Promoting a society that is critical in its thinking and attuned to its environment is instrumental in ensuring the widespread adoption of counter-hegemony in Sicily.

By working in Sicilian schools, Libera hopes to create future generations of organic intellectuals who will work within their home communities, furthering understandings of the importance of the antimafia movement and the need to maintain a vigilant and intolerant culture against *Cosa Nostra*. One way the organization does this is by promoting its Facebook page, which helps to further an understanding of the group’s aims and efforts, while also creating a collective community that young Sicilians can join, recognizing that they have support and encouragement to carry forth counter-hegemonic initiatives through daily efforts. In addition, the use of popular social media sites like Facebook and YouTube represents Libera’s attempt to “sell the antimafia

⁴¹³ Interview with *Guardia di Finanza* Officer.

movement as ‘cool’” to younger generations, while simultaneously helping to deglamorize *Cosa Nostra*.⁴¹⁴

School initiatives that Libera promotes also attend to the counter-hegemonic task of dismantling double-consciousnesses in many Sicilians that contribute to the reproduction of the hegemonic state-mafia system. This is instrumental because individuals must be made to recognize that “they are perpetuating oppression in order to claim the ability to challenge this oppression.”⁴¹⁵ Through working with Sicilian youth, Ciotti hopes to drive home the message that inaction is the same as participation in *Cosa Nostra*, suggesting that “the real mafia is the mafia of words, the ones said by those that do not actually act against organized crime, but limit their contribution to the cause to declarations of disdain.”⁴¹⁶ The organization’s members, therefore, through question and answer sessions as well as lectures, encourages the students to think of how their passivity and acquiescence helps perpetuate mafia power. Consequently, a successful antimafia movement depends on active engagement and steadfast commitment. As founder Don Ciotti suggested, it is not enough to merely pass moral judgment upon the mafia; Sicilians must actively denounce and fight against all expression of illegality and criminality that they see. Davide, a Libera activist, noted that Sicily’s history under the state-mafia system has encouraged “blindness” among youth to organized crime and violence—something that must be curbed if the movement will succeed in stripping *Cosa Nostra* of its influence. By encouraging vigilance among Sicily’s youth, Libera thereby hopes to avoid the “backlash” of declining civilian awareness and participation in the

⁴¹⁴ John Lloyd, “Lunch with the FT: Roberto Saviano,” *Financial Times*, November 26, 2010. <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/e024ca82-f8e2-11df-99ed-00144feab49a.html#axzz1HWoeGolw>.

⁴¹⁵ Freire, 30.

⁴¹⁶ Melchionda, 3.

antimafia movement, which represents a possibility if “double consciousnesses” continue to pervade Sicilian mentalities.⁴¹⁷ Defeating “double-consciousnesses,” and requiring Sicilians to fight the mafia with more than empty words, Libera works counter-hegemonically to dismantle the influence the mafia has long possessed over the land.

Libera does not limit its cultural activities to educational work in schools, however. Similarly to Arci, Libera advances counter-hegemonic antimafia efforts through a two-pronged approach, also establishing work camps to invest in and promote the integrity and capacity of Sicilians. By converting mafia property into counter-hegemonic spaces for education and work, Libera dismantles hegemonic ideology and attempts to show Sicilians “the whole history of the mafia in this region,” using these properties as “laboratories for legality.”⁴¹⁸ Libera aims to ensure that “the locals don’t see the mafia anymore as the only institution they can trust,” furthering the same mentality that Arci promotes through its respective camps.⁴¹⁹ The subdivision of Libera devoted to creating work camps, deemed Libera Terra, hopes to “create a different future for their children, in their own territory, a future free from the culture of violence and corruption.”⁴²⁰ A clip of Ciotti at his early work camps was shown at the Libera lecture in Siracusa, which referenced how early Libera Terra activists in the mid-1990s felt intense psychological pressure to give up out of fear, watching other activists and state authorities being killed for acting against *Cosa Nostra*. In showing this film segment, it was meant to suggest that to fight the mafia “today is much easier, and we are not as alone” as many of the early antimafia activists such as Falcone were. Moreover, by demonstrating to students the

⁴¹⁷ Schneider, “Educating Against the Mafia,” 9.

⁴¹⁸ Hammer, 5.

⁴¹⁹ Hammer, 2.

⁴²⁰ Lardera.

varied ways in which Libera works, it was suggested that there are many ways in which Sicilians can participate in furthering the antimafia cause.

Many of the products from Libera Terra's work camps invoke the memory of past antimafia heroes, such as "*Centopassi*" wine that refers to Giuseppe Impastato and his fight against *Cosa Nostra* when prominent bosses lived a mere "hundred steps" away from his home.⁴²¹ By invoking the spirit and memory of past intellectuals, Libera Terra promotes the development of organic intellectuals, while also helping to empower consumers by providing them with the means to purchase products that directly reject mafia hegemony. Moreover, Libera work camps pride themselves on manufacturing high-quality products, and thus a substantial profit is derived from the production of wine, especially. The profitability of wine products reinforces counter-hegemonic ideology by proving that lucrative opportunities exist outside of the mafia system.⁴²² In addition, purchasing these counter-hegemonic goods "means to join and uphold those entrepreneurial activities that aim to foster a different kind of Sicily."⁴²³ Therefore, by working on the camps or consuming socially-conscious products, Libera offers Sicilians ways to further counter-hegemonic efforts through simple and practical daily efforts, helping to prove that the "common man" can carry on the vision of a Sicily free from *Cosa Nostra*.⁴²⁴

Libera's school lectures and work camps both tend to counter-hegemonic ends. This two-pronged approach to fighting *Cosa Nostra* allows Libera to continue to dismantle hegemonic ideology, create organic intellectuals that further an awareness of

⁴²¹ Lardera.

⁴²² Hammer, 3.

⁴²³ "Antimafia Products Make Their Mark in Sicily," *Mafia Today*, May 11, 2010.

<http://mafiaToday.com/sicilian-mafia-ndrangheta/anti-mafia-products-make-their-mark-in-sicily>.

⁴²⁴ Interview with Libera Activist.

the mafia and the need to actively fight against its presence, deconstruct double-consciousnesses within Sicilians, and provide Sicilians with practical ways of participating in the counter-hegemonic movement.

ADDIPIZZO:

Another antimafia organization operating counter-hegemonically in Sicily is Addiopizzo. This represents a relatively young antimafia group, established by young Sicilian businessmen in 2004.⁴²⁵ When a group of Sicilian men began preparations for establishing their own bar, they became discomforted when they realized they needed to account for *pizzo* in their projected monthly expenditures.⁴²⁶ In Palermo at this time, and even today, many businesses still pay this symbolic tribute to the mafia. Resenting having to account for profit lost to extortion, the young businessmen launched their own antimafia organization in hopes of encouraging other businessmen to denounce the mafia and refuse to pay the *pizzo*, while simultaneously hoping to prompt a consumer revolution that would entice shoppers to purchase only from *pizzo*-free stores.⁴²⁷ Addiopizzo, meaning “goodbye, *pizzo*,” was their organization.⁴²⁸ The organization, according to former Addiopizzo president Francesco Bertolino, drew inspiration from the earlier efforts of Libero Grassi, an ordinary Sicilian business owner who refused to pay the mafia *pizzo*.⁴²⁹ As a result of his deviation from the hegemonic system that *Cosa Nostra* patrolled with scrutiny and violent repercussions, Grassi died in the 1990s. Grassi was easily eliminated as a threat to the mafia because of his solitude, as other business

⁴²⁵ Riccio, 1.

⁴²⁶ Riccio, 1.

⁴²⁷ Riccio, 1.

⁴²⁸ Hammer, 1.

⁴²⁹ Riccio, 2.

owners were too fearful to join or stand behind him.⁴³⁰ It is Addiopizzo's goal to create a collective community of *pizzo*-denouncers so that no Sicilian needs to feel ill-supported in his or her fight against mafia hegemony as Grassi did.

Addiopizzo launched itself onto the antimafia scene in a provocative way. One night in Palermo, the young business partners plastered the city with stickers proclaiming "a population that pays *pizzo* is a population without dignity."⁴³¹ Framing the antimafia fight in moral terms, and making denunciation synonymous with dignity, had a particular sway over many, as this represented a tactic that was not used much prior to Addiopizzo.⁴³² To many Sicilians, this rhetoric represented the "ultimate insult"⁴³³ and was mobilizing because it suggested that acquiescence to the mafia system essentially represented granting support to *Cosa Nostra* and its continued rule over the island. Silence against extortion, therefore, was depicted as "the guiltiest accomplice."⁴³⁴ Framing the fight against *Cosa Nostra* in this way was successful because it created an "us versus them" mentality, implying that Sicilians who failed to participate in "critical consumption" or denunciation against the mafia were carrying on an unfortunate and repugnant historical trend of compliance with *Cosa Nostra*. In addition, this incendiary rhetoric demonstrated how the seemingly insignificant, traditional "act of submission" to *pizzo* actually did much to reinforce mafia dominance and hegemony.⁴³⁵ Therefore, this framing technique worked to enforce the idea that the mafia was not a normal authority to which Sicilians should acquiesce. Addiopizzo worked to discourage acquiescence to the

⁴³⁰ Jamieson, 35-6.

⁴³¹ Riccio, 1.

⁴³² Riccio, 1.

⁴³³ Hammer, 2.

⁴³⁴ Ducan Campbell, "Book Review: *Beauty and the Inferno*," *The Guardian*, October 9, 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2010/oct/09/roberto-saviano-beauty-inferno-mafia>.

⁴³⁵ Interview with Bruno Piazzese.

state-mafia system, therefore, by labeling those who did not participate in “reclaiming political society” away from the hegemonic system as immoral and undignified.

By making *pizzo* submission synonymous with direct support of *Cosa Nostra*, Addiopizzo called upon Sicilians to face their “double-consciousnesses.” While many business owners in the 1990s may have denounced the mafia with words, a rare few were willing to physically stand up against *Cosa Nostra*—a violent organization that had repeatedly proven its resolve to wage war against anyone who did not grant consent to the state-mafia system. In addition, plastering the city with these provocative stickers helped to further the antimafia cause by encouraging the production of organic intellectuals who would think critically about how their own actions were perpetuating the hegemonic system, and mobilize others within their community to stand together in solidarity against *Cosa Nostra*.

Addiopizzo’s success depends on its ability to convince Sicilians that an alternative to the hegemonic system exists. Therefore, Addiopizzo is counter-hegemonic in nature because it generates networks of support and solidarity for business owners that pledge to no longer submit to the mafia through the *pizzo* tribute. For instance, in the mid-2000s the organization put up billboards reading “*contro l’estorsione non sei solo*,” meaning “against extortion, you are not alone.”⁴³⁶ Through this message, Addiopizzo worked to create a feeling of community and collectivity around the fight against the mafia, ensuring that business owners and consumers would no longer have to stand alone in their courageous acts of denouncing. Addiopizzo suggests that business owners need not be fearful of denunciation, as they not only have support from fellow business owners, but also from new laws that guarantee protection for mafia denouncers. The

⁴³⁶ Johnson and Soeters, 182.

organization attempts to show Sicilians, therefore, that “the State is there and intends to help its citizens” who are committed to fighting *Cosa Nostra* through daily actions.⁴³⁷

Business owners in Sicily are enticed to join Addiopizzo and its counter-hegemonic initiatives because the organization has proven its ability to guarantee lucrative benefits through affiliation with the organization and through *pizzo* denunciation. Many incentives await those who denounce *Cosa Nostra*; not only do businesses save a substantial amount of money that would normally be reserved for *Cosa Nostra pizzo* in the summer, Christmas, and Easter,⁴³⁸ but Addiopizzo also has a commanding number of affiliates who pledge to consume products exclusively from *pizzo*-free stores. Therefore, mafia denouncers no longer need to fear substantial financial repercussions from mafia denouncement as they once did.

Today Addiopizzo is one of the foremost antimafia organizations in Sicily because it has succeeded in generating a consortium of hundreds of local businesses that stand in solidarity against *Cosa Nostra*. Moreover, Addiopizzo has also created an emporium where consumers can go to purchase necessities and gifts with the guarantee that none of the money derived from their purchases supports the mafia. Addiopizzo also engages in conscious-tourism ventures, leading educational antimafia tours in Palermo for curious visitors while also generating literature and advertisements about where to shop and stay without supporting *Cosa Nostra*. Addiopizzo has thus created positive publicity for businesses willing to denounce both inside and outside Sicily, which has helped secure these businesses with profits through promoting them to tourists and “dignified” Sicilians alike.

⁴³⁷ Riccio, 2.

⁴³⁸ Interview with Red Diaries Activist, Siracusa, Italy, November 26, 2010.

Through banding conscious businessmen together in emporiums and consumer networks, Addiopizzo works counter-hegemonically, showing Sicilian business owners and consumers that “being on the side of legality does not mean to be a loser and, actually, can also be profitable.”⁴³⁹ Because *pizzo* is a form of symbolic submission,⁴⁴⁰ refusing to pay such is a hegemonic blow to *Cosa Nostra*, one that suggests Addiopizzo is helping to bring about a counter-hegemonic era where businessmen and consumers no longer need to acquiesce to status quo power structures. This stands in stark contrast, therefore, to decades of thought under mafia hegemony where Sicilians widely believed that the only sure way to prosper and survive was through participation in and acquiescence to the mafia system.

On several occasions, *Cosa Nostra* has attempted to challenge Addiopizzo’s assault against its symbolic power, but the mafia has failed in coercing business owners into submission due to Addiopizzo’s ability to create networks of solidarity where Sicilians feel protected and encouraged to denounce. Violence against Addiopizzo activists has been rare, although one recent example includes activist Rodolfo Guajana, whose hardware store was torched by *mafiosi*.⁴⁴¹ Former president Bertolino concedes that “there is still fear and it is understandable,” but Addiopizzo works to quell these uncertainties by creating communities of denouncers who can derive support and protection from one another. Nonetheless, fear that is still present in Sicilian society can be understood as a lasting remnant of *Cosa Nostra*’s historical ability to patrol non-consent to the state-mafia system with threats or demonstrations of violence.

⁴³⁹ Riccio, 1.

⁴⁴⁰ Hammer, 1.

⁴⁴¹ Hammer, 3.

While the mafia attempts to rely on old tactics of reproducing hegemony using threat and violence in the absence of spontaneous consent, these tactics hold little power among groups who have demonstrated their ability to stand together in denouncement of these hegemonic mechanisms. Today Addiopizzo boasts a business membership of over 400 stores, with many more Sicilians also pledging to engage in critical consumption.⁴⁴² Addiopizzo tour guides proudly sport their antimafia t-shirts as they lead curious tourists down the same streets where antimafia activists were once killed a decade ago. One tour guide, Eduardo, claims he is not fearful because it is not prudent for *Cosa Nostra* to strike against an organization whose activities do not deliver a substantial economic blow to the mafia. Fellow Addiopizzo activists have voiced similar sentiments, suggesting that Addiopizzo represents “little fish”⁴⁴³ in a larger antimafia sea, and *Cosa Nostra* must now be strategic in its use of violence amongst an increasingly intolerant and vigilant society.⁴⁴⁴ The *pizzo* accounts for a small percentage of mafia power, which is why the mafia does not target stores who proudly display the Addiopizzo sticker in their storefronts. The power of denying the *pizzo*, therefore, is not in its economic, but rather its symbolic ramifications. By overturning a tradition of submitting to mafia domination, Addiopizzo delivers a more significant blow to mafia hegemony than if the organization was depriving *Cosa Nostra* merely of economic power.

As Bertolino suggests, Addiopizzo’s success to date as well as the limited violence the group has faced reside in the fact that “the businessman feels protected and knows that the institutions will reimburse and assist him after his denunciation.”⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴² Hammer, 3.

⁴⁴³ Hammer, 3.

⁴⁴⁴ Hammer, 3.

⁴⁴⁵ Riccio, 3.

Moreover, *pizzo* denouncers have often demonstrated their resolve to fight the mafia in the courts, as well, testifying against extortionists that long targeted their businesses. *Cosa Nostra* recognizes these businesses as lost causes not worth targeting because the mafia's threats of violence and coercion hold no weight among these individuals who derive protection and support from the alternative medium of Addiopizzo.⁴⁴⁶ It is evident, therefore, the strides Addiopizzo is making in Palermo at moving past the history of the 1990s and Libero Grassi, where brave businessmen stood alone in their decisions to denounce, and unknowingly were forced to make the ultimate sacrifice to further the antimafia movement.

Addiopizzo engages in counter-hegemonic initiatives in its attempt to erase the influence *Cosa Nostra* possesses over the minds of Sicilian business owners and consumers. By engaging in public awareness campaigns and plastering cities with evocative antimafia slogans, Addiopizzo deconstructs mafia hegemony, creates organic intellectuals aware and intolerant of *pizzo*, and creates pragmatic mediums through which ordinary Sicilians can participate in counter-hegemonic efforts by generating stores where *pizzo*-free products can be purchased, for instance. By creating a sense of community around its counter-hegemonic activities, Addiopizzo shows that communal and personal benefits can be derived from mafia denunciation.

IL MOVIMENTO AGENDE ROSSE

The "Movement of the Red Diaries" is another antimafia organization operating in Sicily. Paolo Borsellino's brother, Salvatore, started the organization in the wake of his father's murder. The Red Diaries was formed in order to investigate the death of Paolo

⁴⁴⁶ Hammer, 1.

Borsellino, in the hopes of proving who within both the state and *Cosa Nostra* were complicit in this planned murder. The name of the organization refers to Borsellino's infamous "red diary" in which he kept his most coveted notes and ideas about *Cosa Nostra*. It is rumored that this diary also contained leads on which *mafiosi* were likely involved in the murder of his friend and ally, Giovanni Falcone, who was killed a mere two months prior to Borsellino's own death. What is undeniable is that the red diary contained testimonies from *pentiti* that revealed the identities of several state authorities who had intimate ties with *Cosa Nostra*. Borsellino's red diary disappeared from the scene of his death, leading many Sicilians to question who was involved in the crime and what incriminating evidence was in the diary.⁴⁴⁷

When the Red Diaries began, the organization focused on political initiatives to dismantle mafia power. The primary activity of the group at this time was pressuring the state to conduct thorough investigations into the death of Paolo Borsellino. The organization believed that, as a result of his work with *pentiti*, Borsellino possessed incriminating information about state authorities involved in aiding *Cosa Nostra* power, and thus hoped that putting pressure on the state would entice those complicit to come forward. As one Red Diary activist explained, however, in the 1990s with this focus on the state, "we couldn't resolve the mafia problem because it is not a political problem. It no longer is about judges or politicians, it is a *cultural* problem."⁴⁴⁸ This volunteer explained that there are two ways to address the mafia phenomenon: 1) repressively through legislation and police, and 2) by educating the youth through cultural work. The time for the latter is now, the young activist acknowledged, as repressive advances were

⁴⁴⁷ Interview with Red Diaries Activist.

⁴⁴⁸ Interview with Red Diaries Activist.

incredibly strengthened in the '80s-'90s and the "laws are beginning to do their job."⁴⁴⁹ It is apparent that the Red Diaries have redirected their efforts from political to cultural work, therefore, based on the recognition that the state was not the only agent that could be mobilized to dismantle *Cosa Nostra*.

The Red Diaries is committed to dismantling state-mafia hegemony just as Borsellino was attempting to do before his untimely death. Immediately following the magistrate's assassination, the organization engaged in publicizing information about Borsellino's work that had uncovered the extent of the state's involvement with *Cosa Nostra* in order to educate Sicilians about the strength of state-mafia alliances. As Borsellino's diary possessed incriminating evidence of state-mafia ties, the organization continues to raise awareness of symbiotic state-mafia relations that the hegemonic bloc long worked to discourage. As Salvatore Borsellino, the organization's founder, stated: "He certainly would have informed public opinion of the negotiation [between the state and mafia], should there have been no other way of stopping it. For this reason it was of vital importance that he be eliminated."⁴⁵⁰ Through carrying on the ideology Borsellino devoted his life to promoting, the Red Diaries ensure that *Cosa Nostra* did not simultaneously kill Sicilians' ability to call attention to state-mafia ties and demand reforms to end this historical system of symbiosis through their killing of the magistrate.

Organizing rallies and public events, the Red Diaries operate throughout Italy in order to pay homage to Borsellino's efforts and remember that state-mafia complicity is not a thing of the past. The associate thereby promotes the recognition that the

⁴⁴⁹ Interview with Red Diaries Activist.

⁴⁵⁰ Salvatore Borsellino, "Paulo's NO to the Negotiation that Killed him," *19 Luglio 1992*, October 21, 2009. http://www.19luglio1992.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&catid=25%3Aenglish-version-stories&id=1900%3Asalvatore-borsellino-paolo-was-killed-for-having-said-no-to-the-negotiation&Itemid=47.

eradication of these compromising relations depends on the maintenance of a society that is intolerant of such corruption. Another way the Red Diaries promotes awareness about the state-mafia system is through the production of educational videos about electoral corruption; interviewing Sicilians about their experiences during past elections when *mafiosi* attempted to buy their votes, Red Diaries hopes to draw attention to this prominent connection still linking the mafia and the Italian state that Sicilians must resist in order to put pressure on the hegemonic bloc. These educational campaigns create organic intellectuals who show Sicilians that the state-mafia system is not natural, nor something to which they should grant approval—passively or otherwise.

Another way the Red Diaries works to dismantle pervasive hegemonic ideology is by working with Sicilian youth. Hegemonic ideology that has long suggested state-mafia relations are natural and that this system delivers benefits to Sicilians has manifested in *Cosa Nostra*'s continued appeal among the youth. The mafia is not an organization of criminals, but rather of artists, the Red Diary activist described. One must possess specific skills and character in order to join, as it is not enough merely to be willing to engage in criminality. Particularly today, when repressive legislation has had the effect of changing mafia operations into more elusive markets, *Cosa Nostra* no longer showcases its influence in a public way on the streets of Sicily as it once did. Rather, the mafia of today is much more concerned with skillfully extracting political alliances, contracts, and legal immunity from the state, away from the increasingly watchful eye of citizens. Consequently, *mafiosi* must possess certain skills in order to be an asset to the modern-day *Cosa Nostra*, whose aims and tactics have changed over times as a result of changing political climates.

With tremendous funds now coming into Southern Italy from the international community in order to boost crime fighting, development, and address economic problems, it is more prudent than ever for the mafia to infiltrate public offices and have a say in the distribution of these funds. The President of the district of Ortigia—a small island off of Sicily that recently hosted a G8 conference—notes that significant money from the European Community now floods into Sicily, and that “the mafia takes a lot of this money, making up fake projects and activities. Where there is money, the mafia is ready.”⁴⁵¹ Thus, contemporary *mafiosi* are not the unintelligent thugs and “combatants” they are stereotypically depicted as, and are rather selected based on the possession of certain marketable “talents,” and overlooked if they do not comply to certain standards regardless of familial affiliation.⁴⁵² As the Ortigia President described, “we shouldn’t confuse mafia with micro-criminal activity. The mafia is smart, you must have a management-oriented mind. You can’t simply be a criminal.”⁴⁵³ Belonging to this art, this “political ideal” continues to attract people, the Red Diary activist explained.

The Red Diaries works to delegitimize *Cosa Nostra* in the eyes of young Sicilians by deglamorizing the criminal organization. The organization stations its activities in regions affected by the underlying problems that perpetuate mafia power, including unemployment, poor educational systems, and illegality. In many poor neighborhoods, urban youth learn at a young age how to avoid police, steal, sneak out at night, and avoid school. These are youth problems the Red Diaries work to address in the absence of an effective state presence in these areas like Siracusa, for instance. The Red Diaries is working against a pervasive historical trend, however; as prominent *pentito* Antonio

⁴⁵¹ Interview with President of the District of Ortigia, Ortigia, Italy, November 26, 2010.

⁴⁵² Schneider and Schneider, “Mafia, Antimafia,” 503.

⁴⁵³ Interview with President of the District of Ortigia.

Calderone attested to, the strength of the mafia lies in the fact that “around every man of honor of a certain rank is always a circle of twenty or thirty kids—nobodies who want to become something...there to do small favors, to be put to the test...”⁴⁵⁴

Based on this recognition, the Red Diaries organization works with boys 10-12 years old who have already learned to steal mopeds and shoot guns. It is precisely in these regions where the mafia is strong. For example, while in Campania, a Red Diary activist worked among youth who were enamored by *Cosa Nostra*—wanting to see pictures of their properties and assets, as well as of the jail cells where once prominent *cappomafia* spend the rest of their years. This intrigue needs to be carefully managed; it can be channeled into a fascination with antimafia education and the antimafia cause, or it can be unaddressed and mismanaged, which would consequently add to the glamorization of *Cosa Nostra* as a medium for respect and success. By working among the youth, Red Diaries works to deconstruct mafia hegemony that has long had the effect of suggesting that violence and illegality are acceptable and normal. Moreover, Red Diaries hopes to bring attention to the real societal problems perpetuating mafia power, promoting awareness through lectures and community events that *Cosa Nostra* need not be the solution for these problems of unemployment and destitution, but instead should be blamed for amplifying these problems in Sicily and contributing to the state’s ineffectuality in mitigating these ills.

The Red Diaries not only deconstructs mafia hegemony, but also works to offer an alternative conception of reality to Sicilians that further encourages the youth to look outside the state-mafia system for livelihood and needed services. One main problem, an

⁴⁵⁴ Schneider and Schneider, “Mafia and Antimafia,” 503.

activist described, is that “people like belonging to something.”⁴⁵⁵ Having a sense of purpose and a semblance of community have long been features of *Cosa Nostra*. The fact that a collective identity is derived from participation in this organization—where nicknames are given to members and a unique “code language” marks those among the organization’s ranks—attracts young Sicilians.⁴⁵⁶ The youth remain intrigued by this elusive organization and its secrecy of tactics and rituals, believing that membership in *Cosa Nostra* “situates them ‘outside’ normal society, and, in their view, ‘above’ it.”⁴⁵⁷ Thus, the success of this counter-hegemonic movement depends on its ability to offer an alternative to the state-mafia system that attracts Sicilian youth and provides them with a new group in which to belong. In order to do this, Red Diaries attempts to showcase the antimafia movement as “cool,” responsible for imprisoning immoral criminal bosses who have long oppressed Sicilians. The Red Diaries seeks to create a collective community of young Sicilians who pledge to uphold legality, civic responsibility, and stay in school. Red Diaries teaches the youth that they will be valued for their contributions to society in fighting the mafia, and that *la lotta contro la mafia* is an important and respectable struggle in which all upstanding citizens should participate.

The Red Diaries association also works counter-hegemonically in its attempts to call attention to the “double consciousnesses” within many Sicilians that effectively stifle the ability of civil society to dismantle hegemony. One Red Diary volunteer describes an important event in Sicily following Borsellino’s death that highlights this debilitating feature still present in many Sicilians. The volunteer discussed a young Sicilian girl, Rita Atria, who spoke out against the mafia in the 1980s-90s even though her father was a

⁴⁵⁵ Interview with Red Diaries Activist.

⁴⁵⁶ Saviano, 54.

⁴⁵⁷ Schneider and Schneider, “Mafia, Antimafia,” 503.

mafioso.⁴⁵⁸ She delivered her testimonies to Borsellino, and felt protected enough as a result of her friendship with this magistrate to continue her denunciations. When Borsellino was murdered in 1992, however, the 23-year-old girl threw herself from her balcony, knowing that no one could protect her any longer from *Cosa Nostra* and its resolve to eliminate all denouncers.⁴⁵⁹ Her own mother, disgusted and horrified at her daughter's involvement in the antimafia movement, vandalized her daughter's grave after the funeral.⁴⁶⁰ Rita's mother therefore embodied the double consciousnesses her daughter believed existed in many Sicilians when she proclaimed prior to her death that "we cannot defeat the mafia until we kill the mafia within ourselves."⁴⁶¹

The Red Diaries uses this example as rationale for the need to educate Sicilians of the differences in mentality they possess between "theory and practice." Many are not aware of the effect their silence has in perpetuating mafia power. Red Diaries, particularly in its work among Sicilian youth, urges that the antimafia is not about words or simply waving a flag and proclaiming a dedication to legality. "The power of the antimafia," the volunteer explains, "is in denunciations and helping judges to make arrests."⁴⁶² Because *Cosa Nostra* still possesses important political ties and, therefore, impunity, it is the role of ordinary citizens to actively denounce against any expression of corruption. As the activist noted, "Borsellino told us it was not time to cry, it's time to work. But every year, we are still mourning heroes, not working."⁴⁶³ The Red Diaries, therefore, creates solidarity networks of support that encourage active work in the

⁴⁵⁸ Schneider and Schneider, *Reversible Destiny*, 158.

⁴⁵⁹ Jamieson, 133.

⁴⁶⁰ Jamieson, 133.

⁴⁶¹ Interview with Red Diaries Activist.

⁴⁶² Interview with Red Diaries Activist.

⁴⁶³ Interview with Red Diaries Activist.

antimafia cause, helping to mobilize and effectively channel antimafia sentiment into a productive fight against *Cosa Nostra*.

By bringing organic intellectuals into Sicilian schools and “at risk” communities, Red Diaries helps to demonstrate to Sicilians that counter-hegemony can be incorporated into simple, everyday activities. It is not the goal of the Red Diaries to enlist young Sicilians to join the antimafia organization, but rather to encourage the youth to stay in school and learn values and ideals that will allow them to contribute to the antimafia fight when they are older. A Red Diaries activist suggests that the antimafia fight is one in which all Sicilians can participate in by being citizens of legality and by denouncing any expression of criminality that they witness. Thus, the Red Diaries shows the youth in Sicily that they need not be fearful of denouncing *Cosa Nostra*, and rather can feel confident that fellow Sicilians and the state support them in the fulfillment of their civic responsibilities.

Red Diaries is evidently a counter-hegemonic antimafia organization, as it works to dismantle hegemonic ideology by deglamorizing *Cosa Nostra* in the eyes of Sicilian youth, provides Sicilians with a new way of conceptualizing their realities outside the state-mafia system, tackles double-consciousnesses in a way that encourages Sicilians to put into practice their antimafia sentiments, and lastly promotes simple ways in which Sicilians can incorporate counter-hegemonic activities into their everyday lives.

SUMMARY: Thus, it is clear that Arci, Libera, Addiopizzo, and the Red Diaries are counter-hegemonic organizations working to dismantle *Cosa Nostra*'s power and influence in Sicily. These organizations have unique interpretations of why the mafia remains strong in Sicily today, which dictates their slightly different methods of

approaching the mafia problem. What these four organizations share in common, however, is that they all consider the mafia to be a cultural problem requiring cultural reforms to effectively address, believing political reforms and targeting the state to no longer be as expedient. Moreover, all four organizations advance the counter-hegemonic antimafia movement by attending to remaining semblances of hegemonic ideology, producing organic intellectuals that reframe reality for Sicilians and pose alternative ways to live and prosper outside the state-mafia system, attacking the double-consciousnesses of Sicilians, and finally by creating ways in which ordinary Sicilians can incorporate counter-hegemonic activities seamlessly into their daily lives and everyday behaviors.

As Gramsci described, the longer hegemonic forces are in power, the longer it takes for a counter-hegemonic movement to dismantle these pervasive ideologies and power structures. Because state-mafia hegemony solidified over a period of nearly 120 years before receiving widespread challenge, the antimafia movement will take time to fully remove and mitigate the effects *Cosa Nostra* has had upon the attitudes and mentalities of Sicilians. The recognition of the long-term nature of this counter-hegemonic movement, however, is precisely what serves as the fuel that propels antimafia organizations forward despite uncertain political climates, frequently evolving and changing their strategies in hopes of better reaching a population that still bears deep scars from *Cosa Nostra* that cannot easily be removed. There is considerable reason for hope, however. In the words of magistrate Paolo Borsellino, the antimafia fight has managed to persevere “in spite of everything”—in spite of historical trends of fear and apathy, violence against deviance from the state-mafia system, and in spite of symbiotic

relations that still persist between state and mafia.⁴⁶⁴ “In spite of everything,” the antimafia movement will continue to wage its counter-hegemonic attack on *Cosa Nostra*.

⁴⁶⁴ Rita Borsellino, 63.

CONCLUSION:

This thesis has built upon existing scholarly literature on the antimafia movement in Sicily, but has also attempted to fill the void in this scholarship by examining the contemporary nature of *la lotta contro la mafia* and how it has changed since its origins in the 1980s. While much has been written about the unique aims of the movement and the challenges it faces in attempting to deliver widespread cultural change to Sicily, the disproportional scholarly attention the movement has received in recent years compared to the 1980s has resulted in a lack of understanding about how the movement has changed its strategy from no longer targeting the state, but rather focusing on society as the agent that will bring Sicily into a future no longer defined by *Cosa Nostra*. This thesis has employed Gramscian theory to understand why it was prudent for the movement to work both within and outside the state in order to bring fundamental changes to the island. Gramsci's ideas of hegemony clearly elucidate the formidable challenge the antimafia movement faces in eradicating physical and ideological domination that has become entrenched for over a century, deeply pervading Sicily's economy, politics, and culture.

By using this Gramscian framework, this thesis has sought to explain how civil society is attempting to dismantle the state-mafia hegemonic bloc in Sicily through the antimafia movement. This movement first began in the 1980s, when magistrates Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino aptly recognized growing fissures between the Italian state and *Cosa Nostra* as an opportunity to launch an attack against this hegemonic system that had long dominated Sicily. Fissures were always present within the hegemonic bloc, but were historically mitigated due to the similar aims and desires of the

two hegemons, which long served to hold these two powers intertwined and dependent upon one another. Changing circumstances in the 1970s-80s, however, put pressure on these tenuous fissures as the mafia grew richer through the drug market and began neglecting its roles of protecting citizens and enforcing order—roles that the state depended on *Cosa Nostra* to carry out. The “Second Mafia War,” which jeopardized the safety and lives of Sicilians and state authorities, consequently produced deep fissures between the state and mafia, but also within the state itself.

Falcone and Borsellino utilized their unique political maneuverability as magistrates to play upon these fissures, encouraging Sicilians to recognize their unprecedented opportunity to dismantle the state-mafia system. Through working with mafia *pentiti*, the magistrates gained critical knowledge about the extent of state-mafia ties, as well as the various hegemonic apparatuses within Sicilian society that worked daily to reproduce and strengthen hegemony. With this information, the magistrates knew what sources of mafia power to target in order to attend to the first task of counter-hegemony, which Gramsci describes to be the dismantling of hegemonic ideology.

The unremorseful demonstrations of mafia power in the 1980s against civilians and the state, alike, convinced Falcone and Borsellino of the need to target the Italian state to enact political reforms that would end its symbiotic relationship with the mafia. The mafia had grown strong over a period of 120 years of state delegation and accommodation, but this trend could continue no longer. These magistrates, therefore, encouraged Sicilians to join *la lotta contro la mafia* by pressuring the state to adopt legislative reforms against *Cosa Nostra* and to bring about an era of accountability and transparency in Sicilian politics.

Ordinary Sicilians would not become widely mobilized to join the antimafia movement until after 1992, however, in the wake of the murders of Falcone and Borsellino. Incensed by the deaths of the leaders of the movement, Sicilians became motivated to work among their communities and neighborhoods to carry on the fight to which the fallen magistrates had devoted their lives. The focus on the state and the need to generate political reforms to eradicate *Cosa Nostra* from the Sicilian landscape continued until the mid-1990s.

By the mid-1990s, Sicily possessed a thorough legislative framework from which to challenge the mafia. While these reforms had brought about many high-profile trials and arrests of powerful *mafiosi*, *Cosa Nostra's* power was far from dismantled. By focusing almost exclusively on the state and on political solutions in the 1980s-early 1990s, the antimafia movement had merely addressed the locus of hegemony, not the varied hegemonic apparatuses within society that reinforced the hegemonic system daily. Therefore, by the mid-1990s it was clear that *Cosa Nostra* represented a fundamentally cultural problem requiring cultural work to fully dismantle. Consequently, the antimafia movement turned its focus to society as the medium through which cultural change could occur.

By examining the activities and aims of four different antimafia organizations currently operating in Sicily, this thesis strove to demonstrate how the antimafia movement is attending to both Gramscian phases of counter-hegemony: dismantling remaining traces of hegemonic ideology, but also offering the masses a new, counter-hegemonic ideology that provides Sicilians with an alternative reality and system outside of the state-mafia hegemonic bloc. The counter-hegemonic nature of Arci, Libera,

Addiopizzo, and the Red Diaries has been proven by highlighting how each of these groups works to dismantle hegemonic ideology by challenging its remaining manifestations in society, produces organic intellectuals that promote a new reality outside the state-mafia system, works to challenge double-consciousnesses within Sicilians that contribute to their perpetuation of hegemony, and promotes institutions and activities that provide Sicilians with practical ways to incorporate counter-hegemony into daily behavior.

While notable strides have been made towards creating a society that supports and embraces mafia denunciation, legality, and the rule of law, much work remains to be done. This is understandable, as counter-hegemonic initiatives in Sicily began roughly twenty years ago, and are challenging hegemonic forces entrenched and solidified over a period of 140 years to date. As Paulo Freire suggests, it is clear that a society has moved beyond its oppression when ‘the reality of the oppression has already been transformed, [and] this pedagogy ceases to belong to the oppressed but becomes a pedagogy of all people in the process of permanent liberation.’⁴⁶⁵ Because not all Sicilians have yet recognized their ability and responsibility to break free from their oppression under the state-mafia system, it is clear that “permanent liberation” from hegemony has not yet been attained in Sicily.

Gramsci himself recognized that counter-hegemonic movements require substantial time to carry out. The counter-hegemonic antimafia movement is undoubtedly a slow process, requiring deliberate action, unrelenting efforts, and evolving strategies. Yet, there are many reasons to be hopeful. There is much evidence that suggests Sicily is moving steadfast towards a future no longer defined by *Cosa Nostra* as a result of the

⁴⁶⁵ Freire, 36.

movement's focus on and investment in the ability of ordinary Sicilians to demand an end to state-mafia hegemony. Not only has the state enacted crucial antimafia legislation that has provided a legal framework to fight *Cosa Nostra*, but citizens are coming to recognize their ability to participate in daily actions that weaken the mafia's power, such as denouncing against corruption, educating the youth about Sicily's history under the mafia, working in respectable jobs outside the state-mafia system, refusing to pay the *pizzo*, and purchasing mafia-free products at markets across the island. Sicily has seen a genuine mobilization against state-mafia hegemony, therefore, and thanks to the work of a variety of antimafia organizations and activists, Sicilians are cultivating their individual abilities to reclaim their society, their economy, and the politics that govern them. By focusing on the contemporary nature of the antimafia movement, I have sought to show how Sicilians are making remarkable progress towards dismantling the state-mafia hegemonic bloc, and are fostering in its place counter-hegemonic ideals and practices that deliver them agency from a system that has long dictated and restricted their behaviors, beliefs, practices, and livelihoods.

While studying abroad in the small island of Ortigia, there stood a massive concrete wall along the coast that was built through *Cosa Nostra* construction contracts. The wall was intended as a future docking platform for cruise ships, but was never completed due to lack of funding and waning interest in the initiative. The unfinished wall remained for years, blocking an otherwise picturesque view of Sicily's waterfront. Despite frequent protests against the wall—which continued to serve as a symbolic reminder of *Cosa Nostra*'s presence on the island—*mafiosi* refused to dismantle this tangible manifestation of its influence or to recognize and cater to civilian pressure. On

my return trip this November, however, the wall was gone. Unrelenting civilian pressure from ordinary civilians and antimafia organizations finally succeeded in forcing contractors to demolish the once formidable wall that had been built years before when state-mafia alliances were so strong that *Cosa Nostra* easily obtained building contracts for nearly all construction on the island.

There are a multitude of signs, therefore, that ordinary citizens have been mobilized through the antimafia movement and its counter-hegemonic initiatives to dismantle physical and ideological manifestations of state-mafia hegemony on the island. Sicilians are beginning to recognize that their lives no longer need to be directed by *Cosa Nostra*, particularly when communal networks of solidarity exist to support mafia denunciation, and counter-hegemonic organizations have succeeded in developing institutions and pragmatic ways to live and work outside the state-mafia bloc.

As a result of the counter-hegemonic movement, Sicilians have now come to resent vestiges of mafia power like the docking station that conjure up memories from a different time—a time when the island was still under the trance of hegemony and did not yet possess the means to recognize or resist this oppression. While one wall invoking the memory of state-mafia hegemony has come down, the more formidable hegemonic bloc still stands in Sicily. However, with the increasing popularity and strength of the counter-hegemonic movement, the same energy and widespread mobilization that destroyed the docking station will in time destroy the state-mafia hegemonic bloc, as well.

With the docking platform removed, a beautiful view of the Sicilian coast is now unobstructed. This spot where the wall once stood—an eyesore that cast a dark shadow

along the coastline—is now a favored place among locals to watch the sunrise. A “new dawn,”⁴⁶⁶ indeed, is upon Sicily.

⁴⁶⁶ Lo Dato, 17.

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