

Institution: University College London
Unit of Assessment: 28 – Modern Languages and Linguistics
Title of case study: Engaging law enforcement and the public with the history of organised crime in Italy
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Research at UCL spread public understanding of mafias around the world, contributed to the professional preparation and development of law enforcement officers and investigating magistrates engaged in front-line work against the mafias, provided historical evidence supporting magistrates in Reggio Calabria seeking to create a legal precedent for the successful prosecution of the 'ndrangheta under anti-mafia laws. It contributed to the memorialisation of victims of mafia violence in Sicily, aided the work of the anti-protection racket organisation Addiopizzo by influencing its staff and alerting visitors to Sicily to the importance of critical consumption in order to avoid involuntarily funding the mafia.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Italy is unique in Western Europe in that it is plagued by sophisticated criminal organisations that have existed for around 150 years. The three major mafias – the well-known Cosa Nostra mafia of Sicily; 'ndrangheta, a Calabrian mafia organisation believed to control a large proportion of the European Union's drug traffic who, in recent decades, have surpassed their better-known Sicilian counterparts in spread and earnings; and the camorra, their Neapolitan counterparts – constitute a major threat to Italy's stability and democracy. Understanding these organisations inevitably has implications far beyond academia.</p> <p>John Dickie (full-time researcher in UCL Italian since 1993; Professor of Italian Studies since 2009) has been researching these mafias in Sicily and Southern Italy since 2001, focusing particularly on examining their history and organisation as a means of better understanding how they have prospered for so long. His more recent (post-2007) work in this area is underpinned by an innovative comparative approach to the long history of the three mafias, and draws on documentation unearthed by him on important phases of their history. It particularly explores a new 'unitary' approach to the 'ndrangheta's history, which had long been believed to be a collection of gangs rather than an organised group. As with all 'large-canvas' narrative history, Dickie's approach involves blending existing work with new research, often drawing on newly discovered sources to provide overarching narrative syntheses intended to be accessible to specialist and non-specialist academic, as well as to professionals and the general public.</p> <p>His 2004 monograph, <i>Cosa Nostra</i> [a, section 3], exemplifies this approach in its synthesis of the best academic work then extant in the new sub-discipline of Sicilian mafia history with recent insights from the judiciary, law enforcement and journalists, and localised areas of fresh research. Dickie drew on these myriad sources to produce an academic consensus around the history and evolution of the Sicilian mafia and to bring this specialist understanding to as wide an audience as possible.</p> <p>Work undertaken between 2007 and 2013 and supported by a Leverhulme fellowship (2009–11) led to the publication in 2011 and 2013 respectively of <i>Mafia Brotherhoods</i> [c] and <i>Mafia Republic</i> [d], a two-volume history of organised crime in Italy, from its origins to the present day. Inasmuch as they draw on existing research, these texts seek to reproduce for the other major criminal organisations (the camorra of Campania and Naples, and the 'ndrangheta of Calabria) what <i>Cosa Nostra</i> does for the Sicilian mafia. However they rely much more heavily than did <i>Cosa Nostra</i> on first-hand research of archival and other sources. Dickie's comparative methodology allowed him to set out new theses in these texts on, among other things: the origins of the 'ndrangheta; the transformation of its relationship to kinship groups; the persistence of coordination between its local cells; and the likely existence in the distant past of a coordinating body, known today as the Crime or Great Crime, and which has only just been discovered by law enforcement. The work particularly challenged a previous perception of the Calabrian mafia as a loose collection of local gangs.</p> <p>A short biography based on newly discovered sources of Ermanno Sangiorgi, a nineteenth-century</p>

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police chief involved in mafia operations also emerged from this research project [b].

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

[a] *Cosa Nostra. A History of the Sicilian Mafia*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 2004. Book available on request.

[b] 'Ritratto di questore con mafia', in S. Lupo, *Il tenebroso sodalizio. Il primo rapporto di polizia sulla mafia siciliana*, XL Edizioni, Rome, 2011. Available on request.

[c] *Mafia Brotherhoods: Mafia, camorra, 'ndrangheta; the rise of the Honoured Societies*, Sceptre, London, 2011. Submitted to REF2 under its original hardback title: *Blood Brotherhoods*.

[d] *Mafia Republic*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 2013. Submitted to REF2.

Research quality: [b], [c] and [d] emerged from a two year (2009–2011) Leverhulme Research Fellowship held by Dickie: total value £43,266. On its completion, the Leverhulme committee rated the project '**A – outstandingly successful**' (the highest possible).

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Dickie's research on the history of criminal organisations in Italy has had direct impacts on the training and practice of law enforcement and judicial professionals, and of civil society organisations in Italy. The work has also directly engaged wide public audiences both beyond and within Italy, both through its publication in accessible texts bought and read by a global non-specialist readership, and through its contribution to international media discourse about Italian mafia and the social and political implications of their operations.

Since the mafias are distinguished from ordinary gangs by their historical continuity, understanding this history and how the organisations have changed – or not – is a prerequisite for successful anti-mafia work. The most powerful mafia in Italy today, the 'ndrangheta, remains under-researched: for example, before Dickie's work, there was no adequate explanation of its origins. Moreover, since 1992, both Italy's police forces and its prosecutors have been organised in specialised anti-mafia teams, coordinated nationally. This new level of specialisation means that, unlike the past, it is now a regular occurrence for both police and magistrates to work on combatting different mafias in different phases of their careers, and to work on several mafias contemporaneously. Dickie's comparative research on mafia history provides a single historical narrative of all the mafias together that is adequate to this new, broader perspective.

The use of Dickie's research as a **resource for practitioners** has ensured the considerable impacts of the research on **professional understanding and practice among anti-mafia officials in Italy**. However, the nature of Italian law enforcement, particularly in anti-mafia work, is such that much of this influence occurs through informal channels such as meetings, emails and telephone calls. The most dedicated magistrates and law enforcement officers take it upon themselves to read around the subject. Accordingly, law enforcement officials and judicial practitioners routinely refer either to Dickie himself and/or to the written outputs of his research in seeking to better understand these organisations' operation and evolution. As such, the research has made significant contributions to the professional preparation and development of law enforcement officers engaged in front-line work against the mafias. The unique comparative approach used by Dickie to contextualise and understand Italy's three principal mafia organisations sets his work apart from comparable books, ensuring its widespread use at all levels of the Italian law enforcement and judiciary services [1, 2].

This use of research has **supported the successful investigation and prosecutions of mafia members** through its use to establish correlations between contemporary investigations and the history of mafia activities. Describing its general utility in this context, a magistrate involved in anti-mafia investigations, and with experience investigating both Sicilian and Calabrian organised crime, explains that: '[Dickie's] research has confirmed empirical data that has emerged from investigations I have carried out in Calabria' [1]. A Captain in the Carabinieri's ROS section (which specialises in organised crime and terrorism) with experience of front-line operations against both Cosa Nostra and the 'ndrangheta similarly attests to his use of Dickie's work 'to confirm dates or people involved in particular crimes' [2].

A specific example of this occurred in 2010 **by magistrates in Reggio Calabria to build a case by prosecuting the 'ndrangheta as a whole under Italian mafia laws** as part of 'Operation Crimine', a national police operation that led to the arrest of some 300 suspected members. The assumption that the Calabrian mafia constituted only a loose collection of local gangs had previously meant that each 'ndrangheta trial had to start from scratch by proving the existence of the particular local gang in question. This was a serious impediment to effective law enforcement. Operation Crimine sought to remedy this by providing the first evidence of the existence of a coordinating body known as the Crimine (the Crime). Dickie used both *Mafia Brotherhoods* and supplementary documentation communicated personally to the Assistant Chief Prosecutor of Reggio Calabria to demonstrate that the Crimine (or something very like it) may already have existed in the 1930s and is perhaps even as old as the 'ndrangheta itself. This information was used, in the prosecutor's words, 'to analyse the results of [police and judicial] investigations and to construct hypotheses based on that evidence which, particularly in relation to the complex project known as Crimine, have so far met with substantial confirmation in the rulings issued by a number of Italian judges in trials that have taken place in both Milan and Reggio Calabria' [3]. The trials resulting from Operation Crimine are still ongoing. Once the judicial process is complete, it is hoped that they will establish a precedent for recognising the 'ndrangheta as a single, unified criminal association, allowing for collective prosecution under Italy's 1982 anti-mafia law no. 416bis – a huge step forward that will parallel that achieved by the famous maxi-trial against Cosa Nostra in 1992.

Dickie's expert research insights are widely and frequently used to **inform understanding and practice within anti-mafia civil society organisations**. These include the Sicilian organisation Addiopizzo, which takes a revolutionary approach to fighting the mafia by bringing together businesses that refuse to pay protection money to Cosa Nostra with consumers who want to make sure that the money they spend does not end in the mafia's coffers. The organisation's officers and volunteers use Dickie's work to better understand the history and operation of the mafias and thereby to **enhance the services that they provide to both local communities and tourists**. Addiopizzo Travel, for example, requires all of its trainees to read *Cosa Nostra* as preparation for delivery of organised tours of Palermo's 'sites of memory' in relation to the mafia and the city's fight against it [4]. Dickie's books have also promoted Addiopizzo's work and objectives among a wider public audience: many non-Sicilian tourists have been introduced to Addiopizzo by reading *Cosa Nostra* in its various translations, and have become involved in its efforts as a result, including, for instance, by donating money and choosing hotels that do not pay protection. Addiopizzo uses *Cosa Nostra* to introduce young Sicilians to the history of the Mafia including, for example, a three-year project (2008 to 2010) sponsored by the Ministry of Education, in which Addiopizzo worked with secondary school students to research the history of the mafia in an effort to reduce its influence on day-to-day Sicilian society [4].

The reach of the books' impacts on **public engagement with and understanding of mafias** is considerably enhanced by the fact that *Cosa Nostra*, *Mafia Brotherhoods* and *Mafia Republic* are written for non-specialist audiences, presenting both original and established research to a global audience in an accessible while still academically rigorous manner. As a *Financial Times* article (June 2011) described the narrative of *Mafia Brotherhoods*, it 'bowl[s] along, powered by the sort of muscular prose one associates with great detective fiction' [5].

The books' reach across international public readerships is suggested by the number of translations and sales. This is particularly so for *Cosa Nostra*, which has appeared in 21 languages plus Braille since publication in 2004; by Spring 2011 it had sold 750,000 copies worldwide. The book's yearly English language sales (excluding the US market) from 2008 to 2011 exceeded 60,000, with sales peaking in 2008 (16,371) and 2011 (16,465) [6]. The book's continued relevance to broad non-academic audiences is further demonstrated by renewed contracts for continued publication in countries including Holland, Spain, Norway, and Germany; and sales and translations have flourished in new markets such as Finland, China, Poland. *Mafia Brotherhoods* has likewise been widely translated into Dutch (2011), Italian (2012), Czech (2012), and Chinese (2013) and sold over 39,000 copies since 2011. *Mafia Republic*, published in the UK in May 2013, is already contracted for publication in the same territories. While contracts to produce single volumes combining the two books had been signed in Germany and the US [6]. *Cosa Nostra's* reach, moreover, extended well beyond casual readers: in June 2008, a filmed raid on a Russian

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mob boss's palatial villa in Rome found the book on his bedside table!

However, the most significant channel for the broader impacts of the research on public engagement with the issues covered in Dickie's books is their coverage by media outlets around the world. *Mafia Brotherhoods* was subject to extensive media coverage surrounding its publication in 2011, ensuring the communication of its key insights to a huge audience, including interviews on BBC Radio 5 Live's *Up All Night* (6m listeners per week) and *Newstalk* 106-108 FM (12% audience share in Dublin); and a major July 2011 book tour in Australia – where the 'ndrangheta has long had a presence – including appearances on *Late Night Live* with Philip Adams (over 300k listeners) [7]. As recently as 2012, *Cosa Nostra* was the book club selection by the influential American pundit David Frum on the hugely popular *Daily Beast* website which receives 18 million visitors per month. [8]

Dickie's provision of expert advice to media professionals through informal consultations and organised events has also **informed and enhanced media professionals' knowledge about – and thereby the accuracy of global media discourse on – mafias**, which are often reported in sensationalist terms. Dickie's books frequently inform coverage of mafia stories by providing relevant historical and societal information. This is gleaned not only from use of the published work, but also through Dickie's presentations to media professionals of expert insights gained through his research. On 2 September 2009, for example, he drew on research later published in *Mafia Brotherhoods* and *Mafia Republic* to deliver an invited presentation on mafias and the media to some 150 news professionals at the annual conference of the European Broadcasting Union's radio news group in Turin. Media interest in his work recently extended to the production of two related television documentaries based on it: the first of these, *Mafia Bunker*, was transmitted on History Channel Italia in April 2013; the second, *The Mafia's Secret Bunkers*, aired on BBC2 on 1 May 2013. The latter, according to its Executive Producer, used Dickie's research not only as a credible source of support for the original commission, but to move 'beyond an engaging current affairs piece into the most detailed and informative piece on the 'Ndrangheta Mafia in Calabria that there has been on international television' [9]. It was watched by 1.23 million (5.27% audience share) and was recommended by the *Telegraph*, *Daily Mail*, the *Times*, *Observer* and the *Sun*. The Italian version pulled in 114,000 viewers, doubling History Channel Italia's average audience, and also received positive advance notices in the Italian press [10].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- [1] Statement (Italian) on use of Dickie's research for confirming empirical findings provided by prosecutor assigned to the anti-mafia investigative team at Reggio Calabria Prosecutors' office.
- [2] Statement (Italian) on Dickie's work as a reference provided by Captain in the ROS section of the Carabinieri, with experience of front-line operations against the Cosa Nostra and 'ndrangheta.
- [3] Statement (Italian) on use of research to build precedent against 'ndrangheta provided by Assistant Chief Prosecutor of the specialist anti-mafia investigative team at Reggio Calabria Prosecutors' office, who led Operation Crimine investigation.
- [4] Statement (Italian) provided by the director of Addiopizzo Travel to corroborate educational benefits delivered through Addiopizzo's engagement programme.
- [5] *Financial Times* review of *Mafia Brotherhoods*: <http://on.ft.com/1cfdhts>.
- [6] Report from Felicity Bryan Associates is available on request.
- [7] Australian media coverage: *Late Night Live*, ABC radio (6/7/11) <http://bit.ly/1eIIIJif>; 2010 listener figures <http://bit.ly/18cPY6i>; *The Australian* (5/10/11) <http://bit.ly/17Oh0QR>. Radio audience figures from <http://bit.ly/1eILuJn> (*Newstalk*) and <http://bbc.in/1jrHUOn> (*BBC Five Live*).
- [8] The *Daily Beast* book club: <http://thebea.st/1f0XVdA>.
- [9] Statement provided by Managing Director Lion Television, Executive Producer 'Inside the Mafia's Secret Bunkers' about the use made of the research in producing this documentary.
- [10] Dossiers of UK/Italian newspaper clippings available on request. Audience figures on BBC2: <http://bit.ly/17UTv2V>.