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From Clans to Co-ops

Confiscated Mafia Land in Sicily

THEODOROS RAKOPOULOS

From Clans to Co-ops

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The book is dedicated to cooperativists and cooperationists – all those people in Sicily and beyond, who believe in and engage with the principles of cooperation. Labour is to be shared. The fruit of some intellectual labour on co-ops is this book. Hope you like it.

Introduction

Early Morning Encounters

It was around 6 o'clock in the morning, but we were already late for the fields. I tried to explain to Piero, jokingly, that in English, 'work in the fields' can be verbally associated with 'fieldwork', which is what I was[1] doing there as an anthropologist, spending time in Sicily as the most vital part of my London-based doctoral pursuit.[2] He seemed unimpressed: 'Is this British humour?' As we stood looking at the hills on the horizon, kilometres away from the village boundaries, the cobalt blue of the spring skies seemed to intensify with every sip of the coffee, every drag of the cigarette. The staggeringly beautiful Welsh-like hills of the Palermitan hinterland in Western Sicily lay as the backdrop as a solemn crowd of men prepared themselves to drive towards the hilly landscape to dedicate their day to their land-plots.

This was the entrance to San Giovanni – a village located in the Spicco Vallata valley of Western Sicily – close to the main winery in this area of a tightly knit vineyard economy. We stood outside the *bar Sangiovannaru*, where most peasants took their morning coffee before setting off for their plots. The *bar,* in Italy, is a place where people gather to sip a coffee and, in the mornings, grab delicacies like a *cornetto*, a small croissant. In rural Sicily, places like the *Sangiovannaru* assembled exclusively men of all ages, from teenagers to those well into their eighties. No other place in San Giovanni was so lively as this *bar* at this time of day – or indeed any time of the day. I counted about forty people coming and going in the ten minutes we were there. This was the first month of my stay in the village. I had just met Piero, a member of the administration of the 'Giovanni Falcone' cooperative. As he was from Palermo (located 31 kms away from the village), I was interested in seeing how he behaved in the village cafés, not being a local.

We were on our way to Saladino, a five-hectare tract of land that eight years previously had belonged to Giovanni Barbeto,[3] a local imprisoned *mafioso*, which the state had confiscated and allocated to the Falcone cooperative. Our day plan – and this was in the first days of March, frosty

but clear in the early hours – was to arrive at the vineyard at 6 AM and spend the day spraying sulphite (a natural preservative) on the organic vines. We stood around a stool just outside the *bar* doors, occasionally sharing a *buongiorno* with the incoming men. Just as we were about to light up a second cigarette, taking a few more minutes of indulgence, a middle-aged man approached us where we stood and started talking. He presented a lighter and lit our cigarettes. Without introducing himself, he then launched into a long complaint to Piero about the 'complete mess the co-ops have made' in local agricultural work relations. There used to be a genuine local market for agrarian labour that was now going through what he called, with particular emphasis, 'worrying developments'. Emphasising every word he uttered, he pointed at Piero, saying,

> You, your cooperatives, are ruining the game here, with your rules and regulations and stuff . . . you know, people that have worked for me, in my plots, as they've done for ages, all of a sudden ask for more dosh, saying, '*Hey you don't give enough, and how about those* [social security] *contributions for a change? Look at these new cooperatives, they pay much more, they pay the social security, I might knock on their door instead*.' I've been having this since you anti-mafia people started your business.

The man left and we got back on the tractor that we came with and set off. I was a little perplexed but had an idea about what was going on – an idea that Piero confirmed: the man was a small-time *mafioso*. But, at the same time, Piero told me, the man's rant was not atypical of local reactions to, as he put it, 'what the state and the cooperatives have achieved in San Giovanni'. I was presented with a tangible case of reactions to change as channelled through the cooperatives; this was why I was in Sicily, after all, to explore grassroots reactions to a social change inflicted from above but also pursued laterally among ordinary Sicilians.

This vignette is just one of many episodes illustrating how the coming of the 'anti-mafia'[4] cooperatives – cooperatives that cultivated land that the state had confiscated from *mafiosi* – brought about a small breakthrough in the agrarian life of San Giovanni.[5]

When local agrarian workers talked about their work conditions with me, they said that mafia patronage had depressed wages for generations. In discussions about access to resources and labour markets, locals suggested that the cooperatives[6] had brought about a relative change in accessing jobs and also a (minor) shift in ways of thinking about labour – and the mafia. Expressing the aims of the cooperatives, Gianpiero (then a thirty-two-year-old man from Palermo), the representative of the Paolo Borsellino cooperative, told me,

> I feel that the aim of the co-ops will be reached when I hear the peasants in the bars talking about trade unionism, not just F. C. Juventus. Our aim is to offer access to the confiscated land, standardise labour rights and change consciousnesses.

Trade unionists told me that the Spicco Vallata anti-mafia cooperatives were arguably the first agrarian businesses in the area that always paid full social security contributions and a net pay of above six euros an hour for agricultural work. The cooperatives were composed of members who performed administrative office duties and members who worked the land. Moreover, they employed wage-earners for seasonal work. These daily workers, as well as the worker-members, typically earned a minimum of 51.62 euros a day (net), an amount that far exceeded all other work and pay accounts I encountered locally. The cooperatives' administrators had mostly monthly wages in addition to the full labour social security contribution made by the cooperative as their employer.

As the co-ops employed no more than one hundred people (members and short-term contract workers together), this wage and pay change was minute in the broader political economy of the area. Nonetheless, the cooperatives symbolically 'took on' the local mafia's labour patronage and were important contributors the livelihoods of many local households and individuals. What is more, they had attracted attention and sympathy from across the cooperative movement as well as from the Italian civil society, with the odd journalist from domestic or foreign media[7] rushing to San Giovanni every couple of months. They symbolised one of the most celebrated cases of grassroots economic activity against organised crime on possibly a global scale – and indeed, through work and the securing of livelihoods, 'not just through words and good intentions', as one such journalist from Germany confided to me with awe and admiration in a private chat.

'Legality' (*legalità*), a term people used to denote a positively engaged relationship to law, was key to this achievement. Cooperative workers considered that having a job in the cooperatives established the regularisation of workers' rights, precisely solidified in 'legality'. For cooperative administrators like Giampiero, the legality idea meant that community well-being would improve if all resources were legally regulated and mafia was curbed. Crucially, 'legality' entailed the end of informal work.

Giampiero spoke to me at length in an interview about the changes that wage employment in the cooperatives had brought about locally among the co-ops' manual workers, peasants who cultivated conventional grain and vines but were employed by the cooperatives. He suggested that

Libertà, the NGO catering to anti-mafia, as well as the administrators of Borsellino, the co-op he worked in,

> had managed to convince the peasants using only the wallet [*col portafoglio solo*]: we ask them how much the *mafioso* pays them, they tell us, 'he pays thirty euro a day' [*iddu mi paga trenta euro a jurna*]. . . . OK, we tell them; last year the daily pay according to the law, the daily contract for agriculture was 51.62 euros. . . . So, come to us! . . . This is how much they get, legally. It's the norm [*È la normalità*]. And so, imagine Theo, for the Borsellino co-op there were three hundred applications for *braccianti*[8] positions! People realised that their interests were with the legality, the normality.

Problematising the implicit economism of this argumentation, centred on people's 'interests' and a quasi-utilitarian siding with 'legality' to explore these interests, is a starting point for this ethnography. As economic anthropology is rooted in material concerns, one can note how people's material life is embedded in a number of other commitments that transcend the economistic, yet important, shift in labour regimes that the anti-mafia cooperatives have brought about. Such commitments overlap with obligations and understandings that transgress Giampiero's idea of the cooperative as an 'enclave of good' and an agent of change. These commitments lie in the social life of workers outside and around the cooperative environment, a social life including kinship and friendship relations, memories of landscape and labour, attitudes to land and land neighbourliness, and the cosmological ramifications of gossip and community.

Legality in terms of legal pay is just one, albeit central, example of how co-ops in Sicily, like in many cases elsewhere, attempted to create enclaves of 'good' economic practice in what their administrators perceived as a sea of sociocultural malice. This implies, to pursue the aquatic metaphor, that the tides of social life leave islets of benign capitalism undeterred. It also implies that people envision – and enact – economic practices based on ideas of ethical and fair logic by removing themselves from their environments.

But how can you seal out economic life from the social fodder it is embedded in? It might not come as a surprise that you probably cannot. This book explores and problematises the *hows* of this *cannot*, providing a total immersion in the world of the Sicilian antagonisms between mafia and anti-mafia. Its narrative takes a threefold argumentation format. Firstly, the book takes cooperatives struggling against the mafia as its focal point to examine how some members of these organisations aim to exclude themselves from the – sometimes controversial – richness of

local social life. Secondly, it explores how this proves to be impossible, as the lives of co-op members themselves are embedded in a series of obligations, commitments and generally social relations that often fly in the face of anti-mafia co-op principles. Thirdly, it elucidates how some of these principles – foundational ideas for the anti-mafia such as 'food activism', 'community' or 'land boundaries' – contradict the very internal coherence of cooperatives and exacerbate divisions within them.

The book therefore explains how this anti-mafia political intervention not only informed aspects of cooperative activity but also entailed the promotion of values and relationships that opposed those that some local people, including cooperative members, lived by. Different moralities[9] arose within the cooperatives, presenting the incongruities between the set goals of the project and its development on the ground. Consequently, I highlight the complex internal differentiations often faced by politicised cooperatives (where the constitution and activity of cooperativism is driven by a political project). Divisions of labour develop in politicised cooperativism because some cooperative members (are able to) identify with its basic political premises more so than others. Politicised cooperatives, albeit delivering degrees of social change, contain different ideas, practices and morals – sometimes complementary and others at odds with each other. Anti-mafia cooperatives' main goal and practice was to offer stable employment, contributing to the bettering of locals' livelihoods.

The book argues that co-op members' embeddedness itself proves to be a renovating aspect for anti-mafia cooperativism, as co-ops really draw from local kinship, gossip, work memory and neighbourhood relations to acquire their actual operational form on the ground. The deployment of cooperative life is then fully immersed in the life of the locality: co-ops are constituted on the grounds of their members' experiences, which are taking place both within and outside the co-op environments. This remark has a Sicilian premise, but I believe it addresses cooperativism at large as a project of egalitarianism – that is, an exercise in lateral economics and industrial democracy – that extends and is defined by the livelihoods of the people making cooperatives. It is the subject of this book to sing and problematise the body cooperative – ridden with ambiguities. The narrative and argumentation is structured as follows.

The dynamics of divisions and contradictions in cooperatives are historical: the genealogy of Sicilian agrarian cooperativism was framed by tensions between peasant mobilisation, the anti-mafia movement, mafia and the state (chapter 3). The analysis first indicates the emergence of divisions in anti-mafia cooperatives, wherein administrators identified

more strongly with the ideological flair of food and anti-mafia activism than local workers did (chapter 4). The co-ops' two-tiered system had been instigated via two incompatible spheres of recruitment: an ideological preference to staffing through political networks and the actuality of kinship patronage as well as the reality of forming anti-mafia families (chapter 5). I then show that, just as with the moralising discourses of activism, co-op administrators appropriated local gossip in order to demarcate moral borders around their own, and 'their' cooperatives', reputation in Spicco Vallata (chapter 6). What is more, the ethnography shows that workers' livelihoods outside the cooperatives continued to be entangled with informal local practices, some of which were, ironically, reinforced by anti-mafia cooperativism's promotion of waged employment (chapter 7). Claims to community was another ideological realm at play as it formed contrasting trajectories within cooperatives, most importantly influenced by outside agents, including mafia (chapter 8). This influence, as well as the neighbourhood with *mafiosi*, instigated further disagreements on how to approach *mafiosi*. In addition to this, attitudes towards the confiscated land also led to significant rifts in the co-ops, resulting in uncomfortable social arrangements between neighbouring land plots (chapter 9).

NOTES

1. The choice of the past tense of verbs throughout this book admittedly takes away some of the charm of the narrative. For this reason, I use the past tense throughout the book to mark that the events described should be contextualised in terms of social life in Spicco Vallata throughout 2008 and 2009, in the inter-subjective ways I experienced and came to analyse it.
2. The fieldwork took place as part of my doctoral project while working in Goldsmiths, University of London.
3. Barbeto was the main mafia figure in San Giovanni during the 1980s and 1990s, notorious in Italy, for his spectacular car bomb assassination of the popular anti-mafia magistrate Giovanni Falcone in 1992 (not to mention the other 150–200 murders he admitted). He will be coming back in this narrative a few times. Falcone worked with Paolo Borsellino (also assassinated soon after), and with other magistrates, in the anti-mafia pool and was central in the state's struggle against Cosa Nostra.
4. 'Anti-mafia' is an established term in institutional and grounded life in Italy, adopted by authors as diverse as Jamieson (2000), Schneider and Schneider (2003) and Dickie (2004). I call the agrarian cooperatives that work on land confiscated from the mafia 'anti-mafia cooperatives', the emic term most often used in the village to describe them. The term in this form implies an ideology of opposing the mafia.

5. While I have anonymised all names of individuals, toponyms and local associations, this is not the case with widely known organisations that would be, in any case, easily identifiable in Italy. I have also not anonymised *mafiosi* who have been imprisoned *for life*, like Giovanni Barbeto, although I have otherwise changed the names of *mafiosi* (most of whom were released after spending three years, the minimum time for being a member of the mafia, in prison). The *mafiosi* I have encountered in San Giovanni were men who had been in prison for a while.
6. The major differentiation in agrarian cooperatives is between work-based co-ops, such as the anti-mafia cooperatives, and production-based co-ops, whose members are producers (Sapelli 1981). The former, composed of waged members-labourers, are work organisations with shared capital between members – in this case, the usufruct of land. The latter are composed of independent producers who sell their produce to a co-owned winery, which processes and distributes their produce (more on this in chapter 3, from a historical perspective). In the case of Spicco Vallata, the *Santoleone* co-op-winery catered for around eight hundred producer-members who sold their grapes for vinification and bottling.
7. Throughout my fieldwork stay I have encountered journalists visiting San Giovanni from as far away as Japan.
8. A *bracciante* is a person who works as a field hand, a daily land worker making a living through daily wage labour in an agrarian context. Although not specific to Sicily, historically, *braccianti* refers to landless peasants. These agrarian proletarians (Schneider and Schneider 1976; see also Roseberry 1978), were – and still are – people whose only means of livelihood were their *braccia,* their arms. The cooperatives' daily workers called themselves *braccianti.* It is a widely used term in Sicily, akin to the *bracero* notion (Kearney 2004).
9. I use this term to encapsulate people's evaluations of situations as ethically acceptable according to their standards and within their social situatedness; as the ethnography will show, definitions were dynamic and always contextual to people's experience.

Chapter 1

Problems with Cooperatives

Enclaves and Co-ops

A radical state-led initiative, the anti-mafia cooperatives of Sicily are hailed, throughout Italy, as symbols of the anti-mafia movement and are recognised as its most successful manifestation. Yet, while anti-mafia cooperativism[1] unsettled the local labour market in positive ways, its achievements also led to contradictions, which are important to grasp in order to engage with the full meaning of anti-mafia social change in Sicily. A focus on this relationship between continuity and transformation (the bettering of people's livelihoods and the incongruities that accompanied it), as well as on how this relationship was reflected in, and drew on, internal divisions of labour within the cooperatives, drive this book.

The ethnography explores the social processes of change enacted in San Giovanni and its surrounding area, the valley of Spicco Vallata, through a study of the activity of four work-based[2] agrarian cooperatives. These organisations cultivate land plots that the Italian state confiscated from the powerful local mafia between the years 1996 and 2009, allowing local people direct access to land and work without the mediation of *mafiosi*. Focusing on this shift of access to resources (labour, land and reputation) offered to the cooperatives' members and the unintended repercussions this entailed, this anthropological inquiry examines a politicised project of cooperativism that aimed to secure people's livelihoods away from mafia's influence. Some of these contradictions can be grasped in a phrase of Alberto Dalla Chiesa[3] that anti-mafia activists repeatedly told me and had become a mantra of anti-mafia cooperativism: 'The state gives as a right what the mafia offers as a gift'.

Cooperatives, Smaller than Life: The Untold Story

Cooperatives, like most institutions, often profess to do a lot. Their representatives claim social change, or egalitarianism of all kinds, or community economics as their dreamt aim or indeed achieved goal. Like all

ideologies, cooperativ*ism* then appears larger than life; this is odd, as cooperativism has been seen as the end of -isms, as lived socialist practice (e.g., Whyte 1999; Zamagni and Zamagni 2010; Restakis 2010). Sociologists and anthropologists of cooperation and cooperativisation have often criticised cooperatives for not living up to what they profess (e.g, Kasmir 1996; Narotzky 2007; or MacPherson 2008, Errasti et al 2016). It is an accusation that this book is sympathetic to – and that comes from a slightly Marxian lineage. In this line, the general backdrop against which this book develops is to show how, through the prism of ethnography, cooperatives appear to be smaller than their representatives claim to be.

However, this critique, centred on labour and exploitation, or struggles against neoliberalism, would leave a lot behind[4]. While some (see, e.g., Checker and Hogeland 2004) note that removing co-ops from local context to strive for social change is problematic, if not redundant, not much has been said about that 'local context'. This is why the anthropological eye of this ethnography is set on how co-ops are more fully engaged in the complexities of local life than often admitted. This engagement is done in silent and unseen ways that can fly in the face of the specific ideology on which cooperatives develop (in this case, the anti-mafia). The social fodder that cooperatives are embedded in comprises life outside the co-op work and within kinship networks, flows of reputation, neighbourhood issues and household organisation. The book thus discusses what has not been touched upon by critiques to cooperativism: the 'local' context, in the sense of co-op members' lives, and hence in a framework that includes relationships beyond waged employment within them,entrenched as members' lives are in a series of obligations *around* cooperative work. That *around*, I argue, is what determines the inside, the private life of cooperativism.

The book centres on exploring how cooperatives constituted themselves as enclaves of good practice and how this enclaving ideology regarding land and labour (Clemmer 2009) was met with attempts by workers to unwittingly embed the co-ops in local life. Examining the tension between enclaving and embedding mobilises issues central to economic anthropology today, as the Sicilian material offers a lens to questions concerning the social life of cooperatives. Like other junctures of co-ops and state, Sicily's historically complex relationship with the Italian state is central: the legal confiscation of mafia land was intended to curb local *mafiosi* power and promote values of legality and transparency. In this juncture, state, mafia and cooperativism converge and clash. The co-op concern thus springs organically from a scrutiny of the grey zone of this stage, where my interlocutors lives unfold.

How the cooperative ideology of legality is *embedded* locally becomes then the core of our investigation – and it is through tracing co-op people's lives in their community outside the time they dedicate to the co-op that this can be studied. Drawing on the idea of embeddedness (Polanyi 2001) of economic activity in social life (and the values associated with people's grounded experience) can capture the distinct, and even contradictory, social realities sheltered under the same work cooperatives. This is especially so when we see resources as also embedded in socially arranged relationships (like land, as in Hann 1998b; 2007; 2009a). Attention is needed, though: embeddedness does not operate outside context (Peters 2009; de Sardan 2013). In cases of politicised cooperatives, like the Sicilian anti-mafia, it is even explicitly poised against a dis-embedding idea of forming enclave-like structures, sealed out from local life's vices.

Cooperatives' resources (labour, land and such) are not 'embedded' *uniformly* but across different contexts and different people encompassed in a cooperative. Despite tensions, the 'informal' aspects of their livelihoods, embedded in morals about land (Abramson 2000), mediated kinship (Carsten 1995), reputation (Schneider and Schneider 1996) and 'mutual aid' develop *alongside* rather than against anti-mafia cooperative (legality-oriented) activity. Rather than reifying 'cooperatives' as bounded units of analysis, the focus here is on *their members and daily workers* and their contradictory circumstances, as they bring different values into the organisations they compose. These are translated into diverse practices outside the co-op framework and different ideas on how this framework (should) operate. They are conditioned by the real live circumstances of people participating in them.

After all, the Polanyian embeddedness notion, convergent with the Maussian idea of institutions as total social facts, makes law a noneconomic institution that serves to incorporate economic life into society (Catanzariti 2015: 222). The very term 'embeddedness' is rarely used by Polanyi himself (Resta 2015: 10). It is often presented as a binary opposition between cases where material life is embedded and others where the market forces disembed it from the economy (Gudeman 2011: 17). The notion has been transformed (Beckert 2011: 40–44) and is here applied to trace how cooperative life, rooted in a sense and an ideology of material change, interacts with the lifeworlds of the people constituting cooperatives.

This is not a series of personal or 'household' strategies, simply; this exegesis would reduce the fullness of Sicilian life, with its plethora of grey areas (Rakopoulos 2017c) to rational maximisation, which is precisely what Polanyi would *not* argue (Robotham 2011: 273). Cooperatives',

like 'livelihoods' (and, again, Polanyian meditations are in order here, as per Polanyi 1957 and Graeber 2011) are influenced by values coming from their members' experiences in their broader social milieux (including kinship, the informal economy and local codes and idioms), often different from, or indeed contradictory to, those claimed by their political principles. Some of these relationships, in the case of Spicco Vallata, are deemed to belong to a problematic 'tradition', which the cooperatives strive, in principle, to supersede. For example, kinship relations are seen by cooperativist ideologues as highly suspect because the loyalties they generate are seen to contradict the ideals of legality and meritocracy (see chapter 5), sidelined by promoting activism based on ethical food-production principles (chapter 4). But family is in fact *constitutive* of cooperatives in practice, giving meanings to the experience of workers' participation in them – in terms of anti-mafia families (Rakopoulos 2017a).

I am not putting forward the idea that my interlocutors are slaloming across two opposed pillars, two different moral worlds, mafia and anti-mafia, and benefitting from both. Rather, their lives are caught in that zone where moral disinterestedness and a morality disassociated from the silences and speeches pertaining in Sicilian life are impossible (Di Bella 2011). It is thus the grounded cooperative life of Sicilians that elucidates our understandings of co-ops as egalitarian institutions and their contradictions (Kapferer 2003). Their actual, non-normative human economy (Hart 2015), beyond -isms, pertains to kinship, moralities over land, gossip and the richness of Sicilian lifeworlds, where mafia is a constant condition of local sociality. This is a lifeworld where law is often bypassed but also adhered to in a generic way (Blok 2010). My interlocutors navigate different situations that produce a grey zone, where knots of relations pertaining to mafia, anti-mafia and state both conflict and merge. The mafia is thus presented as a looming presence, a constant in people's lives. People see it as a constellation of people with agrarian livelihoods – but not as a structural domain, as it is most often discussed (see, e.g., Gambetta 2009; Varese 2011; Travaglio 2014). 'Its' sociological construction, while analytically needed, urgently needs ethnographic backing, where real people do real things – and this book partly serves this aim.

Having said that, this work aspires to be the first ethnography of the anti-mafia movement that pays attention to livelihoods and production processes rather than civil society mobilisation (see Schneider and Schneider 2002b; 2008). This way, it contributes to the ongoing query into Italian neoliberalisms, in terms of work regimes, civic politics, and their moralities (Yanagisako 2002, as well as 2013). The politics of morality have been under constant scrutiny in current anthropology (from

Osella and Osella 2011 to Zigon and Throop 2014), and an attention to the situatedness of ethical concerns is at play (see Fassin 2004). There are even attempts at resuscitating discussion on the 'moral economy' outside the discipline, with an attention on how moral concerns are present in contemporary capitalism (Götz 2015). The strongly moralised world of anti-mafia activism meets, in Spicco Vallata, the moral lifeworlds of those working in the co-ops, with often mixed results.

A burgeoning anthropological discussion among Italianists has brought about the intrinsic, everyday neoliberalism in divisive and unequally structured work relations (Molé 2012) and in the moralities of doing good and professing solidarity (Muehlebach 2012). The general trends of neoliberal cosmopolitanism (Harvey 2003; 2011) do acquire contradictory meanings on the ground. In the Sicilian case, mafia and anti-mafia can be two – granted, opposing – sides of an entrepreneurial coin, struggling over acquisitions of privileged access to markets and land management. In that process, access is negotiated through civic activism in times of austerity, a phenomenon also rampant in Italy, although livelihoods remain relatively in the shade of its scholarly discussion (Muehlebach 2013; Palumbo 2016). When this activism is indeed associated with Italian livelihoods becoming marginalised, it is often an urban phenomenon (Herzfeld 2009).

How this discussion can be sited in the specifics of nested structures of human cooperation, like work cooperatives, still requires critical inquiry, especially as such debate is often at some distance from livelihood concerns. The materiality of how people engage with and in civil society has been set aside, as debate has very creatively focused on the intricate ideological makings of activist morality (Schneider and Schneider 2001). These moralities are contradictory, and these contradictions remain 'immaterial, but objective' (to think in a Marxian sense), rooted in labour, in the widest sense of the term.

But cooperatives' internal differentiation, their divisions of labour, are not simply the result of exposure to markets (Kasmir 2009). In fact, the workforce in these Sicilian cooperatives is composed of people embedded in different, often irreconcilable, social relations and circumstances. In the political context of a project whose lynchpin is legality with its consciously 'enclaving' force, legal categories do not have meanings or values shared universally. Politically driven cooperatives *are* founded on normative principles, in this case the state ideology of legality as well as a moral understanding of food production and agrarian economy (see Luetchford and Pratt 2013). Diverging from perceptions of the term in the relevant sociology (Jamieson 2000; Sciarrone 2009; Armao 2009; see also

Pardo 2004), I nuance this idea of legality, suggesting that it is not neutral but socially ordered (and ordering), rooted in ideological perceptions of community (akin to reflections offered by Santino 2002). The ethnography therefore provides an account of a radical political project that challenges the mafia but largely fails to grasp the local social arrangements within which it unfolds.

Of Guns and Grapes: Imagining a Post-mafia Sicily

Confiscations

Palermo in the 1980s had the highest rates of violent crime among European cities (Sterling 1991; Dickie 2004; 2014). The *mafiosi*, coordinated in the vertical structure of Cosa Nostra (Lodato 2001; cf. Tilly 1974), selectively eliminated state bureaucrats, including investigating magistrates, who challenged their aims. The number of mafia victims, dubbed 'excellent cadavers' (Stille 1996; see also Sant Cassia 2007), included members of parliament such as Pio La Torre, who had sponsored an anti-mafia law in 1982 (Rizzo 2003) that initiated the formation of anti-mafia confiscations. His assassination that same year indicates just how important the law he had crafted actually was.[5]

The 'Rognoni-La Torre' Law (number 646/82, co-proposed with the Christian Democrat parlamentarian Virginio Rognoni) made two fundamental amendments to article 416 of the Italian Criminal Code. It introduced the specific crime of 'mafia' association, distinct from 'organised crime'. It also introduced the power of the courts to confiscate the assets of persons belonging to the mafia, as well as those of their relatives, partners, and families who in the five years before a confiscation had acted as 'straw persons'.[6] In criminal proceedings against a person '*for mafia*' – i.e., for any type of criminal offence related to article 416 *bis* of the Criminal Code – his assets are sequestrated when he (unexceptionally, a man) is formally charged, despite the presumption of innocence. They are then confiscated if the defendant is convicted *for mafia*, if he cannot show they have an innocent origin. Since then, when the *mafioso* is charged (indicted), his assets are sequestered, while upon conviction the property would then be confiscated.

La Torre's collaboration with Rognoni also shows the convergence of the two major parties, *Democrazia Cristiana* (DC) and *Partito Comunista Italiano* (PCI),[7] en route to an anti-mafia political consensus (Lane 2010: 34–36). La Torre belonged to the moderate faction of the PCI. The commu-

nists promoted 'an alliance of democratic forces' against mafia violence, raising awareness of mafia intimidation of the peasant movement (Rizzo 2003). Interestingly, as a trade unionist, La Torre had been imprisoned for his part in Spicco Vallata land occupations in 1948, an action aimed in part against mafia power. This shows how state policies on mafia shifted over time (Ginsborg 2003b: 205): by the mid-1990s, in response to intense mafia anti-state violence and civil society pressures, the state took a more active anti-mafia stance, and the confiscation law was a key intervention in this policy.

Anthropologists exploring the specific characteristics of Italian communism have noted that its 'escape from Leninism' (Shore 1990) consolidated the party's hegemonic success in most of the country, but not Sicily (Li Causi 1993). The PCI elaborated and posed the 'moral issue' (*la questione morale*) to politics, which was incorporated in contemporary Italian political discourse (Ginsborg 2005a). Focusing on the transparency of the public sphere, the moral issue entailed exposing the role of ambiguous political agents (like the mafia). The principle of '*legalità*' invoked by left-wing legalistic agendas and endorsed by the anti-mafia cooperatives is currently used in ways that emulate and reproduce the 'moral question' of the late 1970s (Rakopoulos 2014a: 25). It can be defined as a moral observation and an ethical appreciation of the law and the jural system morality.

New legal measures were introduced in the early 1990s when a series of mafia killings had provoked popular contempt for the organisation (Jamieson 2000: 127; Lavio 2014). These included the brazen assassinations of the magistrates Falcone and Borsellino, as well as an escalation of violence against state officials, which even included terrorist threats. The law providing for the 'social use of assets confiscated by the mafia' eventually came into effect in 1996 (n. 109/96), passed in response to the activism of the NGO Libertà.[8] One million signatures were gathered supporting the demand for 'the mafia to restitute what was unjustly usurped' (Libera 2008b).[9] Therefore dubbed 'a popular initiative legislation' (Pati 2010), the law introduced a procedure to ensure the 'social use' of the confiscated assets (Libera 2010). Once a *mafioso* is convicted, his assets, including property rights, are handed over to the Ministry for Internal Affairs.[10] Having identified the territorial jurisdiction where the assets are located, the Ministry passes them to the relevant municipality. In the case of land, this includes ownership, usufruct and adjunct rights. When arrested, a person accused of mafia-related crimes is asked to prove the provenance of their assets; this undermines the presumption of innocence in Italian (and generally European) Criminal Law. This jural

process, as an 'extraordinary measure', draws from legal theory of exceptional circumstances. Under normal criminal procedure, this fundamental democratic principle is undisputable. But here, 'the realm of mafia is an "*exceptio legalis*"', as the Palermitan magistrate Dr Rossio told me.[11]

An example will help clarify this process. Giovanni Torinese (a San Giovanni *mafioso*) owned a vineyard in the territory of Reale (a Spicco Vallata village), bought to launder drug money in the mid-1980s. The *mafioso* was arrested in 1997; the land plot was confiscated in 1999 and passed into the property of the state; the Reale municipality then transferred its usufruct to an anti-mafia cooperative, under renewable lease contracts valid for twenty or thirty years. Therefore, the confiscated plots always belong to the state and are leased for free (*comodato d'uso*) to the co-ops, which never really retain full ownership over the confiscated land. These social agrarian cooperatives fall into the category of appropriate social use as they abide by the principles of Italian cooperativism and are not-for-profit organisations, protected in the constitution (article 45). They are supported by the state and Libertà, which says that the land was allocated to the cooperatives 'as they represented the community' (Libera 2008a) and founded 'an economy of legality and solidarity' (Libera 2009b). Libertà pushed for a legality-oriented discourse promoting the anti-mafia cooperatives.

Despite the cooperative movement's 150-year-old history (Sapelli 1981), the Italian 'social cooperatives' are relatively new. The anti-mafia cooperatives specifically were created in response to the 109/96 law, and use confiscated land plots, machinery and other resources taken from mafia (tractors, harvesters and a winery called Cento[12]) and bestowed on the cooperatives between 1996 and 2006 to be 'restituted back into productivity' (Frigerio and Pati 2007: 3; Pati 2005). In 2012 there were eight such cooperatives in Italy (see figure 4.3, page 100), cultivating land hailed as 'liberated' or 'emancipated' and presented as the result of grassroots mobilisations with state backing (Procino 2003). The fact that four of those eight cooperatives were located in the Spicco Vallata area of western Sicily made that the ideal site to study 'anti-mafia change'. Libertà and many journalists alike claimed the area had been 'liberated from the mafia' and was an example for communities across southern Italy (Morelli 2003; Libera 2006: 2).

After the mid-1990s, when the relationship between the state and Cosa Nostra shifted from connivance to conflict, triggered by an escalation of mafia violence, the jailing of numerous Spicco Vallata *mafiosi* between 1996 and 2000 (twelve clan[13] leaders in San Giovanni alone) multiplied the number of landed properties in the hands of local municipalities. While

elsewhere in southern Italy the confiscated assets passed to other social structures (not necessary cooperatives), the co-op solution was deemed more appropriate for western Sicily – and proved more efficient. Mayors pushed for the formation of a specialist bureaucratic apparatus to administer the transfers of usufruct rights to local cooperatives, guarantee the 'social use' and 'associated' use of the land and promote the cooperatives' activity at large.

The mayors of five Spicco Vallata villages welcomed the creation of the Consortium Progress and Law in May 2000, which to this day oversees the cooperatives' activity, 'to administer the assets in associated use and for a social goal' (Focus 2001: 1). Tasked with the transfer of confiscated land and other assets 'from the clans to the state and the community' (Focus 2001: 12; Candito 2012), the Consortium imposed a model of anti-mafia cooperativism characterised by the pursuit of legality and values endorsed in legislation ('work', 'property'), especially regarding the regulation of land and labour (Moroni 2010).

The Consortium, whose seat is in the San Giovanni municipality, has two branches: in one, led by the local mayors, personnel may change through the municipal elections that take place every four years. The other branch is a permanent team of four bureaucrats appointed by the Ministry of the Interior. The managing directorship of the Consortium is a permanent position chaired by Matteo Mandola, a young and incredibly stylish – well-tailored suit, aviator glasses, long shiny hair – Palermitan lawyer with a PhD from the local law department. When I first asked him his views on the confiscations, he told me they were due to 'a state of permanent legal emergency with mafia issues in our country'. The Consortium's presidency rotates every year among the eight mayors. The municipalities that originally participated in 2000 were Tarini, Reale, Cembali, San Turiddu and San Giovanni. Three more villages joined three years later: Bocca, Fonte and Principe. The Consortium was promoted by the centre-left prefect of the Palermo province of the time, as well as by the leftist mayors of San Giovanni and Tarini. The guiding principles of the cooperatives were the interconnected notions of law and progress, as the Consortium's name suggested; as Luca, the president of Falcone, told me, 'There is no development without legality and no legality without development; this is our mission here, to enact both'.

The NGO Libertà has played a key role: despite not having any administrative powers itself (not being a state organisation), the Consortium has delegated to the NGO full responsibility for the representation and marketing of the cooperatives, in what Matteo Mandola described to me as 'a joint venture of state and civil society against the mafia'. The NGO Arci[14]

also assisted in this, catering for Lavoro e Altro, the most openly left-wing cooperative among the four that I examined.

It is important to emphasise the local character of the restitution process. The cooperatives studied here cultivate land that had been confiscated from significant Spicco Vallata *mafiosi*. Such mafia figures include Totò Riina and Giovanni Barbeto, today imprisoned for life, who controlled Cosa Nostra's heroin trafficking in the 1980s and 1990s, when the Sicilian mafia organised the largest share of the world's circulation of the drug (Camilleri and Lodato 2002). The Lavoro e Altro was located in Tarini, while the three others (Falcone, Borsellino and the much smaller Liberanima[15]) were in San Giovanni. Collectively, the land tracts these cooperatives managed amounted to almost six hundred hectares; they include mainly organic vineyards and cereal farms (Libera 2009a; Consorzio 2010). The cooperatives also had the usufruct of two beautiful nineteenth-century Spicco Vallata *masserie* (farm houses), both confiscated from Giovanni Barbeto and turned into agricultural tourism establishments (*agriturismi*). The fact that the majority of confiscations in Italy took place in the cradle of Cosa Nostra was highly symbolic.

The rhetoric of this redistribution of assets used by official agencies, such as the Consortium, presents a just state actively intervening to restore to an (idealised) community what had been 'stolen' from it. State documents explaining 'whither to confiscate' (Focus 2001) resemble a Marxist analysis of primitive accumulation.[16] These documents present *mafiosi* as having 'usurped' the agricultural land from what was allegedly in the common domain, available to all (Consorzio 2010). In fact (see chapter 3), there had been only one short-lived historical case of collectively owned land in Spicco Vallata, related to the 1946 peasant land occupations. The confiscated land, as the state apparatuses and the NGO claim (in texts co-authored by their representatives), symbolises 'a resource for the area, an opportunity for development and civil growth' (Frigerio and Pati 2007: 5). Following this line of argument, the authors envision newly created cooperatives as horizontal work organisations (all members being equal in pay and work tasks). Their aim, associated with ideas on 'community' (as explored in chapter 8), is to 'democratically accommodate the land that returned to the *community*, after the mafia had unlawfully usurped it' (Frigerio and Pati 2007: 37, emphasis added) and to guarantee the '*community's* participation in the social use of the confiscated assets' (Frigerio and Pati 2007: 67; Libera 2008b, emphasis added). The state confiscations project is still ongoing at the time of this book's publication, almost twenty years after its inception.

The first land plot to be restituted – i.e., allocated to a social cooperative – was a vineyard in Tarini, of Totò 'The Beast' Riina, confiscated in 1999 and bestowed on the Lavoro e Altro cooperative. (As mentioned, the municipalities retain legal ownership of the confiscated assets, and the cooperatives only hold the usufruct). As the Consortium was driven by an ideology of communalism and 'justice', a key element for its practice was replacing the mafia as patron by 'reconstituting the presence of the state in the area' (Libera 2006).

The public competitions resulted in the hiring of the core workforce and the establishment of the cooperatives I have studied most closely: the Giovanni Falcone (2001) and the Paolo Borsellino (2006).[17] The fifteen original members of each were selected by the Consortium and Libera. The positions were publicly advertised, and the meritocracy-oriented selection process involved detailed scrutiny of the applicants' abilities, anti-mafia commitment, kinship connections and social contacts. Their ability to demonstrate proved 'absence of' kinship connections and social contacts 'with the mafia' was a prerequisite to people's recruitment. The cooperatives were not allowed to employ anyone who had any *mafioso* in their 'social circle', including kin (up to the third degree, inclusive), friends and affines (Bando 2001). Most of my informants were therefore either people selected in that process or others who joined later, replacing members who had left; they were recruited through connections they had among the existing cooperative workforce. In addition, there were workers on short-term contracts of seasonal employment, paid by the day ('daily workers'). By 2009, the number of people making a living directly through these two cooperatives was more than double the original thirty. By 2016, there were more than 50 members and 60 employees in 9 such cooperatives around the country.

Inherent in the original public competitions was a differentiated valuation according to skill and capability that would have a serious effect eventually on deep divisions between members' teams (see chapter 4). The two-tiered organisation of the co-ops is a leitmotif to which we shall return several times through the book's narrative, wherein differences between social class, urban and rural, household composition and gender would prove to be crucial in the social life of cooperatives and the very constitution of the anti-mafia at large.

'800 Barbetos'

San Giovanni was the ideal site for fieldwork: the most successful project of confiscation and redistribution of mafia land in Italy had taken place

there. It was also, as mentioned, the birthplace of Giovanni Barbeto, and still has a reputation for being one of the most mafia-influenced villages in Italy.[18] In a widely discussed and overquoted newspaper article, published right after Barbeto's arrest, a leading anti-mafia journalist called San Giovanni 'the village of the 800 Barbetos' (Fava 1996), meaning that Giovanni 'The Pig' Barbeto, a *mafioso* who, by his own account, had killed 'around 150 to 200 people' (Lodato 2006: 3), was the tip of the iceberg in a sea of social consensus and kinship links: the 'tradition' of San Giovanni was mafia connivance. 'It is not easy to construct normality in a village bloodied up by hatred,' claimed another article (Corrado 1997). Later, the same newspaper, *Corriere della Sera*, conducted a survey, in which allegedly 60 per cent of *sangiovannari*[19] said the mafia was 'a great thing' (Mignosi 1999).

That San Giovanni – a place with such heavily charged history – was targeted for 'anti-mafia change' had obviously considerable symbolic weight. The subsequent portrayal of how the 'village of the 800 Barbetos', virtually the epitome of mafia consensus, converted to become a village of 'anti-mafia heaven', as Libertà members claimed, was salient – especially given the cooperatives' recruitment policy for locals of excluding anyone who had even remote kinship, affinity or friendship links to mafia.

The mafia is not just an 'agent' or a 'structure' in the island; neither is it linked only to local traditions and popular imagination (Breschi 1986). In fact, this tradition is put to test by the anti-mafia: Spicco Vallata, and specifically San Giovanni, are cases where tradition is considered decidedly problematic. Often, in situations anthropologists study, 'tradition' is either treasured and change is seen as desirable in some ways but disruptive (of culture and social structure) or the anthropologist insists that traditions being abandoned have some value. In the case of a place where 'tradition' is so deeply associated with violence and criminality, this situation becomes almost impossible and actually creates an unusual, if uncomfortable ethnographic setting (see Gilsenan 1996; Herzfeld 1985; Taussig 2005, although in Sicily, violence was not salient anymore). Yet since the mafia is 'cultural' or 'social structural' in certain received ethnographic senses (see, e.g., Gambetta 2009; Pine 2012; Santino 2012), taking down 'its' *economic* power provoked a series of interesting implications that not only dispute a political economy framework but also challenge established ethnographic sensibilities regarding tradition.

This is also true for lay perceptions of the mafia phenomenon, in my experience. When I returned from the field, and throughout my development in the discipline, people I described my work to asked me whether the mafia was still strong in Sicily. People's interest revolved around

a thematic core, the island being the *locus classicus* of mafia, the 'heart' of the mafia 'problem' (Lane 2010). Not surprisingly, the film industry informed most people's views: many inquired whether I was a mafia movie enthusiast or how close movies' depictions of 'the mafia' were to reality.

Getting back from the field to London was telling: when I explained to acquaintances (including Italians) that my research was on 'the anti-mafia', not the mafia, most reacted with mixed feelings of disappointment and enthusiasm. For many, this sounded more intriguing than the mafia itself, connoting heroism and commitment for the people involved. Interestingly, gendered frameworks often informed these discussions. Many assumed that anti-mafia activists were 'brave men' and asked me about how successful 'the anti-mafia' had been. However, rather than uncritically accept the claim that 'anti-mafia' equals 'change', I examine how activities of people involved in the cooperatives transform meanings of land, labour and discourse, while at the same time reproducing established practices and allowing for continuations with past relationships (Sorge 2015).

My research took place throughout the whole of 2009. A pre-doctoral research stay in Sicily lasted six months, from January to July 2007. Confiscations appeared as the only type of instance where an initiative against the mafia had produced changes in Sicilians' livelihoods and anti-mafia activism yielded income. Having interviewed journalists, judges, police officers and NGO activists, I came to the provisional conclusion that mobilisation around anti-mafia initiatives was manifested as a 'sense of civic duty'. Different research interlocutors[20] answered both 'Why take action against the mafia?' and 'What changes has opposing the mafia instigated to your life?' by stating, 'Being a good citizen'.[21] Most thought an 'anti-mafia San Giovanni' was a laughable image, due precisely to the village's reputation as a 'traditionally mafia' place; it was for this reason that San Giovanni cooperatives appeared as the ideal site for participant observation around people actively contesting the mafia while making a living.

San Giovanni was hailed by Libertà agents I spoke with as a village whose land was 'liberated from the mafia', an idea also promoted by the Consortium (Focus 2012). During harvest, volunteers from northern Italy visited San Giovanni through Libertà-organised summer camps to help the cooperatives with agricultural work; the public image the place had acquired made it all the more appealing. After I visited the village a few times and contacted people from the cooperatives, I decided to move to San Giovanni. Although many cooperative members (the administra-

Illustration 1.1: The view from the balcony of my apartment: *via Porta Palermo*.

tors) hailed from Palermo and lived in the city, commuting thirty-one kilometres to San Giovanni to work, it was in San Giovanni where mass confiscations of mafia leaders' landed property had taken place and where the seat of the Consortium was located.

I asked Checco, the Falcone cooperative's 'PR', to help me move to the village. He explained that several journalists from Italy and abroad had visited to write about the anti-mafia experience there.[22] A journalist himself, he admitted he could not understand why I had to spend a year there to get a grasp of the situation. Nevertheless, he introduced me to *signor* Pippo Pitrè, then a fifty-eight-year-old day worker from the Falcone and ex-member of the Borsellino cooperative, and asked him to help me out. I took up permanent residence in Pippo's empty apartment in the village, paying him rent, and he became a key informant. He and his family had moved to another house, two kilometres outside the village, in 2007.

The official population of San Giovanni is 8,349 people (ISTAT 2011), although most locals insisted that the number of permanent residents was four thousand at best. The village was founded as San Giovanni dei Mortilli at the foot of the Mato Hill in 1779, built according to the needs of the historical specifics of the land tenure system at the time (latifundism[24]), hosting the largest number of people in the smallest possible space. Anthropologists have described the inland Sicilian 'agrotown' as a technology of densely populated settlement that reflected the needs of

the latifundist system (Schneider and Schneider 1976: 34; Blok 1974: 47). Blok argues these 'peasant agglomerations' are characteristic of southern Italy generally (1969; also in 2000: 136–54).

Interestingly, San Giovanni's history was born out of a confiscation: the valley's *feudi* belonged to the Jesuit College of Trapani (Belli 1934) (their names still demarcate land territories today: Dammusi, Mortilli, Signora). In 1776, the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies ordered the expulsion of the Jesuits, and the Marquis of Sambuca, a member of the Sicilian nobility, acquired their land (Comune di San Giuseppe Jato 2008). He was issued a license to build a settlement for the agrarian workforce of his latifundio. The nobleman's settlement attracted *braccianti* (agrarian workers) from neighbouring villages; the site's position on a route between southern Sicily and Palermo led to its rapid development (Comune 2009). In 1820, the village population was more than five thousand. A part of the hill collapsed in 1838, prompting a reshuffling in settlement and the construction of the adjunct village of San Turiddu (today's official population: 5,016, [ISTAT 2011]), built to house San Giovanni's homeless population.

Locals called San Giovanni '*un paese*', a village – although the term could also be translated as small town. There were hardly any public spaces; the *villetta,* however – a widening of the vibrant Palermo road (*via Palermo*) – formed an unofficial square; its five *bar* (cafés) were packed with teenagers on weekend evenings. The building where I lived was well situated in the thick of things, close to the *villetta*. Opposite the apartment was the Billiards café, which, I soon noticed, was popular with *mafiosi*. The balcony looked out onto a panorama of the Mato Valley: vineyards as far as the eye could see. The size of the apartment was inconvenient (two hundred square metres, when I only used a couple of rooms), but, as it was very close to the village centre and the cooperatives' offices, I found it ideal from the start.

The Falcone and Borsellino anti-mafia cooperatives shared the same offices; after Marafusa (the giant winemaker of the area), they were the most widely advertised enterprises of the village. Yet, their offices were difficult to find. On *via* Palermo westwards towards the *bar* Virilia, located at the edge of the village, the cooperatives' offices are ungracefully located behind a petrol station. This was where the cooperative administrators worked, mostly young Palermitans. They were unimpressed by San Giovanni. Overlooking the Mato Valley, the village's panoramas were charming, but cooperative members almost unanimously felt the village itself was dreadful. Every morning they had to travel the thirty-one kilometres from Palermo along a highway they described as a dire construction financed by a 1980s money-laundering scheme for the profits

Illustration 1.2: Detail of the *viletta*: a monument.

of international heroin trafficking in which San Giovanni *mafiosi* were central players.

There were many signs of local mafia presence, which Palermitan administrators complained about. For lack of plaster, the building where I stayed, as well as most of the surrounding apartment blocks, showed bare red brick. Neighbours were proud to emphasise that 'in a peasant community like ours, there is not much need for comfort'. Some argued that the unattractive brickwork facing the main streets of the village indicated 'what it meant to be a peasant' and, indeed, to come 'from a village with a mafia past'. I associated the shabbiness with the mafia's logic of contempt for conspicuous consumption (Arlacchi 1986: 23). When

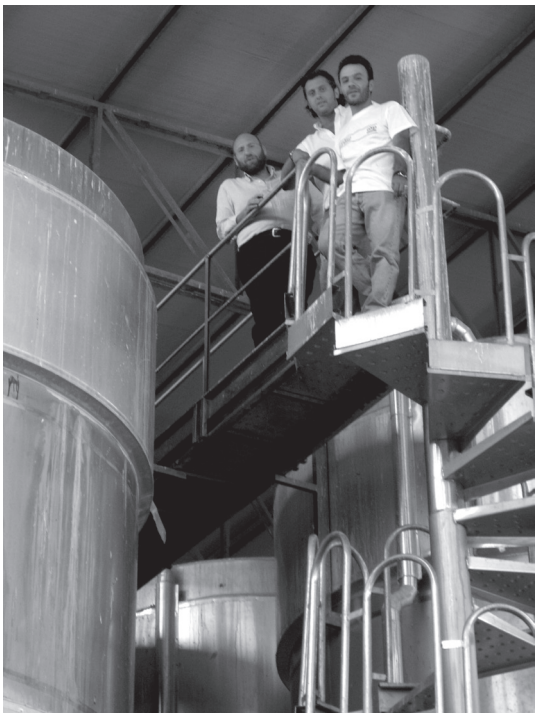

Illustration 1.3: The mayor of a local village alongside two members of Lavoro e Altro, in a confiscated winery.

Illustration 1.4: The entrance to the shared offices of the Falcone and Borsellino cooperatives. Notice the humble buildings; the red door is a warehouse; the cooperatives' offices were on the first floor; notice the red banner welcoming the 'E!state liberi' of volunteer labourers in the confiscated fields. The banner made the offices quite conspicuous, unlike most of the year.

Illustration 1.5: The highway, with San Giovanni on the right; above the village, notice the Mato Hill.

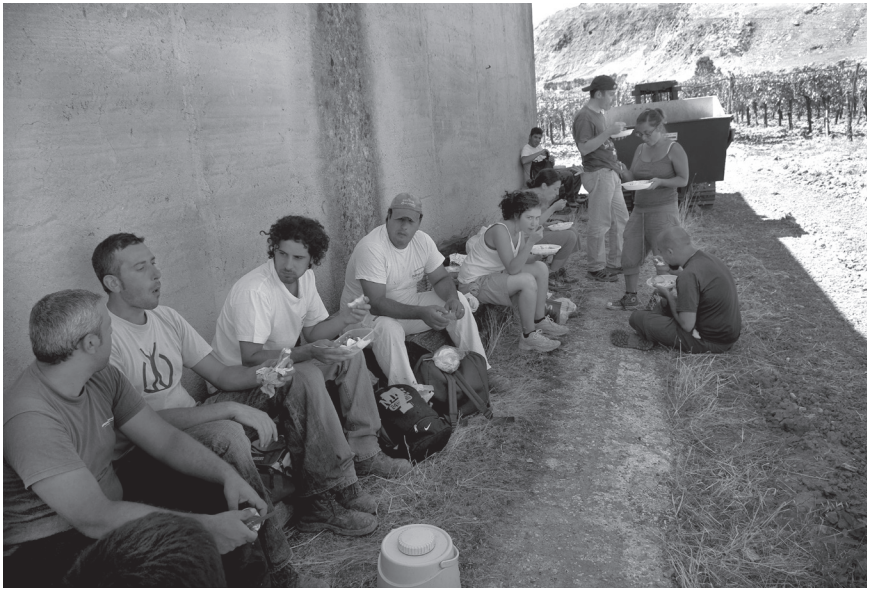

Illustration 1.6: Member-workers (the four men in the foreground) and volunteers (the younger people in the background) of the Borsellino during lunch break in the vineyards of Castello, during harvest, in August. At the front: Niki, Peppe, Ciccio and Donato. Photo by Francisco Calafate.

Illustration 1.7: Members of the Lavoro e Altro co-op during a lunch break, while they set up the co-op's agriturismo. The two workers at the front are wearing caps of the CGIL union. Photo by Diego Orlando.

I started visiting local homes, invited by friends, housewives were happy to show off shiny new pieces of cutlery or furniture but shrugged when questioned about the lack of plaster on their house's outfacing walls, often responding, 'It is better to enjoy some luxury without people knowing your riches', or, 'Better to show you are a pauper while you actually reign'. A neighbour told me a local adage popularised by *mafiosi* to explain the apparently anti-consumerist local ethos: *megghiu cummannari chi futtiri* (it's better to command than to fuck).[25]

Among the Anti-mafia

Research among people struggling against the mafia posed a number of ethical issues before, during and after fieldwork. I originally handed a personal declaration to the three cooperatives' presidents, stating that all information gathered was to be totally confidential, masked behind careful layers of anonymity in my book and in any articles that would stem from my research. To the best of my abilities, I gave the same assurance, orally,

the first time I came in contact with someone I interviewed. My emphasis on how I had to change all names of people, places and organisations, however, provoked curiosity rather than ease among many interlocutors.

In fact, it was in relation to confidentiality that I first glimpsed how the two-tiered organisation of the cooperatives reflected differentiated ethics and moralities. Seeking to organise my methodology to accommodate the intricacies of the cooperatives' division of labour in terms of ethics required some telling manoeuvres. Methods and argumentation converge in anthropological endeavour, where theory stems directly from the paradigms of the people one works with. The administration members could not grasp why I wanted to be so 'secretive' when their remit was all about publicity and transparency. Some explained to me that not anonymising posed no dangers to them, as they had already been exposed quite extensively to the local society, and even on a national scale. In fact, some saw my research as another channel of publicity. For them, publicly 'naming' *mafiosi* as well as publicising names of anti-mafia activists was part of their anti-mafia activism.

The co-ops' manual workforce, on the other hand, living in Spicco Vallata, took a different stance. They were careful to remind me that what they shared with me could be publicised 'anywhere I wanted but Sicily'. Tano, for instance, told me that 'as long as it remains in the limits of my village and my island, I want you to be cautious'. I followed this advice and managed to act according to the needs of different informants. These contradictions posed severe ethical issues for my research but I followed the confidentiality protocols suggested for anthropological fieldwork, not revealing interlocutors' identities and protecting them from each other (Caplan 2003; Edel and Edel 2000). This was particularly significant, given that I met a few *mafiosi* while doing fieldwork whose names I also altered for the book.

People's ideas on safety thus echoed the cooperatives' internal division between the administration/office-based/Palermitan team and the agricultural/fields-based/local team. As I was not a local, most villagers who were not connected to the cooperatives thought I was a new member of a cooperative's administration team. My first impression was that this could entail risks. Initially, feeling in danger was a prominent emotional state for me: I spent the first months of fieldwork worrying about mafia intimidation, always carrying with me a USB with all my notes, naively fearing that someone would break into my house.

As with confidentiality, and in relation to it, I initially projected ideas of safety onto my relationships with locals. After I had spent a few months getting into the fieldwork process, the more I acknowledged how 'mafia'

and anti-mafia were interwoven in San Giovanni, the more I realised that my disquiet was groundless: there was no reason to believe that local *mafiosi* wished to harm me, and it was safe to assume they had no real strategic interest to harm my interlocutors. Apart from alleged arsons in an olive tree grove and a wheat field, there had been hardly any violent or threatening activities against cooperative members.

The effects of certain reflexivities, triggered by my interaction with locals, touched on issues of research positionality. The much-discussed issue of the anthropological researcher's 'privileged' position vis-à-vis their research participants only partly applied to my case. My physical features, knowledge of Italian popular culture and literature,[26] non-suggestive accent and relative experience in agrarian work even led many locals, when meeting me for the first time, to treat me as a Sicilian visitor to the area. My acquired capacity in the Sicilian dialect, dubbed a language in itself by most locals, was also an asset – although when a conversation moved from Italian to Sicilian, new interlocutors would immediately realise I was not from the island, which then often became the object of jokes and sarcasm.[27] My degree of familiarity shaped most of my initial interactions with interlocutors, including cases where some informants joked that I must have Sicilian origins and even felt that my being Greek confirmed this. While appreciating my facility in relevant matters, interlocutors eagerly insisted on the uniqueness of Sicily as a cultural hybrid formed of centuries-old distillations of cultures. However, for most, 'the Hellenic aspect' shone above other facets: Sicilians were 'Greeks who had become Italians' one woman told me.

These (perhaps essentialist) accounts worked in most cases to my benefit, as I gained people's trust, which allowed me access to their lived spaces. Many locals were intrigued by the presence of 'the Greek' among them, and some identified similarities between Sicily and Greece: the two regions were, allegedly, 'insular', relatively impoverished and 'corrupt' peripheries of a nonetheless historically rich European 'South'. Although the premises of this relationship were slippery and sometimes uncomfortable, partially accepting these labels won the trust of many people, as they saw in me someone from a background no more privileged than theirs, especially when I explained that I was raised in a rural area where viticulure[28] was the way most people made their living. During participant observation in the vineyards, this personal background was particularly appreciated by co-workers.

The gendered aspect of this assimilation, however, had counter-productive effects; despite (or possibly because) I looked like many locals, my status as an unmarried young man in the village did not help in

gaining access to households where young women lived. This problem was somewhat alleviated with time, especially when a female friend visited me in the field. This gave me the reputation of being engaged, which I often did not refute when asked. Nevertheless, I did not manage to enter the homes of all my interlocutors. This biased my research, as the data gathered from spending time with female research participants, usually housewives, could have been richer and wider otherwise.[29]

These issues also conditioned my ways of reciprocating towards my research participants, to bring back to them a sense of the research achievements and returning some of their trust. Cigarettes and distilled liquor from Greece became popular among agrarian workers of the cooperatives. When I had to meet people outside the work context but, for reasons mentioned above, not in their homes, I made sure I treated them to drinks or a meal, although this proved, in a couple of cases, to violate their own principles of hospitality, which I eventually opted to prioritise. Another contribution I managed to offer was English lessons to some co-op members, particularly the president of the Falcone cooperative, Luca. He enthusiastically asked me to help him, as he thought English skills were valuable for the cooperative's development now that they had started, in a modest way, to export to niche markets in Germany. These intensive language classes helped create a bond early on. Some cooperative members commented that, while as a researcher, I aimed to being 'taught' by Luca, I ended up teaching him: this reciprocity reinforced the inter-subjectivity of the ethnographic experience.

It is important to note that most interlocutors saw my presence in the village as a 'success of the anti-mafia'. Fifteen years before the time of fieldwork, I was told, this research would have been impossible, as I probably would have been assassinated. I am aware that this was proof, for many people, of the change the cooperatives had brought about. In this respect at least, intentions and outcomes of action were identical – like an unwitted personal becoming. Peppe, a young research interlocutor, insightfully remarked that '*you* are the answer to your research question,' meaning that my very safe presence in the field was already proof that Sicily had changed immensely. This book describes, analyses and problematises this change.

NOTES

1. The terms 'cooperationism' and 'cooperatism' are also used; see for instance Fournier's biography of Mauss as a 'co-operator' (2006: 107–10). I use the term 'cooperativism' to denote a set of principles that cooperative members follow.

2. As discussed later, cooperativism is either producer-based, where autonomous peasants cooperate, or worker-based, where people co-own land or cultivate land owned by the state, as in the anti-mafia cooperatives. A 'cooperative' is thus an association around which production and work is organised as the co-op law implies: all working participants are equal members, with a vote in the annual General Assembly; profits are reinvested within the activities of the association, income generated for members is relatively horizontal, and divisions of labour are aimed to be set at a minimum. Co-ops in Italy, like in many other countries, are integrated in cooperative banking schemes, where they derive favorable credit. An agricultural cooperative is defined under the Italian land reform laws as having at least nine members.
3. General Alberto Dalla Chiesa was a *prefetto* in Palermo, in effect the general officer of the *Carabinieri* (the military police, one of the three police forces of Italy, and active in hunting *mafiosi*) in Sicily. The *prefetto* coordinates the administrative actions of the state in the territory; he has special powers on police, *Carabinieri* and other state forces, and he coordinates them in particular problematic situations, during natural disasters, and in matters concerning the public order and 'civil protection'. Dalla Chiesa, who was general of the *Carabinieri* and had been successful in the struggle against terrorism, was sent for this reason to Sicily as *prefetto*, to coordinate the struggle against mafia. Shortly before his assassination he had been appointed as a 'super-prefect' to lead all of the police and military anti-mafia efforts in Sicily. Dalla Chiesa was killed in Palermo in 1982, only one hundred days after he had taken office; his legacy is still debated in Italy, partly because he had played a key role in curbing the Red Brigades in the north, when he served as *Carabiniere* general in Torino, yet failed to crush Cosa Nostra (N. Dalla Chiesa 2007; Stille 1995: 61). Dalla Chiesa is revered by people in the anti-mafia cooperatives, who often quote him.
4. For a start, current scholarship of work often omits a discussion of co-operatives altogether. In the SAGE handbook of work and employment (2015) there is no chapter dedicated to co-ops, in 530 pages.
5. It has been said that 'the mafia kills in the way a state does; it does not murder; it executes' (Dickie 2004: 97).
6. Legally, a 'straw person' (*prestanome*) is a person who does not intend to have a genuine beneficial interest in a property but to whom such property is nevertheless conveyed, in order to facilitate a more complicated transaction at law (in this case, retaining the plots' ownership). In Spicco Vallata, such people were often victims of mafia intimidation but equally often were mafia affiliates. The issue of nominal landownership is complex, as it regards the visibility of *mafiosi* vis-à-vis the state. In terms of criminal procedure, once an asset is proved to be directly or indirectly controlled by a *mafioso*, it becomes confiscated, despite its nominal status. This is not to be confused, however, with the practice of registering wives as nominal landowners (explored in chapter 7) or *mafiosi* wives actually owning plots acquired from inheritance; in cases such as these, the plots are legally glossed as *familiari* and are not confiscated (chapter 9).
7. The PCI (Communist Party) became, at the time of La Torre, the largest Western communist party (Shore 1990). The DC (Christian Democracy) was

the historical centre-right party of Italy, which single-handedly governed the country from the mid-1940s to the mid-1980s (regarding party politics of the period, see Ginsborg 2003a: 141–85).

8. Libertà is an 'umbrella NGO', the largest in Italy, to which 1,500 organisations adhere. There is a Libertà branch in fifty Italian cities. It caters for 'the anti-mafia struggle', promoting 'the restitution of land' (Cooperare 2009) and 'the eradication of mafias from Italian social life' (Libera 2009a: 12).
9. Presenting the views of state institutions and Libertà, in order to elucidate the reasoning behind confiscations and cooperatives, I quote from a few selected sources (as the available material is enormous), including websites, leaflets, posters, booklets, press releases and conference papers on 'the anti-mafia' that I followed. I focus on three main sources: a collaborative book of the Ministry of Interior, called *L'uso sociale dei beni confiscati* (The social use of confiscated assets), edited by two key Libertà administrators (Frigerio and Pati 2006)); the website of the Consortium, the state apparatus responsible for the allocation of assets to cooperatives in Spicco Vallata, discussed later in this chapter (Focus 2001) as well as its publication *Focus*; and finally, Libertà's leaflets, newsletters, the magazine bearing its name and its website (Libera: 2009, as these unsigned documents represent the NGO at large). All of the above are cited as primary sources.
10. Specifically the *Agenzia Nazionale per L'Amministrazione e La Destinazione Dei Beni Sequestrati e Confiscati alla Criminalità Organizzata* (National Agency for Assets Seized and Confiscated from Organised Crime).
11. These ideas reflect broader tendencies in legal theory in Italy and can be seen in the light of Carl Schmitt's jural theory of the 'state of exception', according to which the sovereign is 'he' who decides in exceptional situations (2008). Hence the Italian state justifies its toughened criminal procedure (Ingroia 2009) as 'extraordinary measures' required counteracting the de-legitimisation of the state's monopoly of violence by the mafia, even incorporating values bordering on being undemocratic and in potential violation of the European Convention on Human Rights, chapter 6. Current Italian theorists who find kinship with Schmitt's theorem include Giorgio Agamben (2005): his figure of the '*homo sacer*', set inside/outside the conventional realm of the law in a permanent state of exception, has been dominant in recent social science, impacting on anthropology as well. Schneider and Schneider (2002a) also discuss aspects of this problematic of 'emergency' in anti-mafia legislation.
12. The means of production (land and machinery) of the anti-mafia cooperatives are owned by the state: this also refers to the confiscated Cento winery where vinification and bottling takes place. Part of the funding for the renovation of the Cento came from the European Union's PON-5 programme to assist development and security against illegality. The cooperatives retain the total control of the use-value (legally: usufruct) of the assets nevertheless.
13. It should be noted that in this work the idea of clanship is emic to Sicily. For Morgan and Engels, before the introduction of private property and the construction of the familial unit around it, the basic structure of kinship was the matrilineal clan. The work of Goody (1976; 1983; 2000) and Tillion (1983) informs my own argument on 'clan' land tenure and the state policy

to tackle it, as it forms analogies with mafia and the anti-mafia confiscations. Clanship has a different meaning in Goody's discussion of landed property and family (1983). In Spicco Vallata, it is dramatically different, linked to mafia. Conversely, 'family', a unit based around the household, is linked with transmission of property matrilineally or directly to women, through the process Goody called diverging devolution (1983). Blok notes how blood imagery is evoked in Sicily to constitute mafia, whose main unit is 'the family' (2000: 87–89). In my ethnography, 'clan' rather than 'family' is the state and mass-media kinship metaphor to identify a mafia coalition.

14. Arci, an openly leftist association, is the largest politicised association in Italy. The cooperative Lavoro e Altro was intricately linked with the Arci branch of Palermo, which was particularly active in the 'anti-mafia struggle', as well as in issues of anti-racism, anti-sexism and environmental activism. Arci was openly critical of Libertà's non-political view of the anti-mafia movement.
15. The Falcone, Borsellino and Liberanima cooperatives were guided by Libertà's Palermo. There were Libertà members in the administration teams of both cooperatives.
16. Marx's ideas on primitive accumulation are enlightening in terms of his critique of property in *Capital* (1990: 877–879) as a hub of historical social relations obscuring processes of violence: state or private force. Arlacchi argues extensively on the theme of 'mafia primitive capital accumulation' (Arlacchi 1986; Cacciola 1984).
17. Giovanni Falcone was the magistrate/anti-mafia expert who prosecuted Cosa Nostra for a decade until the Spicco Vallata mafia executed him in 1992. Paolo Borsellino died in a mafia-caused explosion one hundred days later.
18. As mentioned earlier, in 1992, Barbeto killed Giovanni Falcone, amongst 150–200 other people. In 1995, he also strangled and melted in acid Giovanni Di Matteo, a thirteen-year-old child, the son of a rival *mafioso* (Lodato 1999). These atrocities gave the place its bad reputation. Barbeto lived almost all his life in San Giovanni. His nicknames speak for his fierce activity: '*u verru*' (the pig) and '*u scanacristiani*' (the strangler).
19. This colloquial word is the demonym used for people from San Giovanni.
20. I shall use the terms 'informants', 'interlocutors' and 'research participants' interchangeably. My preferred term is the latter but it was not applicable in all instances. Especially people close to mafia would adamantly refuse the idea that they were 'interlocuting' with me, so I am respecting their idea by opting for 'informants', a term whose uni-directness might be more appropriate in their case.
21. Di Maggio (2009) traces this through organised questionnaires, using categories such as 'anti-mafia commitment', 'liberation', and 'change' in order to map what motivated people to apply for a job in the cooperatives.
22. During fieldwork I witnessed visits by journalists from across the board and around the world who wanted to interview anti-mafia cooperative members: the Italian *National Geographic*, a glossy magazine from Germany, the *Guardian*, and even a culinary review from Japan. Titles they published describing the case included words such as 'revolution', 'heroes' and 'change'. Some reporters expressed distress, such as the *Daily Telegraph*'s envoy: 'It was

heart-warming to see this brave soul so commemorated, but as we wandered the vines and [Checco] spoke of 'localism' and the measures necessary to prevent the Mafia themselves penetrating the committees set up to manage the confiscated land, I couldn't help partaking of that fatalism which so many have seen as intrinsic to the Sicilian character . . .' (Self 2009). The *Guardian* underlines continuities in the anti-mafia movement: 'The estate is run by the Borsellino co-operative . . . "So many courageous men lost their lives in the fight against Cosa Nostra," said [Checco] as we walked through the fields. "Now, we, the new generation, are finally able to finish the work that they so bravely began"' (Rafanelli 2008).

23. All photos, unless otherwise stated, are by the author.
24. Latifundism, a capitalist type of estate-based agrarian political economy (Schneider and Schneider 1976: 7; see also Petrusewicz 1996).
25. The adage implies that pleasure comes from controlling people, rather than enjoying material luxuries. Arlacchi also notes the lack of conspicuous consumption among Sicilian *mafiosi*, unlike, for example, Neapolitan *cammoristi* (1986; 1993; 2010).
26. My stay as an Erasmus exchange student during 2002 and previous visits to Sicily had familiarised me with such particularities of life, ranging from local *trattorie* to names of mafia clans, while my engagement with translations of contemporary Italian poetry added an insight into a field many people appreciated. Villagers were often eager to discuss anything from D'Annunzio's verse to perceptions of Berlusconi abroad.
27. It is worth noting that the bilingual environment of my research implied different, class-informed registers of language: the Palermitan administrators spoke 'proper' Italian, whilst the local workers often spoke in dialect. I acknowledge this in my translations, opting for colloquial words to transmit some of the 'colour' of Sicilian and also to underline how language reflects class in cooperatives.
28. The term viticulture will be used throughout this book to describe agricultural based on vineyards.
29. Women, in San Giovanni and Spicco Vallata at large, rarely work outside the household, and most definitely never in the fields, as I discuss in chapters 6 and 7. Gendered issues defined the local political economy in and around the cooperatives; drawing from the often gender-informed data, I aim to elucidate this facet of people's livelihoods in the ethnography.

Chapter 2

The Anthropology of Co-ops, the Mafia and the Sicilian Lens

The anti-mafia cooperatives have emerged in a very specific configuration of tensions between state and mafia power. The Sicilian material provides a lens for a scholarly inquiry of cooperatives due to the specific inherent contradictions of the anti-mafia experience on the basis of which Sicilian co-ops have been established. This is a case that underscores more tangibly broader tensions felt across the board in cooperative endeavours almost everywhere. In Sicily, the enclave format that co-ops acquire is evident: cooperatives operate as protective and protected shells in a shared environment with a number of local obligations. They are in principle withdrawn but in actual fact present in that ambience, and the mafia is not unrelated to some of the social commitments of co-op members.

The next chapter will locate the historical specificity of the anti-mafia cooperatives' rise in terms of the shift in state policy towards radical anti-mafia intervention in the early to mid-1990s, which underlies the specifics of this unique cooperativist endeavour. For now – albeit through a somewhat oblique approach – I shall try to elucidate the development of mafia and the political counter-responses to it, which have taken a variety of forms, including, but by no means limited to, the burst of anti-mafia activism in the 1990s. But before I enter that debate, a note on the mafia is due.

A History of Relations: Mafia, Silence and Violence

Mafia, Sicily's 'most enduring problem' (Turone 2008: 36), has provided a sociological analogy for organised crime elsewhere, in places as diverse as Russia or Hong Kong or Korea (Volkov 2002; Glenny 2009; Varese 2011; cf Schneider 2002). Mafia and Sicily, by extension, provided a metaphoric stage for the exploration of what has been seen as offshoot phenomena (Sciascia 1979), such as criminal brotherhoods (Dickie 2013). This is an interesting analytical oxymoron: on the one hand, there is a good deal of exoticism built into this picture in terms of blood metaphors and the associated binding relations at home (Sicily) that positions the island in

the grand narrative of passé honour and shame exegeses. On the other, there is the problem of rushing to apply codes and a history of political economy to places immensely different from Sicily. While addressing the latter problem would extend beyond the scope of this book, the former can be tackled by spending some time to scrutinise what in my view are some of the most stimulating ideas on contemporary Sicily.

The rigidity of analyses viewing mafia as 'blood familism' in an array of kinship metaphors is still part of the scholarly routine partly because the regional familialist discussion has been at the centre of certain analyses of mafia, including those of anti-mafia magistrates (Falcone 1993). A Siculo-pessimism, to coin a term recalling Afro-pessimism, echoes the fatalistic views of many native authors. Classic Sicilian authors present fatalistic, albeit complex, views of the island population's attitudes to legality and organised crime. Giovanni Falcone, the significant state prosecutor of the mafia, felt he was 'an instrument of the State in a *terra infidelium*' (1993: 9), adding that 'the culture of death does not solely belong to the mafia: all of Sicily is impregnated with it' (1993: 73). Literary works also associate Sicily with impeded social change and inertia, often resorting to essentialisms. Sciascia (1996) saw the playwright Pirandello's sense of the material world as a pseudoreality obfuscating true relations (an idea commonly known as 'pirandelism'), and 'pirandelism' as a metaphor for Sicily.

Fighting against a straw man of static 'familism' to promote civic trust as a replacement for familial loyalty (and, almost by immediate association, mafia) has dominated much of the literature on Italy, and indeed Sicily, and its mafia issue (Gambetta 1996; Gunnarson 2008). Italian sociologists have even suggested the 'return of amoral familism' in Sicily (Principato and Dino 1997). State agents also employ ideas about 'the mafia mentality "inside" the [southern Italian] family' (Jamieson 2000: 156–57). Historians, in accounting for change, have challenged (Bell 2007) the 'honour' idea as a distinctive mafia tradition (Calderone and Arlacchi 1993; Gilmore 1987). And, of course, related to the critique of assumptions about the persistence of an immobile, change-resistant world of 'tradition', anthropologists have also questioned the essentialisation of Sicily and the South in much debate (Blim 1998; Saunders 1998; cf. Whyte 1944).

In Sicily, life with and around the mafia is, for many, an everyday reality; mafia's *omertà* is fused and shared in wider settings than the Cosa Nostra echelons (Di Bella 2011). While secrecy binds together other kinds of brotherhoods in the Italian and European context at large (Mamhood 2013), the specifics of omertà have a particular history and are indeed

associated with a sense of personhood that is at the root of our anthropological priorities in terms of mafia (Rakopoulos 2017c). The intellectual project of unpacking the mafia's mystique can be traced to the history of the first serious anthropological studies on the phenomenon, notably the ethnographic work of Anton Blok and, although in passing, Jane and Peter Schneider. Both approaches, parallel but also inter-complementary, have proposed dynamic historical explanatory schemes that account for continuity and change in ways that re-situate perceived ideas of tradition. Blok (1974) focused attention on configurations of different levels of power, while Schneider and Schneider called upon world-systems theory to understand the mafia as itself undergoing a constant 'transformative experience' (Schneider and Schneider 1976; 1999; cf Dino 2002 and Wallerstein 1974). They meanwhile focused on 'cultural codes' where the meaning of change is figured in relation to (not temporal but social) continuities in values (1976: 81). In this way, these approaches have formed a sort of intellectual diarchy, one approach drawing on the political and power side of things, while the other more attentive to political economy processes. I draw on both these paradigms due to their enduring relevance, as well as on some Italian sociologists and historians' work. The anthropology of the mafia, though much smaller in scope than sociological accounts (Santoro 2011), is revealing for the precious socio-cultural nuances needed to conceptualise the phenomenon, evident in this ethnography as well.

For instance, I take up Schneider and Schneider's cultural codes idea not only to denote continuities of local codes with *anti-mafia* rather than mafia values but also to position certain local practices in the context of dynamic activities. I also build on the Schneiders' use of the notion of 'broker capitalism' (1976: 160) to explore the dual position of Spicco Vallata *mafiosi* as longstanding patrons and subsequently brokers in Sicilian cooperativism. As it has been recently pointed out, both Blok and the Schneiders saw mafia not as 'a state of exception [but] as a normalised system of violent capitalist accumulation' (Watts 2016: 76n15).

In this vein, historians and anthropologists have also argued that the mafia rose through Sicily's dislocated route towards modernisation (Li Causi 1985; Blok 2000; Schneider and Schneider 2003; Dickie 2004; Lupo 1993; 2011; 2015). This stance positions the organisation in a broader, global network of power, deterritorialising it, in a sense. Its entrepreneurial spirit should not be understood as a break with 'tradition' and local codes that vary from place to place; indeed, who negotiates and promotes 'tradition' can be surprising (cf Sorge 2008). While racketeering is mafia's main source of income in Palermo, where an esti-

mated 80 per cent of small businesses pay the organisation a monthly *pizzo,* San Giovanni's local *mafiosi* had never really imposed a full-on racketeering strategy. (Controlling local territory in San Giovanni, as evidenced in this book, has drawn more on interpersonal dependencies of local power.) In the same time, the insight on mafia and modernisation continues to be a useful conceptual framework in the context of the island's ongoing experience of continual change under anti-mafia and post-mafia influence (Davis 1996; Schneider and Schneider 2006; Rakopoulos 2014a).

We should note the consistency of the mafia's power project with broader workings of capitalism at large, further decolonising the mafia (Schneider and Schneider 2011). The Schneiders' long-standing engagement with Sicily and mafia has evolved from an initial Hobsbawmian rebel-focusing idea to one that, to an extent, adds nuances to political economists' ideas on mafias as

> 'industries of protection.' Although this position remains open to debate, particularly with regard to the interplay of political and economic elements, it opens the door to conceptualising the mafia as a normal facet of capitalism, no more outside its political economy than the other capitalisms to which we add such qualifiers as 'merchant,' 'industrial,' 'finance,' 'proto,' or 'crony.' (Schneider and Schneider 2004: 18)

In this move, the scholarly stance towards *mafiosi* gradually shifted overall. The mafia were considered primitive rural rebels in the 1960s (Hobsbawm 1963: 30–56), an idea that interlocks with Eric Wolf's writings on irregular peasant revolts (1969). The intellectual inquiry changed since, but when this exact 'shift' took place on the ground would be harder to define. Indeed, it is debatable if there was ever a real shift into a 'mafia spirit of capitalism' (Arlacchi 1982) on the ground, in terms of the actual mafia doings, amidst the opaque ocean of the mysterious ways of the 'logic of capital[1]' (cf. Harvey 2011). The 1980s' escalation of heroin trafficking and violent feuds might provide a starting point to what is now understood as the emerging paradigm of seeing mafia and capitalism together. But what we do know for sure is that the mafia's past is not pre-modern and archaic. The mafia has been *part* of modernisation, not a hindrance to it, investing capital, capitalising and indeed influencing, for instance, regional policies and institutional changes, such as the 1950s agrarian reform (see chapter 3; an interesting comparative exercise is to think back to the Mexican reform, as per Gledhill 1991; Nuijten 2003).

The historian Salvatore Lupo disagrees with Arlacchi's emphasis on a sudden mafia modernisation, noting that *mafiosi* were active members

of the Sicilian bourgeoisie, leading cosmopolitan lifestyles. Telling is the story of Don Calò Vizzini, who reportedly took part in international meetings of the sulphur mine owners' association in London in the 1920s (Lupo 2011: 8), while *mafiosi*

> were organisers of cooperatives and won much of their power base by serving as intermediaries in the transfer of land from the large landowners to the peasants and therefore by placing themselves firmly astride the collective movements precisely in the post-war years following the first and second world war. . . . They played a role that could not be imagined outside of the great political and social modernisation processes of the twentieth century. (2011: 9)

The mafia is modern, flexible and even aware of cooperativist paths to development (Rakopoulos 2017b). Santino tackles what he characterises the 'pseudo-dilemma' of Cosa Nostra's 'unicity' or 'plurality' (whether it is a monolithic organisation or a network), seeing these as integrated concepts (2007: 13). Movement of capital, resources and people constructs this integration across organisations and borders, as the mafia's internal centralisation and external fluidity is a relational networking system (Armao 2009: 47). Precisely seeing it as relational helps to demystify its allure and to grasp it beyond stereotypes of ancestral violence (Dickie 1999; Mangiameli 2000; cf. Gilsenan 1996).

Having said that, entrepreneurship thoroughly positions the organisation within the workings of modern phenomena. Many contemporary authors, then, refuse the depiction of mafia as a symptomatic survival of a 'traditional' past, proposing, rather, that the mafia bourgeoisie integrated Sicilian capitalism into world markets – for example, the rich *Conca d'Oro* was the mafia's cradle in the late nineteenth century (Dickie 2004: 102–6; Santino 1995; 2007). Lupo goes further, dissociating his position from that of Arlacchi to reject the 'archaic/entrepreneurial', old mafia/new mafia divide itself as a

> naïve, all-inclusive model of modernisation [that] relegates culture, clientele and blood family ties to the traditional world, placing in the world of the present 'impersonal organisation', while instead the problem lies in understanding the complex interactions that exist, past and present, between the former elements and the latter institution. (2011: 23)

Following this idea, the anthropological concern of this book shows how kinship codes and strategies, for instance, can lock horns with novel cooperative institutions or with land property, with contradictory results in mafia and anti-mafia settings. By most accounts today, therefore, the organisation, due to the internal shifts of power and recurrence

to violence, has been gradually repositioned in the context of intricate capitalist processes, where territorial control remains central (like elsewhere in southern Italy, as per Pine 2012). I treat this stance as a vantage point from which we can appreciate the workings of mafia around the anti-mafia cooperatives and in Sicilian society at large. Alongside it, the anthropological encounter would treat the term 'mafia' as descriptive of both a structured organisation and of a hub of networks that pursues intimidatory activity by controlling a territory, in other words drawing on a degree of social consensus in a specific locality. Beyond the essentialisms of the '800 Barbetos', San Giovanni provides an excellent example of that form of actual territorial control (*controllo di territorio*, Santino 2007), a central notion of mafia dominance, often expressed through racketeering and intimidation. In San Giovanni, however, it meant a very low presence of racketeeting in a tightly knit community of shared interests between mafia and non-mafia individuals. It also meant historical fluctuations in terms of the mafia's strategic use of violence.

Two Points on Violence and Change

Max Gluckman's anthropological project conceived of anthropology as the disciplinary study of modernity through the attention it pays to social crises and change (Kapferer 2005:86). The contemporary mafia's conduct (and the anti-mafia response) calls for attention to change. We would be doing the discipline a favor by not shying away from exploring the interplay of modernist interactions between the mafia and a set of relations, customs and institutions that constantly recompose it. To that avail, I would add two more points on this brief undusting of our mafia books, in the light of appreciating the mafia as a modern and modernist phenomenon, which is my main argument here.

The first point has to do with violence. Remaining fixed in a position that focuses upon the violence of the mafia as its only characteristic might be rooted in an episteme of discussing the mafia in terms of premodernity. Namely, underscoring violence as the quintessential mafia characteristic might not allow us to appreciate how mafia organisations can correspond with lawful and egalitarian forms. This analysis implicitly presents the mafia as a strictly unequal and hierarchical structure (Dino 2006), it posits the mafia outside the workings of Sicilian society, and remains oblivious to its protean nature, constantly undergoing *mutamenti* – transformations (Paoli 2001). In fact, the mafia's violence itself is ultramodern, indeed biopolitical, and fused with institutions of care in

Sicily, as in the case of a local hospital that Palumbo discusses (2009). The data discussed here takes consent, or at least coexistence, into account in order to understand how the mafia can tap into peasant struggles or even tolerate anti-mafia cooperativisation.

If given the opportunity, Sicilian anti-mafia co-op activists would spend hours narrating stories of violent mafia crime committed against innocents in Sicily. Undeniably, violence cannot be underestimated when analysing the mafia. The use of force is done strategically and is carefully invested since the mafia is a 'violence industry' (Santino 2007: xx; Dickie 2004: 47–54). Despite the fact that in the last twenty years mafia assassinations have been dramatically diminished, the lingering element in understanding (and fighting) the mafia is still *omertà* and the threat of violence (Coco 2013). Yet, the act of open violence is a strategy the organisation has moved away from (albeit it persists as the main way to solve inner tensions among different clans within it). While I was in the field, in 2009, 'only' two assassinations took place in San Giovanni. The man responsible, Peppe 'The Buffalo' Barbeto, seventy-eight years old, was arrested for the murder of two young burglars who defied the mafia's order and control over petty crime and attempted to break into rural houses. That same year in the neighbouring Consortium village Fonte, Domenico 'The Vet' Raccuglia, one of the five most important fugitives of Italy, was arrested in a year with no mafia violent crime in the area (Fagone 2009). This is in contrast to, for instance, 1995 when an estimated one hundred people died a violent death in that village alone, as I was told by locals.

The anti-mafia's spectacularisation of the mafia's violent past serves an ideological purpose. It provides a double reassurance: on the one hand, it presents the organisation as solely capable of hierarchical criminal acts; on the other, it leaves the population aside as victims of this process. It presents Sicilians as a silenced majority[2] that rejects the mafia. The violent element here creates sharp differentiations; it acts as a distinction signifier, marking unequal relationships of victim and perpetrator, and postulating the mafia as a form of dominance. This view posits that the development of the mafia does not take place through consensual politics, and therefore no horizontal relationships were held between *mafiosi* and other citizens. It therefore obfuscates a history of intricate collisions and class alliances that bred the Sicilian Cosa Nostra and other violent organisations.

Informants often mentioned to me how Sicilians called San Giovanni 'Kabul' or 'Beirut' during the mid-1990s: Giovanni Barbeto was still on the loose and even the army was stationed in the village to tackle the

mafia and imposing temporary curfews (Corrado 1998). With this recent backdrop in living historical memory for my research participants, by comparison my fieldwork took place in a period of virtually no mafia violent crime and, indeed, no protection racketeering. The decline of violence, however, did not imply that cooperative members were not afraid of retaliation for the fact that they were cultivating confiscated property. Interestingly, the fear of violence was also inversely proportionate to the degree of familiarity of a coop member with the local context. Specifically, administrators of the cooperatives were more sensitive to minor instances of mafia threats and, local workers argued, 'used them' to attract media attention to the anti-mafia cooperatives.

An example of this is how the Borsellino administrators reacted to a fire in their olive grove. Although the *Carabinieri* ruled out the possibility of mafia arson, a rock concert was quickly arranged to provide moral and material support to the 'co-op under threat': organised locally, the concert took place within a month of the fire. It featured rock star Ligabue (the Italian equivalent of Bon Jovi) and successfully yielded a fifty-thousand-euro profit. The singer publicly proclaimed his solidarity with the co-op and symbolically planted a young olive tree in the grove, surrounded by journalists and Libertà activists. However, the gesture did not find unanimous support among Borsellino members at the time: 'The point is to make money out of agriculture, not to make a fuss,' Manto, a Borsellino worker told me.

At this point I should stress that I am not suggesting that violence is not a component of the mafia here – and indeed a violence fused with state power, exercised through or in lieu of state violence, or as a proxy of it (Rakopoulos 2014a: 22; Palumbo 2009). But violence marks difference, affirming as 'it' does historical power and social control over the vulnerable in the midst of events thoroughly informed by stratification and potentially typified in the bureaucratic realm (Graeber 2012). This violence is associated with the confusion and mishaps of organised apparatuses committed to arranging and separating people taxonomically – the way the colloquial *mafioso* separates people into 'men' and 'sub-men' (Sciascia 1998).

Exhausting our analytical potential on the dividing feature of outright violence would exclude the possibility of accounting for the unexpected and paradoxical egalitarianisms where the mafia finds a place (Rakopoulos 2017b): the liminal position it maintains between practices of hierarchy and claims to equality. Instead, we might benefit from exploring the other side of mafia dominance and influence in Sicily and beyond – that is, to recall a Gramscian reasoning, through the taking over of local hearts and minds.

The second Gluckmanian, as it were, point has to do with the fascinating qualities of the mafia to transmogrify and render itself an organisation in a constant state of change. In order to appreciate this more fully, we need to comprehend the ambiguities of the mafia's modernity as a historically dynamic institution (Sciarrone 2009: 45). This also includes the anti-mafia. The historical interrelationship of the mafia and anti-mafia is as old as each of them, and Cosa Nostra has been incorporating and constantly undergoing mutational change (Paoli 2001). Equally, the historical relationship between legal forms of economic organisation and the mafia is significant to galvanise the point about state and mafia being interlocked systems in several cases in Sicilian history. The mafia's peculiar capacity for and power of intimidation (Turone 2008), distinct from that of organised crime, implies the enduring organisation of efficient capitalist entrepreneurship that mobilises local networks, as well as the exercise of coercion.

But while Mafia entrepreneurialism is linked with violent capital accumulation (Saviano 2007: 17), rather than the distinctions imposed from the use of violence that affirms and reproduces social distance, consensus is also central to forging and solidifying mafia power. It is in the hunt of social consensus that the Mafia constantly changes, and violence becomes instrumental to that endeavour. Change and mutation is intrinsic to the ambiguities and secrecies pertaining to the mafia, as well as its ability to influence or even assume cooperative, entrepreneurial, even unionist forms in protean metamorphoses (see Rakopoulos 2017b). However, neither fully encroaching equality nor fully distancing itself from hierarchical underpinnings, *mafiosi*'s engagement with the horizontal arrangements of a cooperative takes us away from the conceptual binaries usually associated with egalitarianism and hierarchy. As follows from the above, the mafia is a thoroughly modern institution as well as a hub of networks that mobilises an array of relations in everyday life in Sicily and beyond.

It is in that context that it encounters the anti-mafia cooperative phenomenon, with a number of problems unfolding from their symbiotic and antagonistic relationship. In order to appreciate these issues, I would like to take a step back to see what it is we talk about when we talk about another modern institution that is at once localised and international: cooperativism. The idea and practice of cooperativism is not symptomatic to anti-mafia but indeed a central historical feature of it (see Rakopoulos 2014a). It is also, alongside anti-mafia, the other central tenet of this monograph, central to it's interest in egalitarian systems.

Cooperatives and Anthropology: Beyond Divisions and Enclaves

Modernity is laden with institutions committed to alleviating difference and solidifying sameness, and cooperatives are an exemplary case. Cooperatives in the modern sense of the term were born in England after the industrial revolution; the first was established in Rochdale in 1844 (Webb 1912). The Rochdale paradigm distinguishes cooperativism from previous ventures that involved cooperation (Zangheri et al. 1987). It could only develop in an industrial division of labour (cooperation between differentiated tasks) and class differentiation (Durkheim 1997). In the midst of the industrial revolution; co-ops appeared as expressions of workers' organisation seeking equity in the workplace and direct management of production.

Like the Sicilian anti-mafia case suggests, co-ops can often be traced back to political and social projects. The cooperative movement's equality-pursuing project was a reaction against the institutionalisation of charity in the form of the 1834 New Poor Law, famously criticised by Polanyi (2001: 82). The movement, drawing on mutuality and self-help, counteracted the idea of the 'undeserving poor', aimed to bridge class differences and involved community participation in local economies, often as an alternative to the hierarchies of waged labour (Taylor 2011: 240; Nash et al. 1976). Workers' management, mutuality among members, community participation and tackling the capital/labour dichotomy seem to be the main sociological characteristics of cooperatives.

In post-war Italy, the protection of cooperatives was enshrined in the Constitution (1947) as a 'third way' between liberalism and collectivism, and between state and market (Paolucci 1999). Indeed, when the Constitution was being created, the communists, a major force in Italian constituent politics at the time, suggested that cooperative property should be the only property form recognised (Sassoon 1997: 209–12). Cooperatives thus enjoyed a welcoming political atmosphere and were encouraged by affiliations with mainstream political parties (Bonfante 1981). During the 1970s, cooperative representatives developed relationships with local authorities, evident for instance in 'communist-leaning' Emilia.

That 'Third Italy's' development scheme, a familial enterprise-based model,[3] boosted the Italian economic miracle (Bagnasco 1984; Bagnasco and Sabel 1995). Emilia's 'red' cooperativism (associated with the Communist Party's institutions) has been seen as the adoption of political ideologies on (horizontal) organisation in production, counterposed to Veneto's 'Catholic

political culture' and associated 'white' cooperativism (Trigilia 1986; 2002). The cooperative movement radically transformed local economies, weaving community with economic practice (Thornley 1981; Oakeshott 1978; Thompson 1994) and achieving 'worker control in action' (Dow 2003: 67–82). This condition modelled 'industrial democracy' according to internal horizontal work relations and solidified relations between community and workplace (Holmström 1989). Socialist ideologies inspired workers' management, emphasising 'solidarity' and equity in work relations as cooperativism's fundamental principle (Macpherson 2008).

Cooperative networks formed in central Italy involved policy-making and inter-cooperative cooperation (Bulgarelli and Viviani 2006: 96–100; Sapelli 2006). Admittedly, this was not without tensions: social solidarity and market orientation have always been entangled in cooperativism (Degl'Innocenti 2003). Early on in the movement's development, cooperativism's main organisational issue was to maintain equality as a priority, while also being focused on growth (Bonfante 1981; Bartlett 1993). Equally, the criss-crossing between subsidiary policies towards the cooperative system and the administration of 'co-op-entrenched municipalities' has been continuous since the 1970s (Pugliese and Rebeggiani 2004). The institutionalisation of cooperatives and exposure to markets affected horizontal work relations.

This equality at work is a constant claim and pursuit for cooperativism. Like commercial enterprises, co-ops' social life confirms how the Weberian separation of work and private/family life has been largely based on an empirical fiction (Yanagisako 2002: 19–22). Even more than corporations, though, co-ops occupy an odd position at the junction of kinship and work. They participate in both at once, despite normative ideas on contemporary cooperativism (Zamagni and Zamagni 2010). So if co-ops are a historical force to reckon with and possibly an interesting phenomenon to think about, what would anthropologists hold in store for them?

Industrial Democracy 'Experienced': Anthropology and Co-ops

In the genealogy of social scientists that still resonate today, Marx is among the first who expressed interest in cooperatives. It might come as no surprise that he criticised but did not condemn the cooperative movement. He saw, in its bridging of capital and labour, firstly, a preliminary victory of the political economy of the latter over the former and, secondly, 'the

husks of the old system and the seeds of the new' (Bottomore 1991: 111). However, for that victory to be complete, political power and not localism was required. His interest in cooperativism was therefore underpinned by a dialectical relationship among state, society and market. For Marx, cooperatives are founded upon a historical contradiction:

> The cooperative factories run by workers themselves are, within the old form, the first examples of the emergence of a new form, even though they naturally reproduce in all cases, all the defects of the existing system, and must reproduce them. But the opposition between capital and labour is abolished here, even if at first only in the form that the workers in association become their own capitalist, i.e. they use the means of production to valorise their own labour. These factories show how, at a certain stage of development of the material forces of production, and of the social forms of production corresponding to them, a new form of production develops and is formed naturally out of the old. (Inaugural Address, MECW 6: 78, cited in Bottomore 1991: 571)

It is this bridge and suspension in between time frames that might explain why co-ops have been intriguing to anthropologists for long. In fact, anthropological interest in cooperatives has been in evidence since Mauss, who was actively involved in cooperativism and committed to 'associationism' and whose involvement in cooperative socialism is well documented by social anthropologists (Hart 2007: 5; Hart 2014: 35; Graeber 2001: 67).

Mauss's appreciation for the cooperative movement, which marks the anthropological first engagement with this social phenomenon, presents a slightly different aspect than the Marxian case – and brings forward another sensitive anthropological issue: 'experience'. While Marx saw in cooperatives the dialectics of present contradictions and the seed of future developments, a kind of future-present, Mauss insisted that cooperatives brought about 'practical socialism' (Fournier 2006: 125). Economic experiments were thus not imagined or planned but *experienced* in radical cooperativism (as per the famous Mondragòn case, see below). Speaking before the First National and International Congress of Socialist Cooperatives (in July of 1900), Mauss stated,

> We will educate him [the citizen] for his revolutionary task by giving him a sort of foretaste of all the advantages that the future society will be able to offer him. . . . We will create a veritable arsenal of socialist capital in the midst of bourgeois capital. (Cited in Graeber 2001: 151)

With Marx, we can rethink that suspension of co-ops between time frames and categories, and with Mauss we can think through the practical socialism of cooperation. Cooperatives defy modernist dichotomies as they stand, and oscillate between labour and capital (Whyte 1999), commodity production and patrimonial concern (Ferry 2005), and market orientation and community egalitarianism (Rakopoulos 2015b). Their 'betwixt' status begs for anthropological inquiry, especially regarding their suspension between co-op work and the social life of workers outside it, including family, neighbourhood and politics.

With cooperatives, we are obviously reminded of the Durkheimian idea of cooperation and totality as it is stretched across the solidary distribution of labour in modern institutions (Stedman Jones 2001). Durkheim himself, described as 'a kind of guild socialist' (Morris 2005; Thompson 2012: 31), also shared similar views of practical solutions to everyday lives; rather than ideologising when it came to cooperation, seeing and sympathising with cooperatives as associations striving for social justice.

The radical horizontalist kind of cooperative environment described by Mauss is conducive to liberation from waged work (encouraging, in turn, greater citizenship participation). Cooperation embraces and fathoms the worker in a larger realm than 'work'. However, participating in a co-op does not take up the social existence of a member as a whole. Co-ops are, then, suspended in *in-between* notional spheres and social realms. Although they are not total institutions that would take over the whole life of the participant (like, say, monasteries), they are composed by more than the sum of their parts – incporporating not only the worktime but also degrees of the social life and identity of their members.

In that way – blurring life with work, two realms conventionally divided in mainstream thought – politicised co-ops operate in a degree of contradiction, professing to express more than they can encompass. Incorporating its members' work in an ideologically driven environment, a co-op is often not solely a workplace but also a social arrangement that invests resources and embeds people in activities beyond employment (see, e.g., Ferry 2005). Co-ops with a cause (like the Sicilian anti-mafia) often claim they assume the modernist separation of office from social life, but as processual institutions, they reject it in everyday praxis.

This basically calls for an anthropological inquiry into cooperatives, as the discipline can take these complexities into account, due to that 'life' aspect that anthropologists study (containing anything from kinship to politics). The noted associations of cooperation with a pluralistic 'human economy' (Graeber 2009b) point to that direction, and so do earlier points on how cooperative principles are '*experienced*', not encom-

passed by totalising systems. Co-op politics, as in the case of the Basque Mondragón, are born not of ideologues but rather of practitioners acting together in a collective fashion that does not call for overarching ideologies (Whyte 1999).

The widely discussed Basque cooperativist experiment in Mondragón initially positioned itself against totalising systems: it was 'a reaction against -isms', especially Taylorist specialisation and division of labour. Workers reportedly referred to Machado's verse, 'the path is made walking' ('*se hace el camino al andar*'), to convey their pragmatism (Whyte and Whyte 1991: 257). In that way, 'cooperativism was true socialism – not just one way to achieve it' (1991: 253). This is important, as, with the rise of a discussion on the solidarity economy (see, e.g., Laville 1998), co-ops are understood to form, as vibrant parts of new economies, an 'actually-existing new world' (Lieros 2012), or they become components of future-oriented narratives of change (Rakopoulos 2015b).

However, there is still space to fill in the conceptual gap of 'experience'. As it stands, we have serious scholarly work that scrutinises ethnographically what cooperatives do, how they operate and why they possibly fail to deliver what they claim. But what does the actual *experiential* aspect of cooperativism mean? We cannot see co-ops as units of analysis if we treat experience, without -isms, seriously: we have to refer to their members' lives. While some anthropologists have noted this experience's co-articulations with gender (Ashwin 2014) or ethnicity (Kasmir 2002), the place of kinship, household and reputation still begs for more analysis. This analysis can help us move beyond a certain economism inherent in seeing co-ops as stand-alone structures of experienced socialism. Anti-mafia Sicilian cooperatives produced a different conflict than, for instance, that across nationalistic or gender lines in the Basque country, where there is a schism between those who are expected to share a common interest with management and those who are not (Kasmir 1996: 198).

The 'experience' aspect has taken a slightly different investigative strain, towards the notion that the basic idea behind cooperatives was to benefit their members and 'improve their living conditions by protecting them from the unbridled forces of the market' (Vargas-Cetina 2009: 128), an idea that not only still holds currency in anthropology but also seems to be an underlining anthropological consensus. Such cooperativist critiques to neoliberal regimes of labour are ubiquitous (Macpherson 2008). This ideology of practice has been rooted in specifics, of which 'community' has been the strongest (see critique in Rakopoulos 2015a).

In that stream of thought, cooperatives have been seen as posing against neoliberal market aggression on the one hand and state corporatism on

the other. Co-ops first of all protect forms of members' gendered selfhood and the communal aspect of their lives. Stephen, for instance, proposes that they form buffer zones of sociality to renounce neoliberalism's aggressive individualisation (2005; see Ong 2006). They offer their members a safe environment in the face of neoliberal globalisation, providing a scene for collective efforts, diverging away from individualisation and challenging existing class stratification (Stephen 2005: 254). These findings are in line with the studies on workers' management and participation (Nash et al. 1976), again in Latin American environments. Easing out the gendered feature in labour is also important here, because it appears less pronounced than in 'commercial production' (Stephen 2005: 258–61).

Accounting for new developments, such as cooperatives endorsing projects offering potentials for 'postcapitalist politics' (CEC 2001) or 'community economies' (Gibson-Graham 2006: 110–27; cf. Gibson-Graham 2013), requires attention to the values co-op members and contractual workers endorse in their lives and livelihoods. This idea often dovetails with a rising trend in political theory and sociology, most often inspired from anarchist, post-anarchist and autonomist political affiliations, about forming enclaves of good practice within the capitalist continuum. These could be forming a protective nest over and around the liberated worker in a post-alienation process that attempts the Marxian Aufhebung, the transgression over from alienation into self- and community autonomy (Berardi 2009). They could be shaped in or as temporary autonomous zones (Bey 2008), emancipated areas that, little by little, are affecting the whole body capitalistic. Prefiguration and the art of doing, precisely a claim to experience rather than ideologies, is central to this (Maeckelberg 2012).

These cracks, as celebrated by some neo-Marxist theorists, most notoriously by John Holloway, can contribute to the collapse of the capitalist apparatus (2002; 2010) – one works their way through but against the system, by forming inter-communicating cooperativist enclaves, as experiments in popular democracy (Wainwright 2009). This theoretical framework is definitely taken up by activist theorists of cooperativism (see Sitrin 2012) that abide by the idea of self-managing productive zones of workers' liberation amidst a sea of capitalist exploitation and dispossession by the state. It is a fascinating idea surely, and one that Scott's recent work, alluding to anarchist cooperativist thinking, might cheer to (2012). It is also an idea that does not often hold water when faced with certain economic factors of exposure to markets and the basic need for capital to run a cooperative, as indeed the Argentine case has shown (Azzelini 2015). It most specifically seems debatable when the livelihoods

of people are taken into account – imbued as they are in market and other relations outside the enclave – as this book shows.

In this community aspect there is a material salvage role towards land and labour, which co-ops are called in to play. This protectionism feature is twofold: towards external forces ('the market'), they are salvaging local life; in terms of introvert processes, they protect their members and their means of production. They provide the enclave zones from which people can defend local configurations against the dispossessions that market and state enact on communities. Security of people, safety for work, protection of labour rights and the environment and relative decommodification of some co-op assets are the main aspects of this idea.

'Protection'

It is for this reason why the anthropological literature, by and large, is committed to unpacking the idea that cooperatives unequivocally promote egalitarian values – and why anthropologists are overall sympathetic to co-ops. Seeing cooperativism as promoting horizontal relations in the workplace, and doing away with capital/labour-related distinction through collective management of a sector by autonomous workers, marks a trend in the scholarship (cf. Berardi 2009; Scott 2012). Specifically, anthropological and sociological reckoning has positioned cooperatives in a defensive towards 'forces' of the market. In fact, they are mostly understood as shelters from such un-redeeming powers of globalised markets (as, e.g., per Stephen 2005; Vargas-Cetina 2005). They are seen as, simultaneously, a system of procurement of labour and a self-help 'associationism' social plan rooted in social relations, evolved from a set of ideas that recognised the conflict of capital and labour and aimed to bridge the unbridgeable – for Marxism (Curl 2009; Restakis 2010). Cooperativism has achieved relative autonomy from the state by guaranteeing protection of labour with co-ops: playing a 'salvage' role for jobs in transitions and crises (Sitrin 2012).

Scholarly attitudes often present co-ops as economic institutions that, uniquely, cater to notions of selfhood and community in the face of market aggression, providing pockets of resistance and safety from the commodification of labour and land – the Polanyian 'man and nature' (Polanyi 2001: 171–201).

More precisely, there are two aspects of Polanyian protection in this conceptualisation of co-ops as enclave protectionist zones here. The first

pole of this policy is the *protection of labour*. Labour here is understood in the wider sense to include notions of selfhood invested in and expressed through the labouring process. For instance, this applies to the transition from command to market economies, where co-ops have been seen as salvage belts for labour (Buechler and Buechler 2002), or as reinstigating a lost sense of collectivity in the interim restructuring of post-Soviet economies (Ashwin 1999). Earlier work from socialist Europe would have it that cooperativism was the plateau that offered exactly the measures to salvage positive means of individualisation within the labour experience in the USSR (Humphrey 1983; 1998).

In a similar way, but as the mirror image of Humphrey's notes on how 'Marx went away but Karl stayed behind', co-ops offered a zone of protection *for* individualism and *against* state forces, retaining individual agency where the totalising systems of socialism reigned supreme (Hollos 2001). In contexts of a more open market, workers' co-ops have been understood as being committed to equality and industrial democracy (Holmström 1993). Attached and related to this salvage-zone policy is that co-ops carry and enact a shared sense of local accountability to disaffected workers, being members of local social movements (Bryer 2011). Unlike their corporate counterparts, they apportion their profits among shareholders and invest locally, while 'capitalist' corporations' investment schemes lie outside the control of shareholders (Cetina-Vargas 2009).

The second pole to the salvage outline is the protective framework laid out for the *means of production* themselves; most importantly for agrarian co-ops: land. Co-op assets, their constant capital, acquire a protective framework and are set outside of the (more exploitative or alienating) wider frameworks of the market in 'enclave settings'. This maintains a balance between making the most of the market and refraining from fully engaging with its most alienating aspects. For instance, agricultural co-ops have been seen to provide more democratic access to resources and marketing (Ulin 1988). Similarly, as hinted above, in Ferry's Mexican ethnography members of the co-op use family and patrimony idioms to make sense of the silver deposits their co-op works on, safeguarding the asset's sustainable future. Their language of inalienability, however, coexists with the commodification of silver; when that enters commercial circulation, its exchangeability eventually triumphs over its inalienability, and relations of exchange trump relations of production (Ferry 2002: 342–3; see also Ferry 2011).

Elsewhere, co-ops are salvaging industrial forms of constant capital: recuperated factories in crisis, for instance. Ethnographically documented cases of protectionism where cooperatives played a 'salvage'

role for jobs also recall Sitrin's findings on the Argentine crisis (2006) or narratives of East German cooperatives in the neoliberal 1990s (Buechler and Buechler 2002; Bauerkämper 2004) and post-Soviet collectives, where familial and gendered solidarity were reinforced by memories of a state sense of collectivity (Ashwin 1999).

This double bind of the enclave and the openness to exchange is crucial. Specifically, the way we account for co-ops' relation to markets – and indeed global markets – is significant in terms of the ways idioms employed are transmogrified to accommodate market dependencies. It is admitted that cooperatives, in European settings for instance, have gradually moved away from a rhetoric of 'solidarity' as a principle (Rakopoulos 2014a, c), giving way to 'market mutuality' as an organising discourse, as cooperatives sought to open up global markets (Kasmir 1996; Zamagni and Zamagni 2010).

Co-ops often emerge from struggles associated with neoliberal crises. However, to conceptualise them as if they act as means to provide defence barracks against neoliberal aggression would not do justice to the complexity of social life they express. Actually, it might not even fully account on how they intersect with broader concerns within these struggles. Enclave zones, for instance, operate with regulations premised on exclusionary effects – like clubs, based on an ideological premise (say, 'being anti-mafia'). But the social arrangement of their enclave feature locally becomes even more urgent to unpack.

Surely, conceptualising the social economy as an alternative route to development may not suffice, since its 'social' features imply that it is entangled with broader responses to neoliberalism – especially in the current fiscally obsessed austerity climate in southern Europe (Rakopoulos 2015b). Moreover, if they do operate sealing out their members from broader forces, what exclusionary processes are employed and deployed to achieve this aim?

Here rises a critique that needs to be voiced to the above argumentations. The approach that reckons with co-ops as lived ('experienced') enclaves sealed out in protection from the perils of externalities does not fully hold. The Sicilian lens helps to account for internal divisions that crack the assumed horizontal unity of cooperation. More specifically, the enclave-protectionism notion is premised on ideas of separating cooperatives from the context of both their broader political economy and the wider fabric of social relations hegemonic in their localities. The debate, by and large, presents co-ops as entities with a social life of their own, developing outside the broader social structures within which they operate. This fissure further exacerbates the sense of tensions between what

goes on *within* co-ops and *around* them – and how these two social overlapping spaces mirror each other on divisions of all sorts.

As it happens analytically, keeping the neat separation of community and economy (as in Gudeman's early work, 1990), siding co-ops with the former or merging the two in cooperativism as 'community economics' can be skewed. This separation is premised on seeing 'co-ops' as units of analysis.

We would benefit, instead, from seeing them as peopled institutions entrenched in a series of institutional dependencies from which they cannot be disentangled. It is their members we should focus on, people whose lives are entangled in other relations and obligations too. Co-ops, it follows, cannot be disembedded from their members' social obligations inside and outside cooperative frameworks. Paradoxically, the more we assume a distance between markets and co-ops, the more this affects our own clumsiness to reflect on the relationship between co-ops and wider society.

This is because seeing co-ops as protection enclaves dramatically unties them from the broader social relationships (and market dependencies) that they operate in. The state in contemporary Europe actively endorses commodification at all levels of the distribution of resources and services, using markets against reciprocity, the assumed premise for cooperativisation. So how important is the surrounding social life for co-ops?

(Beyond) Divisions of Labour

Cooperatives are mostly guided by horizontalism in organising labour but nonetheless operate with internal divisions. Accounting for the oft-noted shift of cooperatives from being orientated as horizontally organised work associations to acquiring hierarchised divisions of labour, authors identify two different but interrelated external influences coming from institutions: authoritative political (usually state) ideologies and/or competitive markets.

While Holmström recommends a comparative approach, considering regional characteristics of community-based central Italian and Catalonian cooperativisms (1993; cf. Bartlett 1992, for another comparison), comparisons should be made with caution. As ethnographic accounts of Catalonia make evident, apart from competitive markets, autocratic regimes may have an impact on horizontal relations within cooperatives and on the ways cooperatives interact with the community in which they operate. In that context, what Narotzky calls 'the political economy of affects' (2004:

57–82) – claims to friendship, community idioms and family relations – served to sustain, but therefore maintain, workers in their precarious job situation (cf. Standing 2011). The 'glue' holding this set of work relations together was (also) a vision of cooperativism stemming from a conservative regime: 'the Catalan way is workers' cooperatives: an 'imagined community' of social relations of production, an ideology of harmony between capital and labour through national identity' (Narotzky 1997: 187). Catalonian regionalism instrumentalised cooperativism, identifying in the co-articulation of *casa* (the family unit) and *cooperativa* (the unit of labour) local expressions of the nation's unity (Narotzky 1988). This corporatism deployed 'a hegemonic cultural concept that consistently glosses over differentiation and conflict, and pictures a history of cooperation, common objectives and non-existent class struggle' (Narotzky 1997: 119). Gavin Smith also identifies such tendencies: regulations governing Spanish cooperatives made an already informalised economy more informal[4] (1999: 179).

These marked divergences from horizontalism (equal work relations as a principle of industrial democracy) are then rooted in processes wherein an idea (e.g., socialism) about the well-being of the community becomes the main priority of the common economic endeavour. Community is used as a sinister ideological premise. Divisions of labour inspired by market-oriented specialisation and corporatist relations diverted the historical role of cooperativism away from tackling the Marxian labour/capital conflict (Smith 2006).

Economic sociologists have seen co-ops as ephemeral organisations (Burawoy 1991; Ferguson 1991) deeming them unable to withstand tendencies towards bureaucratisation and hierarchies (but see Vargas-Cetina 2005). Eventually, the idea that Mondragón's cooperatives complex had to be 'more closely integrated if it was to compete effectively in the European common market' (1991: 201) led to the restructuring of the organisation of labour, imposing hierarchisations in lieu of horizontal relations. Sharryn Kasmir characterises these transformations as 'middle class reforms' (1996: 63–91). In that climate, a long history of interrelatedness between corporative subjects and cooperatives has been underlined (Vargas-Cetina 2009), with sociologists being even more explicit about this (Zamagni and Zamagni 2010). In Italy, co-ops are then considered 'the result of what people consider "corporatist" ideas' (Vargas-Cetina 2009: 133). In the Sicilian case, these ideas have a long history of their own, interlinked with anti-mafia, as I shall discuss in the remainder of this chapter as well as in the next one.

My take on these divisions moves away from the sociological focus on labour and the valuation of skill towards reconsidering Durkheim's legacy of holism. I argue that cooperative organisation, drawing on relations between community and economy, often becomes a channel for experimentation inspired by regionalism and political ideologies, which become the source of such internal divisions. This book is particularly attentive to the respective moralities attached to these divisions.

We need, when accounting for how cooperatives move from horizontal to hierarchical organisations, to engage with the differentiated viewpoints and practices within hierarchised cooperatives. Discussions of hierarchisation do not explain how opinions and practices are manifested in (and informed by) *cooperative members' moralities* (an issue overlooked, in varying degrees, by many key writers: e.g., Kasmir 1996; Sapelli 2006; Zamagni and Zamagni 2010; Holmström 1989; Macpherson 2008.) Moralities and ideologies operative among the workforce are especially significant for an anthropological approach that could lead from a focus on divisions of labour to labour-based divisions. This is a move beyond the overall problematic of enclave. It brings home the need to nuance the idea of hierarchisation by looking at the social life of co-op members outside co-op work. It would be simplistic to see the division of labour as (just) 'management impositions' *within* a cooperative's structure; often, these internal differentiations are informed by aspects of members' lives *outside* the cooperative framework.

This is a main point of this book. The sociological analysis of cooperatives is committed to showing how they become internally differentiated, without elucidating in detail where this differentiation is rooted and what it entails for co-op members. The diverse opinions and moral stances intertwined with their division of labour often remain undertheorised. My ethnography not only sheds light on these nuanced differentiations in terms of *moralities* but also argues that this division is often constructed by different life experiences, even lifeworlds among the workforce.

Zooming in on the Anti-mafia

Rooting divisions of labour in anti-mafia cooperative members' subjective experience entails a differentiation from contexts described in the sociological and anthropological literature. Sociologists underlining internal differentiations in cooperatives (Bartlett 1993) rarely emphasise the role of moralities, codes and social relationships, some assuming a Simmelian perspective to stress the lack of 'trust' in cooperation (Gambetta 2000;

Cook et al. 2007). Drawing on the market's drive for competitiveness, cooperatives are often prone to 'restructuring', diverging from their original equity-orientated organisation of labour.

Instead of specialisation and division of labour arising because of cooperatives' exposure to competitive markets and conservative state ideologies (see below), Spicco Vallata, therefore, tells a different picture. There, it is rather a tension between the Consortium's normative idea and participants' different concepts of community (as well as their embeddedness in different social relations) that is the main axis for internal differentiations. Cooperativism is contextual, shaped by the configurations of power at a given historical moment. In that respect it is also 'modular', in the way Benedict Anderson uses the term (2006). Namely, the principles of cooperativism, instilled in the context of mafia-controlled agrarian production, developed in very specific forms in Sicily as vectors of anti-mafia mobilisation. In the context of post-2000 Spicco Vallata, anti-mafia cooperativism came to entail a commitment to legality, which, as the ethnography will show, created tensions in its adaptations to members' local situatedness. Cooperative administrators set out to apply the principle of anti-mafia *cooperativism* – which eventually contributed to making (internally differentiated) anti-mafia *cooperatives.*

Sicily is somehow diverging from enclave protectionism, in that political cooperativism inspired by the anti-mafia, far from abolishing agricultural wage labour, has instead *created* it (albeit in a regulated form). Whether it created a form of labour protectionism is beyond doubt; however, looking beyond its enclave is the point here. The anti-mafia cooperatives created jobs in the absence of a viable labour market and indeed in the midst of neoliberal market fundamentalism. As alluded to in the vignette opening this book, although there *was* agrarian waged labour in Spicco Vallata before the cooperatives, it was always unregulated: rare and exploitative, part of the informal economy's local networks and mostly controlled by the mafia. The cooperatives did not eliminate this but added regulated work to the setting. Cooperatives in this context, where mafia patrons have historically determined the labour market, are simultaneously viable alternatives to the paradigm of the 'autonomy' of the economy and manifestations of capitalism's contradictions.

There are two notable features of workers' cooperativism in Spicco Vallata; although they are not unique to the area, they are contingent on the specificities of the anti-mafia political project. Firstly, anti-mafia cooperativism arose not as an alternative to wage labour but *from its absence*: where agricultural jobs existed, they were subject to the harsh terms of mafia patronage and were never regulated by labour rights. Anti-mafia

cooperatives followed a very pragmatic strategy, offering employment to poor, petty producers. The priority was not to counter wage labour but to better conditions of production and remuneration. Indeed, the main link pulling the anti-mafia cooperatives together is wage labour. Secondly, the 'capitalist' in Spicco Vallata is the state, which grants access to the means of production (land, machinery), and through them to work to the members of social cooperatives. In Sicily, state rhetoric presented this process as the 'restitution of land to the community' (Frigerio and Pati 2007: 2). Thus, the state, as owner and gatekeeper of 'communal' land, endows cooperatives with decommodified land, and crafts an ideological cooperativist model.

This land has been withdrawn from the market and has no exchange value, as it does not partake in commodified transactions. It is given to the cooperatives to safeguard it, remaining inalienable (Weiner 1992). Earmarked like a special-purpose resource (Zelizer 1997), land is endowed with a particular kind of political role, associated to the anti-mafia ideology and movement. This political inalienability needs to be explored in tandem with analyses of cooperatives as institutions protecting resources. The safeguarding role anti-mafia co-ops retain for decommodified plots in Sicily is crucial.

I have already hinted how this feeds in an anthropological discussion of cooperatives as custodians and protectors of assets and resources. Ferry, for instance, sees co-ops as guardians of an 'inalienable' asset, as they appear endorsing discourses of the commons, patrimony and inalienable possessions (Ferry 2005). In Mexico, the co-op does not own the silver deposits it works on; its members are using a number of idioms, pertaining to family and patrimony, to defend the reproduction of the asset.

At the same time labour, the other main resource anti-mafia cooperatives allow locals to access, also changes form – wrested from the mafia as the state attempts to seize control over jobs. While there is a resemblance to classic state collectivism (Humphrey 1983), in Spicco Vallata this state-driven project that decommodifies land and offers job protectionism is taking place in neoliberal contexts, in the face of broader deregulation and state roll-back (Castells 2011). The anti-mafia cooperatives maintain a position of salvaging land, but co-ops also appear as the safeguards of labour across their sociological spectrum.

We shall revisit this twofold problem regarding inalienable, decommodified land and protected, safeguarded labour in the ethnography proper, unfolding in the remainder of this book. For the moment, it lurks in the background as a reminder of the perceived role of co-ops as well as

the ideological ascriptions to their operation and their means of activity in much of the current state of play in the anthropology of cooperatives. After all, this monograph's ethnographic narrative explores how locals' experience of membership in anti-mafia cooperatives spilled over into other social fields, presenting continuities of cooperative members' activity with local codes and moralities (gossip, registration of land to women, informal work, moral ownership of land). It shows that this interaction can take place *within* the same cooperative, and stems from the tensions between changes imposed by a political project and continuities of members' morals and practices with local codes that the project aims to tackle. In that way, divisions of labour to an extent reflect a distinction between state-driven *cooperativism* (a system of value codified in regularisation of resources) and the grounded meanings of experience of partaking in *cooperatives*. The tension between the legislated and the local denotes the pluralism of economy as different value arenas – different domains of value that interact (Gudeman 2001). What developed among members within the cooperatives, however, rather than struggles over value (Graeber 2001: 115; De Angelis 2007), were clashes of values, registered in diverse social experiences among co-op members.

The Material Anti-mafia

My research contributes a study of cooperatives from *below* and *within*. In terms of its inquiry into the anti-mafia phenomenon, it also seeks to fulfil the need for a study of change in Sicily predicated on work provision and processes of access to material resources. This is not a parallel pursuit of the analyses of cooperativist dynamics. As much as it is a contribution on the studies of the mafia and anti-mafia, this nexus provides an entry point – a lens – for an anthropological scrutiny of cooperatives. This is a study of the lives of people, who positively engage with the state and whose livelihoods are linked to the struggle against mafia influence in Sicily. This way, moving from civil society to material concerns, I inquire into the transformative experience that cooperative involvement means for their livelihoods, examining a rearrangement of access to material resources on anti-mafia ideological bases.

Specifically, instead of moral reform, the ethnography examines a production-based anti-mafia mobilisation. This departs from a hegemonic focus on 'civic education' and 'moral reform' in current analyses of the 'new' anti-mafia movement. Schneider and Schneider's monograph, focused on late-1990s Palermo, follows the civil society mobilisation known as 'the Palermitan spring'; 'educating for legality' in order

to design sound citizens became the anti-mafia movement's major contribution to local civic life (Schneider and Schneider 2003: 260–90). Sociologists prioritised institutional change as the key input to drag society away from mafia (Girolamo 2009), while popular mobilisations have been theorised as ways in which people manifested their 'civic duty' on the streets (Jamieson 2000). Recent culturalist approaches promote the idea that 'the culture of the mafia' can be eroded through educational reform (Gunnarson 2008). Exponents of the 'new' anti-mafia argue for positive engagements with the state, starkly differentiated from how the old *braccianti* saw state agents as allies with *mafiosi* (Arlacchi and Dalla Chiesa 1987). Some of these analyses take for granted the mainstream discourses on the separation between an 'old' and 'new' mafia, assuming a modernisation paradigm neatly separating tradition and change. This is not true of Schneider and Schneider's more nuanced approach (1996; 2003), which underlines the issue of class. It is not true of the movement from clans to co-ops either, as it does not suggest an a la Henry Maine, process towards contract (2008) but one of residues and inertia.

This unproblematised moral reform comes at a cost. Anti-mafia cooperativism, inspired by legality, aims to instigate a value system over resources (employment and property) that contradicted many local values. This formed a process amenable to hierarchisations, as members did not identify with anti-mafia in equal terms morally and practically. The *anti-mafia*, a way of life that stretched beyond the realm of the possible and acts as a vector of inegalitarianism, can show us, as a Sicilian lens, ways to appreciate cooperatives that take us beyond economics. The Spicco Vallata hierarchical situation was also informed, apart from divisions of labour, by the different ideas local co-op members themselves held about state, community, kinship and mafia itself. Anti-mafia cooperativism's strict legalism, aiming to dissociate the cooperatives from certain aspects of local community and tradition, created contradictions on the ground that affected the cooperatives' development.

People who are nominally committed to the anti-mafia have a presence of the mafia *lato sensu* in their everyday life. This situation has stratifying effects on the anti-mafia cooperatives. The cosmologies of mafia and anti-mafia bear complexities that cannot be understood outside the broader workings of political economy and history, as the Schneiders have also pointed out from the origins of their anthropological project (1974). Mafia's embeddedness in the local (economic and other) life actually calls for the presence of anti-mafia, which is historically linked to the material circumstances of people's livelihoods (Rakopoulos 2014a). I shall debate the material basis of anti-mafia in the next chapter, providing a

historical backdrop for the local anti-mafia movement and cooperativism to locate the contemporary cooperatives in a history of tense relationships between law, landownership and markets (chapter 3). The hard data, historical and ethnographic, discussed in that chapter provides a backdrop to locate the book in the relevant anthropological debates and situate its contribution in economic and political anthropology (chapter 2). The discussion on resources and embeddedness reveals the different and often contradictory ideas and practices through which people of the cooperatives approached the resources available to them (land and work), establishing relationships between cooperatives and ideologies of activism (chapter 3), flows of reputation (chapter 4), kinship (chapter 5), informal income seeking (chapter 6), ideas of community (chapter 7) and social arrangements around land (chapter 8).

NOTES

1. Granted, capital is processual: value in process (Harvey 2010: 46-47); and the constant reinvestments of Cosa Nostra from the territory to the global markets, as well as the world-control of illegal commodities are enough to think of the organisation as a capitalist enterprise (Schneider and Schneider 2004). In that respect, oddly, the arcane character of the *mafioso*, an entrepreneur with no name or face, serves very well the idea and imagery of capital as a non-faced entity. This image does not contradict my take on mafia capitalism as thoroughly modern; indeed, it might add a post-modern allure to it.
2. Gramsci's take on the asymmetrical relation between state and society argues that consent operates within both fields, while coercion only in one. It would be helpful to recall the metaphor of the centaur that Gramsci uses, describing the dual nature of the state (and Mafia) here: coercion and consent and avoid dualisms. 'The dualist analysis to which Gramsci's notes typically tend does not permit an adequate treatment of economic constraints that act directly to enforce bourgeois class power: among others, the fear of unemployment or dismissal that can, in certain historical circumstances, produce a 'silenced majority' of obedient citizens and pliable voters among the exploited' (Anderson 1976: 70n78).
3. Anthropologists have cast doubt on this term (e.g., Yanagisako 2002; Ghezzi 2007).
4. All this notwithstanding the local history of other cooperativism experiences, as per the Catalonian Republican industrial colonies (Terradas 1979), while anarchist cooperativism also developed earlier, in mid-1930s Andalusia (Mintz 2004).

Chapter 3

Cooperatives and the Historical Anti-mafia Movement

The Anti-mafia Movement: a brief history

Enclaves or not, co-ops have histories, and cooperativism in Sicily has a fascinating history intertwined with the anti-mafia movement. This chapter is therefore concerned with how the anti-mafia movement has been linked with cooperativism in rural western Sicily, looking at the processes in which their actors have overlapped through time. Historicised, the relations between mafia, anti-mafia and cooperatives can be understood by recognising continuities of practices and, equally, in grasping their transformations. The form this narrative takes is both historic and ethnographic, providing an explicatory overview of the rise and development of the rural anti-mafia phenomenon.

The chapter's aim is twofold: firstly, to identify the key moments of reference in the history of the anti-mafia movement for contemporary anti-mafia cooperative members, building a historiography from below and within my research participants' paradigms. Secondly, it aspires to examine specific readings of history regarding these key moments by current anti-mafia actors, in order to assess the movement's legacy and embed the contemporary cooperatives within a framework of ideas largely indigenous to Sicily – ideas that resonate today with both urban civil mobilisation and rural cooperativism ('legality' and 'anti-mafia' itself). In this way, the chapter historically contextualises the dynamic interactions between peasant politics, state, mafia and anti-mafia as these emerged in Spicco Vallata.

The chapter therefore traces the historical points of reference for current actors of the anti-mafia movement of Sicily; aiming to explore the genealogy of the anti-mafia notion, it follows peasant mobilisations, assessing the impact of this tradition on current anti-mafia cooperativism. The selective ways contemporary co-op participants reflect on the anti-mafia movement's history, commemorating it and updating its meaning today, illuminate current meanings of 'anti-mafia' (Santino 2006; Scolaro 2008).

Cooperativism in Spicco Vallata has had varying meanings at different times. As discussed, a historical ethnography of cooperativism needs to give an account not only of its broad manifestations but also of its actors' particular social relationships on the ground. Thus I see cooperativism as a notion that is contextualised locally and historically, possessing certain core characteristics but changing in form and content in relation to the specific contexts in which the 'module' is developed and deployed. In that way, cooperativism, like most notions, acquires the modularity that Benedict Anderson ascribes to nationalism, a cultural artefact that came into historical being in specific circumstances and

> became 'modular', capable of being transplanted, with varying degrees of self-consciousness, to a great variety of social terrains, to merge and be merged with a correspondingly wide variety of political and ideological constellations. (Anderson 2006: 4)

Cooperativism, similarly, is a general notion able of portability and distillation in new contexts. Contemporary Sicily, undergoing changes influenced by the ensemble of mobilisations dubbed 'the anti-mafia movement', is an ideal site to explore how cooperativism relates to social change (Fiume 2006). Locating this question in historical time helps explore how the interrelationship of mafia and peasant struggles has been negotiated in the context of the island's ongoing experience of change. In this social change, the different meanings and practices of 'anti-mafia' are a major vector (Davis 1996; Schneider and Schneider 2006).

Earlier I mentioned how the Schneiders' points on 'cultural codes' might still retain some relevance, in light of the overall tremendous contribution of these anthropologists to the island and the discipline. But accounting for social change would mean challenging the last remaining assumptions about Sicilian tolerance for mafia values rooted in 'cultural codes', as Michael Blim has suggested in a review of Schneider and Schneider's older work (2006: 10). In their monograph on Sicilian demography however (1996), the Schneiders had admittedly already traced and highlighted, mostly among artisans, a not necessarily 'anti-mafia' but certainly 'alternative' set of 'enlightened' social sensibilities (2006: 76). As they acknowledge in a self-reflective chapter, the importance of the movement escaped them in their first Sicilian fieldwork, situated in a rural community (2006: 75). Later fieldwork in Palermo produced a monograph where the anti-mafia movement is rigorously discussed as at once a prism, a vector and an outcome of social change in the island (2003). The researchers acknowledge the peasant roots of the movement (1997) and suggest its gradual transplantation from agrarian to urban settings

(2002b). In this direction, the work of Umberto Santino should also be considered, despite the analytical framework based on class relations that suggests an evolutionist prospective as well as a pessimistic political suggestion that the movement lost its historical significance when urbanised (2009).

These works, suggesting the move from rural to urban settings – and to an extent the corresponding stress on class configurations (and shifts in work and labour patterns, as per Cole 1997 and 2007) – grasp a sense of continuity alongside transformation (which serves as a grounding for the notion of modularity). They call also, however, for complimentary research on the material and symbolic legacy of the anti-mafia movement's roots in rural environments today, which can benefit by conceptualising the interrelationship of political commitment and relations of production in Sicily and Italy at large. After all, the problematics of social change facing long-standing structures of state bureaucracy and clientelism are an ongoing feature in research concerning Sicily (Palumbo 2016). To this direction, reassessing the rural anti-mafia movement today relocates the historical, ideological meanings of legality from civil society into agrarian production and distribution, building on previous points on Sicily's dynamic, plural cultures (Schneider and Schneider 2005).

Specific circumstances on the ground (mafia activity and the peasant movement's anti-mafia responses) have rendered peasant cooperativism a practice both distinct in its Sicilian specificities *and* contextualised in two different moments in Spicco Vallata's modern history. The first set of circumstances relates to communalist worker-based cooperativism in the 1940s; the second, to post-agrarian-reform producer-based cooperativism, premised on small-proprietor viticulture. The cultural meaning of cooperativism in Sicily derives from circumstances in these two different periods, both of which were informed by anti-mafia commitment. In that respect, the chapter will explain how cooperativism became a model of economic organisation and a political ideal of organising to avoid the mafia, alongside exploitative landlords and distant urban markets. In the final section, I shall examine and analyse, via primary data gathered from ethnographic fieldwork, how this history has been 'transplanted' in the current configuration of anti-mafia cooperatives to form a third manifestation of cooperativism.

This chapter then contributes to the regional scholarship of Sicily and specifically to the anti-mafia movement's history in three ways: firstly, by elucidating how peasant movements in western Sicily were organised around anti-mafia in terms of cooperativist claims and practices; secondly, by framing the meanings of anti-mafia politics into peasant

mobilisation; and thirdly, by underlining interactions between gaining a livelihood and struggling against the mafia. These elements interacted with each other in various ways, to the point where in certain instances they became intertwined, producing ideological specificities unique to Sicily that still resonate with contemporary developments. Explicit or implied 'anti-mafia' policy is an aspect of peasant mobilisation particular to Sicily's peasant cooperativist history and is central to assessing how moral economy elements in contemporary agrarian movements are rooted in specific readings of historical data (Edelman 2005). The lens through which I review this history and assess the ways it resonates with contemporary actors is by approaching anti-mafia peasant sensibilities and cooperative organisation as modular schemes guided by peasants themselves but framed in broader configurations of political economy that peasants can influnce only to an extent, as they are otherwise shaped by political institutions removed from rural Sicily (McMichael 2008).

The Fasci Movement (1892–1915): The Birth of the Anti-mafia

Our narrative begins with the Fasci Siciliani dei Lavoratori (Sicilian Workers Leagues, henceforth Fasci) of the 1890s peasant movement. This is for both historical and ethnographic reasons. The first is informed by the existing historiography of peasant mobilisation in Sicily; the second is based on my ethnographic observation of how people historicise the anti-mafia movement's past today. On the one hand, the Fasci contributed to a seminal change in the way agrarian labour relations are legislated in Sicily and Italy, as well as to a reformulation of the island's relationship to the nation, one generation after Unification. The 'Corleone agreements', the first trade-union collective contract in Italy and an outcome of this mobilisation, confirm the Fasci's centrality in modern Italian history. The Fasci moment has moreover been hailed as 'the birth of the anti-mafia movement' (for instance, Santino 2009: 16; Scolaro 2008).

On the other hand, the choice to locate in the Fasci a 'big bang' of anti-mafia mobilisation relates to the opinions of my oldest informants in fieldwork, men between sixty and eighty years old who were sympathetic to the anti-mafia cooperatives. In discussions, they would stress that among moments in the history of the anti-mafia movement, the Fasci, the post–World War II land occupation movement and the 1960s cooperative movement reigned as most important.

In Spicco Vallata, the Casa del Popolo (People's House), a social centre in the village of Cembali, five kilometres from San Giovanni, was most active in the salvaging and shaping of local historical narratives, espe-

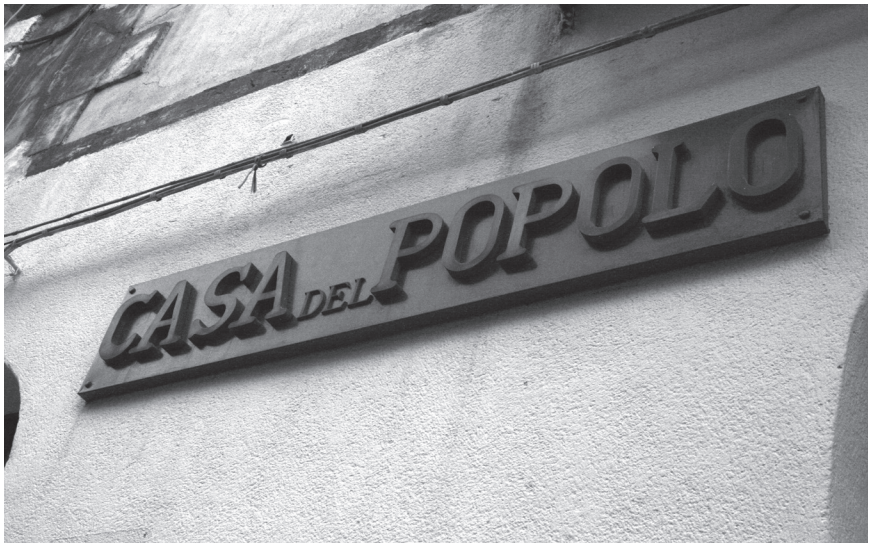

Illustration 3.1: The entrance to the Casa del Popolo at Cembali.

cially regarding agrarian struggles. The progressive political culture of the village allowed for constant re-negotiation of the past aimed at constructing collective memory (Connerton 1990; Fracchia 2004), which I traced in oral accounts.[1] Early in my fieldwork, trade unionists and members of the anti-mafia cooperatives had advised me to visit the Casa to hear 'the old men and their stories' (*i vecchi e le loro storie*). Constructed in the 1950s, the Casa was a welcoming place, 'filled with history', as a resident described it. Socialist realism-style paintings resembling the Mexican muralists or the Sicilian communist artist Renato Guttuso hung on the walls, depicting mothers working in fields alongside their children and moustached men waving red flags over grain piles. A fascinating banner from the 1930s celebrated early feminist agrarian socialism (see illustration 3.2). In the dim light, across tables scattered in the main room of the Casa, old men played cards, read the paper and chatted.

When I asked what period the murals and paintings depicted, a man simply explained that Sicilian *braccianti* and *contadini* (peasants) had been involved in so many struggles that it would be misguided to identify the paintings with any one specific historical event. The men present, all between fifty and eighty years old, then debated what would be most important to portray: the Fasci[2] movement of the 1890s? The post–World War II land occupation movement? The 1960s cooperative movement? Everyone agreed that any of these historical moments was equally qualified for artistic depiction. 'All of these struggles consisted of families

Illustration 3.2: A banner on a wall of the Casa. Notice the hammer and sickle surrounded by a heart, a symbol of the massive women's participation in the rural communist anti-mafia movement.

claiming land, forming cooperatives to manage it, occupying it to ensure it . . . [these were] communist struggles but also family struggles, with women and kids involved,' a trade unionist clarified. Evidently, the peasants' collective historical imagination was informed by their political sympathies and also encompassed the rich variety of actors in these struggles. Interestingly, despite the widespread and often violent rural unrest in Sicily throughout the nineteenth century (Aya 1976), none of the Casa points of historical reference went back to uprisings before the Fasci in the 1890s. This suggests that their historical awareness was mapped by the limits of genealogical narrative: their grandfathers had lived memories of the Fasci.

The Fasci movement was a federation of *braccianti* – which had a mixed (socialist and Catholic) background. It aimed at the collectivisation of the latifundia and drew together landless peasants, as well as artisans, regardless of gender or age, to demand better work conditions. Fasci-coordinated groups of *braccianti* occupied landed estates, challenging Palermo-based proprietors' absenteeism, and formed improptu cooperatives to cultivate these lands. Leading Spicco Vallata trade unionists were imprisoned in 1894, after the movement was crushed by the state.

The Fasci have been described as socialist or even anarchist (Ganci 1977). Marxist-leaning scholars reject the idea that the movement was a 'spontaneous', *jacquerie*-type outgrowth, insisting on its crucial role in late nineteenth-century labour movement (Renda 1977: 328; Santino 2009). Kautsky hailed the Sicilian *braccianti* as 'the centre of the sympathies and thoughts of the international proletariat' (quoted in Romano 1959: 547). Labriola reported to Engels about the Fasci as a mixture of 'socialism, anarchism, business and mafia' (in Santino 2009: 33). Mafia and anti-mafia often mingled in the development of the peasant movement. Bernardino Verro, a leading figure of the movement in Tarini, the large interior town that was its centre of gravity, even joined the mafia himself (Dickie 2004: 171), hoping to provide impetus to the Fasci through alliances with *mafiosi* who were also opposed to the state. After martial law suppressed the Fasci in 1893, a massive peasant exodus from Sicily took place, largely due to fear of state and mafia retaliations. Verro, for instance, went to prison until 1896, although he subsequently became the town's mayor in the first elections after the introduction of universal suffrage. Capitalising on his Fasci involvement, he sought to establish agrarian cooperatives anew, but he was eventually assassinated by local *mafiosi* in 1915 (Paternostro 1994: 48).

Forming a 'historical bloc', the state soon after allied with the latifundists (Gramsci 2005: 67). Predicting the violent demise of the Fasci, the mafia opportunistically joined the alliance, solidifying the bloc, despite having temporarily allied with the peasant movement just previously (Lupo 1981). The example of Verro illustrates the Fasci intricacies (and contradictions): the fuzzy conceptual and practical boundaries between mafia and anti-mafia led to mutual development and eventual cross-fertilisation, particularly in times of social turmoil against a conservative state, regarding widespread claims for resources. Equally, the mafia arose within peasant mobilisation before turning against it. Specifically, before they resorted to violence, *mafiosi* incorporated and emulated the social alliances they could not control. This has been a key reason for the relative social consensus the mafia has historically enjoyed.

Revolutionary Legality (and Violence) before and after the War

Hobsbawm's take on the mafia might be disagreeable, but his point on the 'entrenched legalism of peasant land invasions' (Hobsbawm 1974: 124) does stand for the immediate post-war period as experienced in Spicco Vallata. In spite of the reputed fascist state's opposition to the

mafia (Duggan 1989), fascism did not challenge the latifundo system's vested interests in maintaining the *gabelloti*, the mafia patrons at the time – middlemen in the agrarian labour market. Local fascists were affiliated with *mafiosi,* and so the latifundia protection (which relied on *gabelloti*) was left intact. *Gabelloti* landholding was a service to the absentee landowners of the big Sicilian estates; in that respect, they occupied middlemen positions between different levels of power, local and broader reaching, securing the landlords' profits through violent means of controlling the local agrarian landless workforce (Blok 1974: 33).

The reproduction of the agrarian bloc within fascism obviously suggests mutual interests of state and mafia (Lupo 1981). Mussolini's 'commitment' to eradicating the mafia was therefore mere rhetoric. Affluent *mafiosi* actively participated in disbanding agrarian cooperatives alongside the fascist police. On a wider scale, anti-socialist sentiment shared by fascists and *mafiosi* aggravated mass labour emigration abroad or to northern Italy, especially for the radically politicised in the *braccianti* movement (Schneider 1990).

Toward the end of World War II, the mafia capitalised on historical changes. Some claim that *mafiosi* assisted the Allied invasion of Sicily (summer of 1943) via flows of intelligence from mafia to the US Navy (Follain 2005), while most dispute the reliability of this story (Lupo 1997; Lupo 2015: 93–112; Mangiameli 2004). The widely held assumption that the US Army reciprocated for this cooperation, assisting mafia political influence across the island during the 'transition to democracy', is definitely debatable (Lupo 2011: 21–33). One thing we cannot afford to overlook, though, is that Cosa Nostra did help contain the reach of communism to Sicily after the leftist Resistance to fascism spread in northern Italy (Robb 2009: 125).

In the meantime, the Spicco Vallata *braccianti,* influenced by the PCI (the Italian Communist Party), took to the fields en masse, occupying the estates under the slogan 'Give the land to those who work it'. This struggle contributed to the latifundo's collapse (Blok 1974: 83). The political future that *braccianti* demanded was nothing less than the collective ownership of the latifundo. The post-war impetus allowed peasants to seize land and transform the exploitative latifundist production system. Events such as the occupation of the Spicco Vallata Drago estate in October 1946 by four thousand peasants, who formed cooperatives to cultivate it, are typical of the movement (Di Matteo 1967: 484). (In an important symbolism, the estate is now cultivated by an anti-mafia cooperative).

Immediately following World War II, the *braccianti*, in a revival of the Fasci, organised communitarian uses of land on the occupied latifun-

dia (Santino 2009) despite 'the anti-bolshevik crusades' of mafia patrons and their co-opted bandits, like the infamous Salvatore Giuliano (Dickie 2004: 210). These land occupations and workers' cooperatives lasted in Spicco Vallata from the Liberation (autumn 1943) to the Portella massacre that took place in Spicco Vallata (spring 1947). The movement's legalist claims found a response and basis for actions in the Gullo Decree Number 279 ('concessions of uncultivated land to farmers', 19 October 1944). The decrees represented a basis for peasant mobilisations and cooperativism that corresponded to the peasantry's 'legalist sense of justice' (Rossi-Doria 1983: 114), as interactions between peasants and political power centred on legislative procedures.

The decrees were laws initiated by Gullo, the communist minister of agriculture in the Italian coalition government formed in April 1944[3]. The minister's policies were embraced by the southern peasantry. Delighted with the cooperative movement, Gullo and his party thought that the extension of cooperative property might offer an impetus for communist influence in Sicily. In the fifth PCI Congress, Gullo and Grieco (prominent MPs in the Constituent Assembly) proposed that 'at all costs, we have to direct the activities of the cooperatives towards collective forms of management. . . . We always have to search cooperativist forms, to encourage the peasants to renounce the constant fragmentation of land [that a reform would bring about]' (in Renda 1977: 60).

A delay in implementing the law angered *braccianti,* who started applying it de facto, occupying the latifundia and forming cooperatives to manage them. The communist minister Gullo's law proposal, expressing solidarity with the rural poor, aimed to capitalise politically on the peasant movement's legalism and supported cooperativist management of land in Sicily as a projection of a collectivist future.[4] The revolutionary legality of the landless peasants was coupled with the most progressive agricultural law in Italian history, allowing *braccianti* to impose, through activist means, legislation suspended by the Italian state.

Blood in Portella

In the regional elections that took place in Sicily on 18 April 1947, the People's Block (Blocco del Popolo, a coalition of the PCI and the socialist party), came first, gaining 30.4 per cent of the vote, and shook the political system. The peasant movement's militancy, coupled with parliamentary representation, aimed to establish a fair agrarian reform that would promote cooperativism.

Signor Nicosia from the Casa del Popolo, who was a twenty-two-year-old *bracciante* at the time of the elections, had joined the communist party and voted for the Popular Block and felt that 'the world had started to make sense at last'. I was struck by his passionate will to share his experience; we sat at the table where he and his friends, such as Signor Schirò, passed most of their day. They were eager to discuss contemporary politics, enjoying the company of the young, and noted that many youngsters' interest in the peasant movement was 'boosted by the [contemporary] anti-mafia cooperatives, which do a good job in keeping our history alive'.

Nicosia then told me about the events at Portella on May Day 1947: as the crowds of largely landless peasants gathered to celebrate a day of rest and post-election political euphoria, gunfire into the crowd of *braccianti* families caused mayhem. Thirteen people from the three villages that led the peasant movement were killed or wounded. People scattered, running across the hills and back to their villages. No one could tell at that point who was shooting: 'bullets came from all sides' (Casarrubea 2005: 250). That the action was promoted by a combination of state secret services, Giuliani's bandits and *mafiosi* is yet to be proven, but this theory is widely held in Spicco Vallata today – as much as the belief that Portella was a warning to the peasant cooperativists to restrain their radicalism. Indeed, the final blow to their political ardour came soon after with the long-awaited 1950 agrarian reform.

Many in the Casa del Popolo were Portella survivors, but they let Signor Nicosia narrate, as his storytelling was most vivid.

> We had won at the eighteenth of April [elections]; we took part in the elections with the Blocco del Popolo, under the flag of Garibaldi. And we took to the street for only the third time after so many years of fascism, to celebrate our victory and the first of May. And Barbato's rock [explained later] was approachable for the first time. That piece of granite stood there in the midst of the place and had become a symbol for the demonstrations. Before and during the early years of fascism the *braccianti* who demonstrated along with their families went there to eat. So we reached that and, as in the days of our fathers, set to munch the bread and onion. And then there was the havoc. The shootings and the running . . . all of a sudden. People started fleeing the place. I was scared. The most incredible thing was the horses' screams . . . like sirens from everywhere around; a hellish sound, very frightening. And we saw horses covered in blood. . . .
>
> [Signor Schirò (interrupting):]
>
> We were the three revolutionary villages. And we took it [to Portella] in Mayday; landless peasants. We made our way to Portella, all hugging each

> other, [people] from San Giovanni, from San Turiddu, on the first of May and other occasions. To celebrate the memory of the Fasci. . . . And in '47, I was, when they started shooting, right by Barbato's rock. I was ten metres away from my uncle who was holding the socialist flag all this time, as people rose from eating and started running around. And in the end there were like six of us [from Cembali] and five from San Giovanni and two from San Turiddu who were shot.

Many of those present in the Casa del Popolo agreed that 'the dead of Portella call for justice; they ask who armed the Portella killers'. An ex-communist, who had fled Sicily for Australia immediately after Portella, told me, 'Not a single president of the republic came over to apologise and honour us for the first massacre of the state [*strage di Stato*] in modern Italian history'. It is widely believed in Spicco Vallata that Portella was the first of many ambiguous violent eruptions in which the state's secret services were involved. Interestingly, people today do not recognise historical borders between mafia and state violence in events like Portella. There is debate among historians about whether the massacre was an ambush of the demonstration by *mafiosi* (Manali 2001) or by the infamous Giuliano gang recruited by *mafiosi* (Dickie 2014; Lomartire 2007) or by an alliance of neo-fascists and US secret services working closely with mafia (Casarrubea 2005: 251). Relations between mafia and banditry in specific moments of historical tensions have also been discussed (Hobsbawm 1965; 1972).

My interlocutors, however, do agree on Portella's solemn commemoration as a site of the 'most dearly felt' May Day celebrations in Sicily – and one of the most important in Italy. The site is visually remarkable. Thirteen rocks lie in symbolic representation of the thirteen people shot dead in the tragic event. A sad poem in the Sicilian dialect is carved on a fourteenth rock, the so-called 'stone of Barbato'.

The Agrarian Reform (and Brokerism Thereof)

Researchers regard the 1950 land reform in Sicily as a 'failure' (Schneider and Schneider 1996: 250–54), 'a failed land reform' that had 'political intentions' (Blok 1974: 79) or an 'anti-reform' or 'counter-reform' (Santino 2009). Since the late 1920s, the PCI had been critical of the long-awaited reform; as Gramsci pointed out:

> The Turin communists . . . warned against 'miraculist' illusions in a mechanical sharing out of the big estates. . . . What can a poor peasant achieve by occupying uncultivated or poorly cultivated lands? Without machinery, without accommodation on the place of work, without credit to tide him

Illustration 3.3: The 'stone of Barbato' with a poem inscribed on it, at the Portella della Ginestra site. Photo by Francisco Calafate.

> over till harvest-time, without cooperative institutions to acquire the harvest. . . . (1927: 5)

With the application of the Gullo decrees to the uncultivated and poorly cultivated lands, the swiftly constituted grassroots agrarian cooperatives managed land across more people, in comparison to the post-reform situation. Cooperatives in 1946 shared more than eighty-six thousand hectares among their fifty thousand members, while the social base of the state's agrarian reform reached in 1950 was more limited

Illustration 3.4: Monument to the mafia's victims in San Giovanni: the intellectual, the peasant and the youth, under the Blocco banner, are portrayed in 'socialist realism' style, while a mother is protecting her wounded child.

in scope (around twenty-five thousand people). A smallholder economy substituted the cooperativist organisation that enabled peasants to bargain collectively in urban markets. The 1950 law aimed at shaping a small-proprietor class, offering land to individual families as opposed to collective organisations. It therefore discouraged the formation of workers' cooperatives and thus simultaneously deprived the locals of what had been their main means of political and anti-mafia organisation. Many peasants, bereft of credit facilities and of any machinery to cultivate the land, became vulnerable, resulting in another wave of mass emigration in the 1950s.

Fragmenting land into family tracts damaged radical *bracciante* cooperativism. Pratt makes a similar case for the 1953 reform in Tuscany,[5] where 'a class of family members emerged not through market forces but through the direct action of the state' (1994: 63), arguing that the de-radicalisation of the PCI-sympathetic ex-sharecroppers was the political aim of the land reform. Gaining not only access to markets but also bargaining power became the peasantry's aim in this new context; this meant sidelining brokers, the role that mafia had come to monopolise.

Anti-mafia mobilisation interacted with legal and policy frameworks and informed the shift from workers' cooperativism to producers' coop-

erativism. There has been a shift in the focus of political struggles regarding alliances, claims and agents, from struggles over land to struggles over markets, where *mafiosi* re-emerge as powerful middlemen in the role of market brokers (*sensali*), the pivotal, shifting moment being the agrarian reform legislation.[6]

'*Sensali*' Brokers and Cooperative Wineries (1960s)

Peasant integration into broader structures took place through struggles to organise the vinification processes, after a gradual transformation from dry farming and pasture into wine grape cultivation. This was pivotal for political alliances and relationships against the local mafia. Mafia brokerage and the political commitment of some locals produced local paths towards cooperativism, as peasants sought to reach urban markets. The cooperative winery developed into the basic unit of production around which interests of various social groups and individuals overlapped, regarding political mobilisation and anti-mafia organisation.

Spicco Vallata viticulturists established cooperative wineries for grape processing and for engaging with the wine trade, as well as for integrating production and commercialisation processes. Viticulture peasants focused first on the process of transforming the grape into a finished product, identifying as the way forward common ownership of technological means to make wine at reduced costs and organising themselves collectively while retaining their families' economic autonomy. As the old (pre-agrarian-reform) co-ops gave way to a new module of cooperativism, cultivators continued the communitarian legacy of the *braccianti* movement while building on the new property dynamics instituted by the reform. The ideology of class was now linked to household sufficiency, as noted in Schneider and Schneider's historical ethnography of a Sicilian village's viticulture economy (1996; cf. Chayanov 1986).

With land reform, vine growers in Spicco Vallata experienced a fairly rapid transition from being *braccianti* to occupying unstable positions in new class formations formulated around small property and precarious livelihoods. In guaranteeing a piece of vineyard to each family, the reform had tackled only one economic grievance. The problem, which inspired cooperative wineries, was the speculative power that the mafia exercised in determining market price. Even in the latifundist period, a rising class had moved out of rent-capitalism to become middlemen (Blok 1974: 67), setting the price of grapes (Bandiera 2003a). Viticultivators needed to process the produce; the establishment of cooperative wineries came as an outcome of this concern.

These middlemen are called *sensali,* the Italian word meaning 'mediator, agent, broker, matchmaker', which is exactly what the Sicilian *sensali* did at the traditional animal fairs and in the markets for grain. The Schneiders call the mafia's control over routes of grain and labour 'broker capitalism' (1976: 160). In Sicily, like elsewhere, broker capitalist activity was identified with the figure of the *sensale,* central to the hinterland's integration into urban markets. As a technology of brokerism, the *sensalismo* is interesting: it overlaps with mafia but maintains degrees of independence from it.

The term is not native to the area; although I have not encountered it in sustained usage outside the valley and western Sicily, the phenomenon is in no way unique to the region of my concern, and certain comparisons can be drawn with other Italian cases (cf. Pratt 2007; 2014). However, the association of *sensali* with mafia and co-ops that tackled them with anti-mafia is a Sicilian particularity that in Spicco Vallata has a specifically pronounced resonance even today, and it is central to comprehend structures and agents of dependency in the region.

The *sensali* worked ('and still do!', as many informants complained) for wine merchants in Palermo, Rome or abroad, buying the harvests of independent producers at low prices. Creating a relative degree of consensus and coordination with each other, they became systemic to the commercialisation of wine. Thanks to this coordination, different mafia clans could guarantee efficiency for their brokerage, evoking Cosa Nostra. In other words, after the agrarian reforms, *mafiosi* clans[7] and their affiliates shifted from controlling people's labour to acting as middlemen between producers and the market.

Threatened by low prices and no bargaining power in the late 1950s, peasants, who themselves or through their broader families (genealogically and laterally) were aware of previous *bracciante* struggles, faced new forms of dependence induced by *sensali* control of prices and markets. This gave rise to further struggles that aimed to address market insecurity. The peasant movement recovered, within a generation, the experience of *braccianti* mobilisations. The winery replaced land as the strategic resource around which peasants' collective claims were formulated: the peasant movement transformed itself into a massive social cooperation grounded in reaching urban markets and avoiding *mafiosi* brokers.

In Spicco Vallata, the cooperative winery Santoleone, established in 1968 and located on the outskirts of San Giovanni, was the main achievement of the cooperative movement's mobilisation. The offspring of a vanguard commitment of local communist peasants, with immediate experiences of mafia violence and family memories of the Fasci, Santoleone began as the cooperative attempt of a few families and spread

through kinship and friendship ties (Terranova 2006). It started to grow in the early 1970s, largely due to the Communist Party's pressure and influence. Attracting state funding, it aimed to incorporate peasants into the political system and contain the mafia's influence. This was partly due to the alliance with the village branch of the CGIL (General Chamber of Labour) union, which lobbied the PCI for support. The cooperative thus had grown *out of* a political movement, established itself *through* political institutions and played a central role in integrating people *into* political parties.

At the time of fieldwork, the Santoleone winery had eight hundred members. Trade unionists I spoke with described this huge enterprise as 'the FIAT of our area' – 'the main source of income for locals' as well as social integration through labour. The winery became, for people in Spicco Vallata, a means of community building and policy making, which also influenced their political representation. The cooperative movement and, with that, the anti-mafia mobilisation of the peasantry peaked in establishing the Santoleone. Giulio Rillo, the middle-aged incumbent president of Santoleone, spoke to me of its origins:

> The Santoleone winery comes from the sixties. . . . It gathered around it the communists of the area; my father was also there. Pino Talano,[8] together with thirty other people, communists and not, created this cooperative because in the area there were people buying grapes from the producer to determine its price, directing everything. . . . There were those people of the area, we call them *i sensali* [this is how the word is pronounced in the area] . . . today they call them brokers. . . . Well, the famous *sensale* decided the price. . . . The word [*sensale*], translated from Arabic, means 'people roaming like this', tradesmen. So, they always decided who acquired the grape – most often they were linked to the mafia, they were *mafiosi*. This is the reason people made the co-op, basically, to avoid the *sensali* activity.

The actual mechanics of co-op wineries are simple: each family harvests their own grapes which are amassed to make wine on a collective vinification site. The integration of producers (around eight hundred members during the 1980s and to this day) into cooperativism generated representatives within the peasant movement who translated this momentum into political power as cooperative wineries have been led by people with explicit political commitments. Nationally, the cooperative movement developed through two opposed routes: 'red', supported by Legacoop and the PCI, and 'white' cooperatives, sustained by Unicoop and the DC. What is distinctive about the Santoleone cooperative is that, by pursuing links to PCI political patronage, it also sought protection against the mafia. In this way, peasants sought to de-provincialise their mafia-related con-

cerns, making sure these are were represented on the state level. Thus, with Santamaria, the anti-mafia movement's politics signified a withdrawal from immediate post-war claims to revolutionary transformation and collective use of land.

In 1994, a local mafia clan burnt the cars and country homes of the Santoleone managers. Local unionists insisted this represented the mafia policy of destroying the efforts to form a cooperative winery, undertaken in order to sideline the mafia *sensali*, gain direct access to markets and consolidate political alliances capable of guaranteeing long-term security against mafia. These responses affected both cooperativism and anti-mafia politics and constituted a backdrop against which anti-mafia cooperatives still operate today, and to which my informants made constant references.

The Contemporary Context: Land Confiscations and Anti-mafia Cooperatives

Members of the anti-mafia cooperatives locate the 'deep historical origins of the anti-mafia movement' in the history of the Sicilian Fasci. I participated in one public commemoration of anti-mafia history held in memory of Bernardino Verro, which took place in front of his statue in Tarini's main town park. People working the confiscated land for the anti-mafia cooperatives[9] told me that it was an 'annual event in memory of a peasant leader who paid for his anti-mafia commitment with his life'. Amongst the attendees were Tarini's mayor and trade unionists. They commemorated the Fasci leader Verro without mentioning his one-time mafia affiliation, indeed stressing his 'sacrifice' in the struggle against the mafia. Tarini's mayor read out a list of people who had been assassinated by local *mafiosi* because of their anti-mafia activity. In a narrative genealogy commencing with Verro, 'the anti-mafia forefather', the list included people as diverse as Placido Rizzotto (a communist trade unionist) and Carlo Alberto Dalla Chiesa (a military police general and the prefect of Palermo).

This commemorative event illustrates how the anti-mafia legacy is renegotiated today. Current anti-mafia activists separate historical actors from their time's messy contingencies to construct a genealogy of names retrospectively cast as 'those sacrificed in the anti-mafia movement'. Today's anti-mafia cooperatives see themselves as the movement's continuation and their unique heirs, able to revisit and represent its legacy. Activists, in such commemorative narratives, evoke a 'selective tradition' comparable to the cultural expressions used by labour aristocracies, as

Gavin Smith notes, to 'represent' the 'cultural survival' of working-class traditions and struggles (1999: 30). The far-right Tarini mayor's position is indicative: he privately told me at the Verro event that he felt isolated, as his anti-mafia commitment derived from the 'fascist anti-mafia struggle', while contemporary anti-mafia cooperatives identified with the communist peasant tradition of Spicco Vallata.

There are reasons to qualify the picture of the historical process peaking in the contemporary cooperatives. As discussed in the book's introduction, the Falcone was established in 2001 and the Borsellino in 2006, while the Lavoro e Altro dated from earlier, even before the Consortium itself, having been set up in 1998. They all drew inspiration from the anti-mafia movement of the past.

Overall, despite the claims to 'continuity' with the struggles of the anti-mafia peasant movement, this inspiration was ideological rather than direct. None of the many people who had been involved in previous social or specifically anti-mafia struggles was involved in the newly created cooperatives. However, Santoleone people like Rillo supported the new cooperatives, as did most trade unionists. Their inspiration from 'red' rather than 'white' cooperativist models came specifically from their administrators' ideological sympathy with the historical peasant movement, their present-day collaboration with 'red' consumer co-ops in Emilia (northern Italy) and involvement in progressive Palermitan civil society. As a proportion of the local population, participation in the cooperatives was small (some 150 people's livelihoods were immediately associated to income from the cooperatives, when in San Giovanni only, the permanent population was approximately 4,500 people). Unlike the history they drew from and referred to, the anti-mafia cooperatives could not accommodate massive popular participation and were not grassroots organisations. But akin to that history, their existence was interlocked with mafia in a number of ways.

One striking way for my interlocutors to remember the anti-mafia movement and claim continuity was to recall instances of mafia violence – and indeed the local event of the Portella massacre. Therefore, similar to building on the Fasci tradition, the anti-mafia co-op members annually participate in the solemn commemoration of Portella della Ginestra. The demonstration to the Portella site is the most dearly felt May Day celebration in Sicily and one of the most important in Italy.

The site is visually remarkable. It is widely believed in Spicco Vallata that Portella was the first of many ambiguous violent eruptions that over the following decades expressed a hidden mafia-state coalition. On May Day 2009, alongside anti-mafia cooperative members, committed

unionists marched in the morning from Piana (four kilometres away) to the site. They were joined there by hundreds of families coming from Palermo in a convoy of cars, parked for a couple of kilometres along the main road linking San Giovanni to Piana. A local brass band played throughout, adding a suggestive note to the day. The celebratory feel peaked when anti-mafia activists walked to 'Barbato stone' to lay their commemorative offerings.

Contemporary anti-mafia cooperatives invest in projects of 'social tourism', which include visits to Portella. During the day, urban visitors sit next to Portella's rocks and hear a guide narrate the 1947 events. Young Palermitans seasonally employed as guides on day contracts by the cooperative Falcone narrate the Portella events by stating that 'the peasants were communists for a piece of bread'. This is characteristic of how contemporary anti-mafia cooperatives downplay issues regarding the 'revolutionary legality' of Spicco Vallata peasants in favour of promoting (and reading historical events through) a moderate political discourse, recognising the importance of employing legality (*legalità*) while de-emphasising the politically radical context in which it developed.

Some of the activity of negotiating the movement's legacy is rooted in the management of material possessions, including land. Today the Falcone anti-mafia cooperative owns the usufruct of a plot confiscated from a Tarinise *mafioso* in the Drago area, outlining a tangible continuity that links contemporary anti-mafia cooperatives to the anti-mafia movement's past. Local narratives claim that this tract of land was the very place where trade unionist Placido Rizzotto made a passionate speech to the gathered *braccianti* before they occupied the estate, faced with the mafia's *gabelloti* violence. The mafia assassinated him in 1948 (Paternostro 1994).

I visited the Drago in the summer to help there with the agricultural works in the wheat field. While there with Piero, a committed left-winger, I realised the poetic flair with which he reflected on the charged history of those land tracts as well as of the anti-mafia movement's history at large. After work, in the midst of the day, we stood at the side of the field, then golden and calmly bent by the soft summer breeze. Lighting a cigarette, his *coppola*, the typically Sicilian flat cap on his hand, he recited a small poem he had written which I have reworked to adjust to English rhyming:

> Sicilian cities' light is distant and pale
> at the dusk, while the winds exhale
> among those great wheat fields of fair.
> With a solemn move, I would lay
> my *coppola* on my chest, and say:
> 'All that is solid melts into thin air'.

We should note the importance of leftist politics in forging this anti-mafia lived memory. In Italy, the PCI has assisted rural working-class people to develop a sense of citizenship and be integrated into Italian politics (Shore 1990; Li Causi 1993). In Tuscany, the PCI was 'the movement . . . [that] produced an historic transformation of peasants into citizens, able for the first time to claim rights and participate in a political and civic culture . . . [and] should be assessed on the same terms as other civil rights movements' (Pratt 2003: 85). The specificity of Sicily in this citizenship-building configuration, as regards rural communism (represented by *braccianti* unionists and backed by PCI politicians) is that it was co-articulated with the pursuit of 'revolutionary legality'.

The emergence of 'revolutionary legality' is critical not only because it marks out how Sicily is different from other cases where occupations are self-consciously in defiance of a legal order (see, e.g., Sitrin 2012) but also because, although born in rural areas, it developed with the civic engagement of the urban anti-mafia later (Schneider and Schneider 2001: 432). Sicily in the late 1940s became a point of compromise, where leftist politicians managed to get a legal framework friendly to occupations and cooperativisation organised by landless workers, because conservative forces assumed that these would never be enforced; mafia was the on-the-ground force that ensured this. This signified an unusual situation where occupations were often at least ostensibly legal. This different orientation to legality in the Sicilian left is central to current anti-mafia configurations (Rakopoulos 2014a: 115).

Reflecting on the theme of continuity and transformation in the historical trajectory of today's anti-mafia cooperatives, I should note that the contemporary cooperatives *are* expressions of some historical continuity in that they are both worker-based and producer-based cooperativist configurations. They also reflect a qualitative transformation in the anti-mafia movement in that today there are no mafia-related struggles over either land or access to markets. The social struggles of the anti-mafia movement today do not face outright mafia's violence, although mafia agents are still active. Rather than having to face mafia patronage or brokerage, the cooperatives are *assuming the mafia's control over* material resources. The struggle is now around the usufruct rights to land and the ways the land plots are managed vis-à-vis the local social arrangements around them. The struggles around usufruct are akin to the pre-agrarian-reform mobilisations, while attempts at commercialisation are akin to post-reform. Most importantly, struggles against the mafia now have different priorities. While in the past cooperatives were channels to *avoid* mafia influence (*gabelloti* patrons, *sensali* brokers), anti-mafia cooperativ-

ism today aims at *attacking* mafia: anti-mafia has become the end of cooperativism, not its means.

The negotiation of this legacy is tense. As Smith notes, activists 'select out from and reformulate various patterns of tradition' (1999: 188); this also characterises the anti-mafia cooperatives leaders' depiction of the area's cooperativism and anti-mafia history. Cooperative models in Sicily where cooperativism is mingled saliently with the anti-mafia movement are adaptable to local contexts – and give voice to inchoate local desires.

Sharing History: Of Anti-mafia and Cooperatives

The historical case of cooperativism in Sicily shows that specific circumstances on the ground associated with mafia activity and the peasant movement's anti-mafia responses have rendered peasant cooperativism a practice both distinct in its Sicilian specificities *and* contextualised in two different circumstances in the history of Spicco Vallata, before and after the agrarian reform. Contemporary anti-mafia cooperatives capitalise on *both* traditions described through the historical discussion above: the post-reform autonomous producers' *and* the pre-reform workers' cooperativism. They are workers' cooperatives with an explicit anti-mafia stance, more akin to 1940s Spicco Vallata cooperativism. At the same time, they retain elements of producers' cooperativism in that they are supported by the state (a configuration where politics has shifted against the mafia), hence resembling the cooperativism of the 1960s and onwards.

Cooperativism as a cultural construct and set of practices is thus, in Sicily, adapted to the circumstantial ideological weight it carried in these two different periods. Its practicalities were informed by anti-mafia commitment: cooperativism became a model of organisation (as well as an ideal of organising to avoid or confront the mafia), alongside exploitative landlords and distant urban markets. It has been 'transplanted' in the current configuration of anti-mafia cooperatives.

Their commemorations and general rhetoric draw on both of these traditions: their members speak of 'thin red lines', linking these experiences. The convergence between (most) peasants' positive stance towards law as a means of change and (some) politicians' support for the peasant struggles produced a form of 'revolutionary legality' that has, to a degree, been rejuvenated in today's anti-mafia movement. Its actors' claims to revolutionary legality, their rhetoric of 'reclaiming the commons' and the fact that they do not own the land they cultivate, having

only usufruct rights to it, strongly echo older developments of Sicilian anti-mafia cooperativism. This resemblance is, importantly, utilised ideologically by cooperative administrators. Anti-mafia mobilisation is based on a model of cooperativism akin to collectivism: the peasants set up *worker-cooperatives*, based on land owned by the state. This forms collectivist claims, which are unrealistic, as the Consortium restitutes land back to an imaginary 'collective'.

Nevertheless, this (largely imagined) legacy has to be taken into account. What is more, there are particularities in the uncomfortable interrelationships in the modernisation of rural Sicily. These interlinked histories urge us to think of mafia and anti-mafia as not necessarily independent concepts across a strict dichotomy but as two sides of the same coin of Sicilian modernisation, where cooperativism has been present. The mafia's continuity as an organisation and its strategic transformation from a pre-agrarian-reform, quasi-latifundist network of violent *gabelloti* patrons to a post-agrarian-reform nexus of coordinated *sensali* brokers was crucial for the intersections of political economy and culture in Spicco Vallata. Mafia activity and peasant organisation against it – as well as the local interpenetration of anti-mafia and cooperative formations – have conditioned local particularities of cooperativism and political culture. Contesting *mafiosi* shaped the peasant movement *as anti-mafia*, contributing to the establishment of local cooperative wineries and, through them, to wider political structures, such as the PCI. This reference to wider structures has an impact in anti-mafia cooperativism today, too, as will be seen in the next chapter.

NOTES

Some of the material in this chapter has also been published as 'Cooperative Modulations: The Anti-mafia Movement and Struggles over Land and Cooperativism in Eight Sicilian Municipalities' (2014).

1. See Charlton et al. (2006) and Portelli (1991; 1997) for methodological issues in collecting oral accounts.
2. The Fasci Siciliani dei Lavoratori movement has nothing to do with Fascism. Mussolini appropriated this term from left-wing terminology of the 1920s when establishing his movement (Mack Smith 1983), much in the same way National Socialism was configured in late-1920s Germany.
3. In the coalition, the conservative Christian Democracy (DC) party was in the majority but the PCI also participated. The coalition collapsed due to Cold War tensions when the communists were thrown out of government in 'the May 1947 crisis' – partly induced by the dramatic events of Portella (Ginsborg 2003a: 111–13).

4. 'The cooperative is the cell of the future socialist organisation', noted Gullo (in Rossi-Doria 1983: 106).
5. Tuscany offers a well-researched case on politicised agrarian cooperativism at large, where the Communist Party had already been encouraging producers to cooperate since the 1950s (Pratt 1994: 71).
6. The scheme I suggest is not all-encompassing and allows for differentiated routes to development of collective action – as well as for its disintegration. For instance, the collapse of the regional association of left cooperatives (USCA) was due to corrupt practices internal to USCA rather than the outcome of mafia activity (Sabetti 2002: xi).
7. I take into account the attempt by historical anthropologists to see 'clan' as a male brotherhood, a horizontal coalition of men whose interests lie in controlling female production and reproduction (Tillion 1983; Goody 1983; 2000). 'Mafia' could be approached in a similar way, construed in different ways from setting to setting. The ways the *clan* category is used in historical anthropology by Europeanists such as Goody (1973; 1976; 1983) are different from its emic use in Italian public discourse such as the media. Libertà and other NGOs, and the two most militant anti-mafia newspapers (*Repubblica*'s Palermo supplement, and the weekly *'S'*), both left-leaning, use 'clan' to delineate male brotherhoods' horizontal, compact alliances as opposed to descent-based kinship relations. Italian state agents, such as the Consortium, tap into this discourse of the need for a move 'from the clans to the state' (*'S'* vol. 16). For an African example that suggests different lineage continuities, see Gray and Gulliver (2004). See also page 90 for a hint on the differences between clan and family.
8. As portrayed in the book-homage to him entitled *The Man of the Vines* (*L'uomo delle vigne*, Terranova 2006), Pino Talano, eighty-two when I met him, was still loyal to the PCI, which he thought was capable of anti-mafia struggle. 'He has the stubborn mind of a peasant', was the benevolent, yet somehow harsh, comment of Luca, when I asked him about Talano.
9. Referring to a plot as Falcone's or Borsellino's and so on is obviously not literally correct, as the confiscated plots belong to the state and are only leased for free. However, everyone I met used terms that implied ownership when referring to 'our cooperative's plots'.

Chapter 4

Worldviews of Labour

Legality and Food Ideologies

This book opened with Giampiero's views on the changes in local labour regimes brought in by the co-ops. The same administrator admitted in an interview that 'the wallet' was not always enough to 'shift ideas', as 'the peasants of San Giovanni, those under contract labour from the cooperatives, our member-workers . . . are not anti-mafia [*loro non sono anti-mafia*]'.

This critique of these 'not sufficiently anti-mafia' ideas of the local workers often resonated with the negotiation of the co-ops' food production policies, as set by administrators. Once, Mina, Falcone's vice president, had invited Flavio, a representative of Bolognese left-wing consumer cooperative CoopBrino, to come to San Giovanni to liaise with people from the cooperatives as a business partner because CoopBrino had just signed a business agreement to distribute the anti-mafia cooperatives' produce in Bologna. This was a success, as it sealed links between north-

Illustration 4.1: Commercial fairs, family and enterprise: an instance where members of the two teams came together. Here, a manual worker (Adamo, with his daughter Marella) and an administrator (Giusy) co-host a stand with the products of the Falcone cooperative on display at a fair in Palermo.

ern Italian consumer co-ops and the anti-mafia cooperatives. I accompanied some of my research interlocutors as they fetched him from Trapani airport. As we returned to the village, Flavio mentioned that he found San Giovanni repulsive; he said to me that the village looked like a zoo, and the locals ('imbued with mafia,' he commented) were the animals in the zoo. He imagined that it must take a lot of effort to collaborate with the locals and even suggested that I should call myself 'not an ethnologist' (anthropologist) 'but an ethologist'. This chapter will attempt to explain this animosity and the socio-cultural chasm this implies.

The chapter, as well as the next one, aims to elucidate how two main ideologies that drove the anti-mafia cooperativist endeavour are framed and deployed by the cooperatives. These ideologies fortressed the co-ops as an enclave, sealing them away from local society to a certain extent – at least on paper. They are in a way antithetical, but the choice to analyse them with some sense of narrative continuity and in quite some detail is not arbitrary: they formulate fields of contestation across and over which divisions among and between those labouring in the co-ops are born and developed. These ideologies concern food activism processes and attitudes on food value and values, an issue around which many a movement and associations strive (Siniscalchi 2013a; Luetchford and Pratt 2014). What follows in this chapter concerns ideologies of food and their impact on internal divisions in the co-ops.

An anthropological discussion of cooperatives' promotion of food activism and overall attitudes to food production and distribution necessitates paying attention to the diverse subjective degrees of identification with such claims, which can vary for the different work groups developed within such organisations, especially between a 'production' and a 'consumption/distribution' team. In fact, I propose that food activism claims are part of what makes divisions of labour within cooperatives more pronounced, in stark contrast with cases where democracy is the most central aim – at a local and global level – for food activists, and indeed contradicting the very meaning of cooperativism as industrial democracy.

There are three points here, all converging to elucidate how the administration of the co-ops see their endeavour as an enclave of good economic practice. First, in ethical production-oriented cooperatives, internal stratifications go well beyond systems of voting and reflect divisions among the workforce in terms of remuneration and ideology; second, food activism can be a set of principles that cooperative administrators identify with more than workers do; and, third, a group's area of responsibility – production or consumption – influences the degree to which their attitudes are shaped as claims to partake in 'food activism' or not.

To trace the local situatedness of food activism ethics – that is, the ethical configurations accompanying people's commitment to collective mobilisation around issues related to food – it is necessary to discuss the character of the confiscation process as well as the cooperatives' organisation of labour. To that end, this chapter will scrutinise the cooperatives, describing what they do, how they are organised, what the important roles are, what the relations are between members, and how they carry out food activism.

Divisions in Labour, Fractures of Food

Divisions

As already discussed, there were two types of cooperative members – administrators and manual workers. The difference between members and other ('daily') workers came down, firstly, to contracts: members had permanent contracts, although there were important distinctions between administrator-members and worker-members concerning levels of remuneration and timing of payment, as well as periods and time frames of actual work. (While administrator-members enjoyed professional terms of continuous work, worker-members were restricted by their permanent contracts, receiving actual work and pay for *only* the agricultural season; only three worker-members had a monthly wage). The second key feature distinguishing members from non-member daily workers was democratic participation, meaning that all members sat on the Members' Assembly, which met annually. By contrast, non-member daily workers signed three-month contracts for seasonal agrarian work and were paid on a daily basis, but they had no rights to democratic participation. (To tell them apart, as and where appropriate, from the worker-members, I use the terms 'daily workers' or '*braccianti*'.)

However, the member/non-member distinction is misleading. On the one hand, worker-members and daily workers had much in common despite the (undeniably significant) difference between stable employment and short-term contractual work. Manual members' work (and hence pay) was as seasonal as that of most daily workers. Due to their similar salary, work and living conditions, the situation of the daily workers was similar to the permanent worker-members with whom they identified, as they equally considered themselves 'parts of the cooperative' (see table 4.1).

Table 4.1 General Information about the Spicco Vallata Cooperatives

Name	Location	Land	Other assets	Organisational affiliation	Established
Lavoroealtro	Riccardo	130 ha in Spicco Vallata (of which 14 ha is vineyards) 19 ha in Canicattí (100 km away)	An agrotourism establishment opened in 2010	Arci	May 1999
Liberanima	Partinico Legal seat: San Giovanni	3 ha of lemon grove	—	Libertà	July 2007
Borsellino	San Giovanni	130 ha in Spicco Vallata (32 of which is vineyards) 20 ha in Casteltermini (110 km away)	An agrotourism establishment opened in 2010	Libertà	June 2006
Falcone	San Giovanni	155 ha (30 of which is vineyards) 50 ha from the municipalities of Trapani e Paceco (100 km away)	A winery (Cento) An agrotourism establishment opened in 2006	Libertà	June 2001

On the other hand, there were crucial differences *among* members, between the administrator and worker-members. In that respect, diverging from a marked tendency in anthropology of work to distinguish between workers in stable employment and contractual workers,[1] I focus on another distinction: stratification *within* those in stable employment (administrators and worker-members), not least because the latter, more often than not, were allied with daily workers.[2] The two-tiered organisation of all Spicco Vallata cooperatives (which, in turn, established a pattern followed by anti-mafia cooperatives elsewhere outside Sicily) is a salient issue, with repercussions in terms of class, ethics, relatedness and the overall meaning of participation in anti-mafia cooperativism. As the mechanics of voting and 'collective' decision-making were not often disputed in the field, and as internal stratifications go well beyond systems of voting, I shall not dwell on this theme in my ethnographic narrative.

In fact, although bereft of voting rights in the cooperatives, daily workers shared a similar experience (and status) with worker-members due to their commonalities (and shared values). In addition, worker-members, as members, had the burden of sharing potential losses in the cooperative. The lack of 'voice' in the co-ops, associated with membership and its recurring stable employment, did not mark out a broad stratification along the lines of membership/non-membership as much as the issue of livelihoods did. In fact, it is part of my argument that, in order to understand internal divisions within cooperatives we need to move, both methodologically and analytically, beyond a focus on schemes of decision-making – not least because they have been appropriated by techniques of 'governance', as the relevant literature notes (Zamagni and Zamagni 2010). It is telling data, nonetheless, to juxtapose with cooperatives' 'participatory democracy' the fact that the Falcone, Borsellino and Lavoroealtro all had a similar mode of collective management whereby the ideas of the administration teams dictated the overall planning.

In all three, this was arranged in two decision-making bodies. Firstly, the Administration Council, which met monthly, and where only 5 members voted. Electing the Council was among the duties of the annual Members' Assembly, where all members had a vote. I observed Administration Council meetings in the three co-ops. In the two co-ops' assemblies I followed in 2008 and 2009, all decisions by the councils were approved with a 100 per cent majority, including the councils' annual planning and previous year's balance (*bilancio*). The assembly also elected the members for the next year's council, constantly electing a majority of administration members over worker-members (thus, for each cooperative, three administrator-members and two worker-members) and

without exception reflecting the views of the Consortium and Libertà. As for the significance of the Members' Assemblies as 'democratic participation', it would suffice to quote the opinion of Mina, Falcone's vice president, which she confided to me just after one of the co-op's annual assembly meetings: 'Well yes, the assembly is important, but too much democracy can be a waste of time when deciding things corporate; we need organisation and quick decisions.'

While highly suggestive, this data on its own cannot provide the necessary nuances of what the administrator/worker division of labour in politically driven cooperativism really meant for the lives and livelihoods of worker-members. Where collective decision-making falls short of 'industrial democracy' (Holmström 1989), this is the *outcome* rather than the reason for internal stratifications. The reasons, as shown here and in the remainder of this book, lay mostly *outside* the cooperatives framework: in the backgrounds of the members, in the broader social relationships in which they were embedded, and in how these related differentially to the political project guiding the co-ops. For this reason, I shall not explore the typical and typified decision-making processes in cooperatives in my ethnography. I shall, instead, examine disagreements, splits and conflicts in the workplace and beyond, as indicative of opinions challenging the legality-oriented ideology of the cooperatives that were never expressed in the democratic bodies of the organisations, at least not during my fieldwork.

Food and Legality: Ideological Overlaps of Administrators

As discussed, anti-mafia cooperatives make explicit references to a political struggle waged against the mafia. 'Legality', an activist and ethical embracing of the law, was members' constant point of reference. The term stems from the history of the anti-mafia movement and has been unrelated to other food ethics claims so far, despite having been a central tenet of the production of 'democratic' public discourse in Italy (Ginsborg 2003a: 145; Santino 2002; Schneider and Schneider 2003, 2005) and potentially associated with a vocal civil society (Pizzini-Gambetta 2006). Their organic produce, small in production volumes but highly valued, quickly established the cooperatives as niche exporters of quality food from the island to northern Italy and a number of foreign countries and attracted the attention of many (often international) food reviews and magazines. Journalists noted, in a leitmotif phrase, the 'combination of nature and

culture' represented by the organic foodstuffs cultivated on confiscated land (e.g., Self 2009).

Through the discussion of the cooperatives' social composition I elucidate two issues. I first look at how internal divisions impeded cooperative arrangements of internal democracy and associated food-activist claims with administrators more than with workers. Second, I trace how these divisions were, to an extent, the outcome of food-activism commitments. In that respect, I aim to show how cooperatives' food-activism goals often do not necessarily abide by or nurture industrial democracy but actually hinder it.

In the anti-mafia co-ops' case, this process was conveyed in a two-tiered organisation, whereby administrators embraced food-activist principles more than workers did. Disseminating the co-ops' reputation, distributing the produce and promoting consumption were the work of administrators. Using websites, leaflets and newsletters, Libertà endorsed what Lino, a co-op administrator, described to me as 'the continuation of the anti-mafia movement's history' (as discussed in the previous chapter). Many administrators were Libertà members, and therefore Libertà influenced the administration's collective decisions substantially. As Checco, the cooperatives' thirty-year-old public relations manager, once told me, the food and wine produced symbolised 'a sense of purity: being the fruit of both organic agriculture *and* legality processes.' Checco noted many times in our interlocutions that awareness of food ethics and anti-mafia awareness were two sides of the same coin for the cooperatives. Libertà, whose Palermitan branch was most active in the cooperatives' marketing, called the cooperatives' foodstuffs and wine 'pure' and 'ethical.' Giampiero, the thirty-two-year-old vice president of Libertà Palermo and a member of the Borsellino cooperative, told me that '*because* of this twofold approach' (anti-mafia and organic), buying their produce implied 'ethical consumption.'

My informants among Palermitan administrators, who were also members of Libertà, stressed the 'purity' (*purezza*) of their produce. They argued, in different circumstances, that the foodstuffs they produced participated in a 'virtuous economic circle': the foods and wine were 'the products of legality in all respects.' Specifically, the administrators underlined that the foods the cooperatives produced were cultivated on legally expropriated land using organic agriculture, which guaranteed that their production was socially and environmentally fair. Moreover, distribution took place through consumer cooperatives as well as through outlets organised by Addiopizzo.[3] Piero, the Borsellino cooperative's agronomist, told me once that this fact was a way to be in line with their food ethics

and politics. 'It is legality all the way,' Luca, the Falcone cooperative's president, noted in an interview. This idea of legality keyed in well with the administrators' sense that they operated within 'virtuous networks' of meritocracy (as explained in the next chapter).

Cooperative administrators promoted in a series of leaflets and newsletters and explained in interviews the idea that their products (organic wine, pasta and legumes) embodied – in a play on words – 'the fairness/the taste of Sicily' (*Il g(i)usto di Sicilia*). It is significant to acknowledge that this articulation of nature and culture emphasises the incarnation in the landscape of anti-mafia activism. Linking nature and culture in presenting food-activist claims is a central tenet of some associations, such as Slow Food (Petrini 2001: 8; Siniscalchi 2013a). Recent studies have explored and problematised Slow Food's interacting principles of economy/ecology (Siniscalchi 2013b). The choice to cultivate organic foods (one not necessarily shared by workers) is, in that sense, the outcome of a series of interlocked conditions: it appears 'fair' and 'alternative' (to the dominant system of food distribution as well as to the hegemonic mafia influence in Sicily), but, eventually, it serves a marketing logic. It is sealed in an understanding of an economic enclave that starts in confiscation and ends in the 'fair and good' food on the table. The commercial recognition of this choice is supported by a system of northern Italian consumer cooperatives in ways that underline how the negotiation of the anti-mafia legality claims contribute significantly to the branding of the cooperatives' products. This backing also has a Sicilian counterpart in the form of Addiopizzo, an anti-racketeering association, that has managed to organise a number of Palermo small store owners and small businessmen against Cosa Nostra's *pizzo* (racket) (see Gunnarson 2015). Addiopizzo also backed the Libertà co-ops and their food-activist beliefs.

While all the workers I spent time around insisted that organic agriculture and anti-mafia activism were not their primary concerns, the middle-class anti-mafia cooperative administrators constantly negotiated the discourse of legality in ways that matched current food-marketing needs. Their activity merged leisure with work, as they often met on occasions such as the biannual Addiopizzo feast or film evenings organised by Libertà; several of their friends worked at these events. In the words of Checco, attending such events was not only political socialisation but also an 'ethical obligation vis-à-vis their social allies' (such as the Addiopizzo and the consumer co-ops that distributed their products). It involved the promotion of their products in stands that also showcased Libertà leaflets that informed the public on anti-mafia initiatives, such as demonstrations and talks in schools.

As Ernesto, a Falcone administrator, told me once, their work entailed 'a mission' to link food with anti-mafia ideas: this was their 'cultural project.' In order to explore this cultural project in Palermo and San Giovanni, I organised focus groups in which the administrators of the cooperatives participated. In these meetings, Ernesto solemnly stated that the administrators 'embodied' civil society principles for San Giovanni as well as the 'mission' to develop organic agriculture in Spicco Vallata, an asset underestimated by local peasants. Their mission to produce organically on the confiscated land entailed negotiating a balance between the northern Italian consumer cooperatives that were their business collaborators and the local peasants working as manual labourers for the anti-mafia cooperatives. In the negotiation of food activism among anti-mafia cooperative members, fissures did not arise as to whether activism should be focused on production (more associated with manual workers) or consumption (the task of administrators), since the administrators – who liaised with the consumer cooperatives of northern Italy – monopolised the cooperatives' strategic production of discourse on marketing and food activism. The local peasants of Spicco Vallata, working in the cooperatives in working-class posts, were viewed as outsiders to this process.

Cooperative administrators complained about the locals' 'aesthetics', suggesting that the entire village had been constructed on the back of mafia-related *speculazione edilizia* (real estate speculation), done as cheaply as possible. In fact, many people visiting the village found the derelict facades of most houses embarrassing. Consumer cooperative representatives often came from Bologna (the capital of Emilia in northern Italy) to visit the anti-mafia cooperatives and confirm their collaboration. They compared San Giovanni to impoverished Bolivian villages they had visited while backpacking.

I already referred to the case when Flavio, a representative of CoopBrino, came to San Giovanni. That very week, another CoopBrino representative from northern Italy, Rosy Fernasi, had expressed to me, in private, that she 'shared what my Libertà friends think of this place: it's pretty crap'. But this was a private interlocution between Fernasi and me, whereas the Flavio event took place in a car with other co-op administrators. Flavio and I were strangers to the island and Spicco Vallata, differently interested in the cooperatives, and the administration team thought they should somehow disassociate from his opinion.

Specifically, later the same day as Flavio's remark, Luca was somewhat embarrassed and apologetic towards me regarding Flavio's ideas. Flavio being their business partner through CoopBrino, Luca thought he should stress that he found Flavio's remark offensive, although he had laughed

when he had uttered it. Moreover Luca wished to clarify that the cooperatives had a specific role in the area, often not understood either by locals or by their Emilian partners:

> Here [in San Giovanni] we find ourselves [he spells each syllable out clearly and raises his voice] in an *unevolved* society (*una società non-evoluta* [emphasis added]) – not only due to the presence of the mafia but also due to the fact that income, culture and social status are in such a condition that the only thing that matters to people is the price [of the produce]. That's it. It is not important *how* something is produced – the only thing that matters is its price, nothing else. And since I work in San Giovanni and not in Bologna, I have an eye open for all the world market but I pay attention on how to impose change on this reality.

Luca's disassociation from Flavio's point is then only partial. The vignette above, as well as Luca's words, point to a classic theme: food ethics do not mean the same thing across classes, and the negotiation of a past that constructs a retrospective genealogy of ethical food production associated with peasant struggles and constitutes current food production as part of a broader activism is also informed by class (cf. Pratt 2007). The relative distance in the above quotations, between the different work groups of the cooperatives, underlines that conceptualisations of agrarian change should take class dynamics seriously (Bernstein 2010).

This is influenced by the administrators' participation in the values of the recent anti-mafia movement, in which Libertà plays a crucial role. The managerial roles of certain people (like Mina, Ernesto and Luca) in associations such as the NGO Libertà on the one hand and the cooperatives on the other are central to the merging of two parallel types of discourse (the anti-mafia movement and food ethics). At the same time, local workers, more focused on their own farms' produce, were absent from this configuration. This was reflected in the two-tiered organisation of the cooperatives.

Mina, Giampiero, Luca and several other administrators insisted, in several interviews, that in order to support food ethics, and in order to guarantee the distribution of their *g(i)usto* product and the dissemination of anti-mafia activism alongside and through the produce, hierarchical principles of labour should be applied to the cooperatives. Mina was one of the administrators who was more involved with promoting the cooperatives as ethical food and wine producers. Part of her job was to nurture and develop the business partnership of two Spicco Vallata cooperatives (Falcone and Borsellino) with consumer co-ops in northern Italy, where their produce was distributed. This work often raised issues of prioritis-

ing a politicised marketing of the products, often by downplaying equal work relations and particularly democracy within the co-ops.

Workers: Worldviews Apart?

The peasants of the cooperatives that Giampiero referred to were the people in the manual workforce who were either members of the cooperatives or day labourers; alongside their cooperative employment, they were also smallholders.[4] They earned wages from the cooperatives by working in the confiscated land plots and also worked on their own land tracts (*pezzi di terra*), mostly vineyards. One such case was Pippo Pitrè, a fifty-eight-year-old from San Giovanni, who used to be a member of the Borsellino cooperative but had resigned a few months before I met him. His resignation was due to conflicts with the administration over the fact that, as a member-worker, he did not receive a monthly wage. This mishap took place over a misunderstanding about work the Borsellino administrators thought he had offered voluntarily, helping out another co-op. When Pippo retrospectively demanded wages, he was astounded to hear that he had been 'a volunteer'. He eventually decided to go back to work as a daily worker for the Falcone, as he needed some income. I rented the apartment he owned at the centre of the village. Pippo's family lived in a farmhouse two kilometers outside the village, as they preferred the tranquility of that area. His wife Maria, sixteen years his junior, did not work outside the home; they had a seventeen-year-old daughter, Elena.

As I had become good friends with Pippo, the Pitrè family often invited me for dinner. After a day of work in the vineyards of the cooperatives, Pippo regularly asked me to join him in his house for a warm dish of pasta with vegetables from his garden, cooked by Maria. As we sat gathered around the table, he would boast that we were enjoying his 'own wine,' comparing it to the cooperative's: 'the cooperative wine is too commercial,' while the wine from his vineyard was 'authentic and pure.'

He was proud that he cultivated the red Nero D'Avola variety at 670 meters above sea level, as it is very difficult to grow red grapes at such a high altitude. 'That's the heroism, that's what's really difficult,' he said, 'not just co-op activism.' Pippo was also proud of the fact that he matured the wine in his 'cellar' (in fact, the garage). Like other daily cooperative workers, he thought homemade conventional wine was qualitatively superior to the organic wine made at the cooperatives' winery. For him, the only advantage of the cooperative production of bottled

organic wine was that they produced it on a larger scale; in terms of quality, 'his wine' was superior. Pippo, like many other peasants working in the cooperatives but also maintaining their own – conventional, not organic – vineyards and farms, could not conceive why organic produce was any better than 'the local, traditional one', as he put it. Tano, another worker, emphasised to me that while he enjoyed working in the co-ops' vineyards, he much preferred his own: 'There is more meaning in working my own land, despite what people [administrators] say about organic agriculture and activism. My own product is better.'

It is telling to juxtapose with cooperatives' 'participatory democracy' the fact that Falcone, Borsellino and Lavoroealtro all had similar modes of collective management whereby the ideas of the administrative teams dictated the overall planning. The main actors in the cooperatives' decision-making, the Palermitan administrators, engulfed food activism by way of democratic politics. This meant working in terms of a conceptual enclave: fusing the ideology of a pure political system (free from mafia) with the idea of a pure system of consuming ethical, organic foods. Doing this, however, comes with costs for the internal democracy within the cooperatives.

This was reflected, importantly, in contested notions across teams' views over such issues as danger and safety or the freedom of speech (see also Rakopoulos 2015c for a lengthy commentary). Across such differences among the work teams, (ideas on) the relative safety of interlocutors and anthropologist sometimes conflicted. For instance, Adamo, a forty-year-old agricultural member-worker of Falcone from San Giovanni, commented on my unwillingness to meet a *mafioso* recently out of prison, calling me 'a pussy and a fake anthropologist' and suggesting that 'a real man and a proper anthropologist should be into this kind of stuff'. The *mafioso* was a friend of his; Adamo insisted I meet him. For Adamo, the danger in this case was if the office-based administrators found out about our dealings, as this could have had consequences for his position as a member of the cooperative. I felt I had to find a balance between the danger of being challenged by his perceptions of what constituted a 'real man' and a 'real anthropologist' and the danger of being discovered by members of the office team as someone who had relations with 'the mafia'.

Adamo often emphasised the fluidity of relations with mafia, arguing that mafia and anti-mafia were distinct but did not constitute two worlds apart. As he had told me, in connection with another instance, 'the mafia is eternal in San Giovanni: as omnipresent as the fog is in your London'. Hence, while mafia clans' inter-relations are unpredictable, *the mafia* is

seen as a constant, much as 'family is the centre of Sicilian life' as earlier anthropological research stated in a, slightly debatable by now, fashion (Boissevain 1966: 19; but see Rakopoulos 2017a).

The main sense of unease I had was not from Adamo's comments or my own sense of safety, which I understood was guaranteed due to my friend's linking me with the *mafioso*; it was, rather, that there was a danger that the cooperatives' anti-mafia-committed administrators would find out about that link. That Adamo, his mafia friend Gioacchino and I had 'dealings' should have to stay a secret, because if the administrators found out, it might lead to grave consequences for Adamo's position as a cooperative member. Adamo, like everyone else in the co-ops, was not free to express any positive views about people he liked who happened to be mafia members, let alone to bring others into contact with *mafiosi*. His stance, although not identifying with the silent mafia person, was removed from the views of (most of) the members of the anti-mafia team who condemned anyone who had relations with the mafia.

Some days after I had met Gioacchino and interviewed him, thirty-one-year-old Marelio, an administrative member of Falcone, called me in. Marelio had overheard me talking on the phone and suspected I had dealings with *mafiosi*. Finding this situation dangerous, he asked for details. I clarified that I could not share information with him in order to protect informants. He commented that I was buying into *omertà*, and thus the dangerous ethics of the mafia code of silence. He therefore identified what anthropologists perceive as ethical behaviour, with mafia morality. Silvio, the thirty-four-year-old president of Borsellino and also an administrator, heard about my contact with Adamo and the *mafioso* through local gossip. He thought my contacts with 'the mafia' put me in danger and suggested disciplining the person who had led me to establish bridges between 'the cooperative and the mafia'. This was the danger Adamo had mentioned, as it imperilled his job. Thankfully, he was never disciplined.

This event elucidates the subtle ethical challenges I faced during fieldwork. Codes of conduct were informed by the cooperative distribution of labour (influenced by people's class and other backgrounds), revealing the often contradictory morals that separated colleagues in the cooperative, who were divided across the distribution of labour, personal background, participation in local kinship and friendship networks. It also shows the relationality of my research position – contingent to each *specific* relationship I established with people. In the background is the heavily gendered nature of my fieldwork, as 'being a man' was understood as a performed pattern of behaviour that I had to live up to in order to fulfil expectations some interlocutors had for me. Episodes like this

allowed me to reflect on my gendered position in the field and on how the (arguably rigid) ethics of anthropological fieldwork often contrast indigenous ideas about respectability, as the fact that confidentiality was glossed as '*omertà*' shows.

An anthropology of such divisions, then, underlines the issue of subjectivity in discussing economic organisation and food ethics and values where often a distance between local and 'authentic' is present (Pratt 2007) – in this case, across divisions of labour. Specifically, it is impossible to conceptualise cooperatives as united, cohesive actors in democratic mobilisation over food concerns. On the contrary, claims about food ethics can often underline, and deepen, already existing internal divisions of labour. The positions of workers and administrators (the latter being the real actors of activism in Sicily, rather than the 'cooperatives' they compose) are influenced, among other issues, by their position vis-à-vis food and legality ethics and their overall viewpoints on production as well as their commitment to anti-mafia principles.

Differences across Foodways and Law

The idiom 'legality' informs conceptualisations of food ethics and activism in contemporary Italy. The class-situatedness of this ethics, and the associated political activism from which it derives, is the key point for conceptualising anti-mafia food activism in Sicily today. Administrators stress the discourse on organic production and on anti-mafia principles, while their co-members – the local workers – are less interested in framing their activity in these terms. It is important to conceptualise food activism as a classed element of cooperative ideology. Administrators are invested in shaping the cooperatives towards ethical consumption, while producers (local worker-members) identify much less with these proclaimed characteristics. This is identified both in how workers think of their activity (prioritising their own produce over the cooperatives') and in how administrators think of their colleagues' commitment (which they see as relatively low).

Internal democracy in cooperatives draws from the ideological interaction of food activism and legality activism, wherein the administrators 'guide' the co-ops in their mastering of the food ethics and anti-mafia discourses. Much change has taken place in a shift towards the study of food consumption since, say Goodman and DuPuis' essay (2002) that noted an asymmetry, with production weighing heavier in terms of scholarly focus (such change acknowledged in, e.g., Klein and Murcott 2014).

Production of food in a co-op environment is not endowed with the same attitude across workers: the obvious two-tiered organisation of labour in the agrarian anti-mafia cooperatives of Sicily reminds us that food ethics begin way before the consumption of foodstuff. The production of food and wine is mostly associated with local workers who care little about identifying with anti-mafia or food activism principles and who most often prioritise, in terms of their sense of selfhood and pride, their own private production of wine. The strict separation of consumption and production into different teams within a sharp division of labour is rooted in, and informed by, a series of other disconnections between producers and managers of distribution/consumption, including personal origin (respectively, rural Spicco Vallata and urban Palermo), ethical stance, class understood in a range of semantics and other sources of income (private farming).

Seeing political movements as moral politics cannot fully account for the agrarian moral economies they inspire (Edelman 2001); the anti-mafia agrarian cooperatives' discourse, conveyed by their administrators, explicitly attempted to merge moral claims regarding food production with a politicised discourse (around legality). In the case of Sicily's anti-mafia cooperatives, principles of food activism are followed only by some members – a condition that emphasises the challenges of achieving internal cohesiveness and democratic organisation.

This chapter has briefly situated the actors of Sicilian anti-mafia ideologies, over food activism, in specific divisions. The phenomenology of those hints at a classic sociological division of labour. However, as illustrated in the story of Pippo over produce, quality and family life and in the vignette around talking to *mafiosi*, this is mostly a division based on worldviews, which precedes internal co-op divisions and is rooted in class differences. The valuation of their skill and the valorisation of their labour follow what are already existing differences among work groups that often have contrasting repercussions in the way they operate internally.

Most importantly, such dissimilarities underline the significance of the difference between people participating in each work team. This difference in worldviews, that rarely became palpable, cannot be reduced analytically to a 'division of labour' framework. As much as they are structured in sets of labour differentiation (a two-tiered system), the significance of such differentiation cannot be exhausted in ideas on skill across a manual and an intellectual part. It is this economistic reductionism that opened this book (see page 4) that this ethnography wishes to tackle, with more fodder to come to that direction in the following

Table 4.2 Pay and Membership Status in the Spicco Vallata Cooperatives' Workforce

	Cooperative members*		Contractual ('daily') workers	
Name	Administrative workforce	Manual workforce	Administrative workforce	Manual workforce
Liberanima	2 members (on monthly wage of c.500€	3 members (on daily pay)	—	1 seasonal worker (man)
Borsellino	5 administrators on monthly wage ranging from 1,200€ (Salvo, president) to 940€ (Niko, administrator)	12 members (all of them on daily pay)	—	4 seasonal workers (men)
Falcone	7 office-based administrators on monthly wage ranging from 1,230€ (Luca, president) to 1,030€ (Manlio, administrator)	10 member-workers 4 of them on monthly-wage contracts, 6 on contracts based on daily pay	2 office-based administrators, on annual renewable contracts	11 seasonal workers, cooperative members as fieldshands (men, on daily pay contracts); some amassing a monthly 700€ 4 seasonal workers (men) in other capacities, e.g., tourism 5 seasonal workers (women)
Lavoroealtro	3 administrators on monthly wages ranging from 1,100€ (Vito, president) to 800€ (Mario, administrator)	12 member-workers	—	4 seasonal workers (men)

* All members were on permanent contracts. All figures denote mixed pay.

Table 4.3 General Information about Other Anti-mafia Cooperatives

Cooperatives outside Spicco Vallata					
Name	**Location**	**Land**	**Affiliation**	**Members**	**Established**
Il Gabbiano	Rome	30 ha (mainly vineyards)	Independent	3	2008
Le Terre di don Peppe Diana	Caserta area (Campania)	No land – buffalos for mozzarella production	Libertà	7	2009
Casa dei Giovani	Bagheria	c100 ha (dry farming)	Used to collaborate with Libertà* but now independent	9	2001
Valle del Marro	Gioia Tauro [Calabria]	60 ha (mainly vineyards)	Libertà	10	2008
Beppe Montana	Catania area of eastern Sicily	2,000 orange trees 100 olive trees	Libertà (and Etna Consortium for Legality and Development	4	2011
Defunct Cooperatives in Spicco Vallata					
Akragas	San Giovanni	130 ha (mainly vineyards)	Preceded Libera and the Consortium	4	Established 1998; liquidated by the Consortium in 2002
Paradiso	San Giovanni	130 ha (mainly vineyards)	Preceded Libera and the Consortium	5	Established 1998; liquidated by the Consortium in 2002

* The Consortium and Liberta's imposition of a regularisation of labour did not work in the case of Casagiovane, as the administrators paid no national insurance contributions to the workers. This caused a scandal, which is still under investigation at the time of publication. Meanwhile, the Casa is isolated by other cooperatives, the state and Liberta.

chapters. One fundamental area of contradictions outside the economistic realm was that of kinship and its various ideological and practical workings in the forging and operation of the cooperatives. Like food, attitudes to kinship and recruitment based on kinship proved a great dividing mechanism across the co-ops' teams. But unlike food, claims to kinship and family, rather than solidifying, in fact actually acted as a gluing device for accommodating cooperative work in people's lives.

NOTES

Some of the material in this chapter has also been published in 'Food Activism and Anti-mafia Cooperatives in Contemporary Sicily' (2013).

1. Of course, this is an older discussion, often highlighting gendered stratifications (e.g., Goddard 1996). Recent anthropological research on industrial settings (Parry 2007) where there is a consistent divide between fixed and (sub)contracted workers takes the discussion further. The line of argument is that those in stable employment, unlike contractual workers, are privileged ('embourgeoised', as Parry has it) by comparison. The debate on precariousness and genealogical differences among workers is also akin to this discussion (Procoli 2004; Standing 2011).
2. This is why, for most of the book, the term 'manual workforce' or 'workers' means both daily and member-workers, unless stated. I do appreciate that, legally, administrators were cooperative workers, too. However, the teams identified themselves as 'administrators' and 'workers', respectively.
3. Addiopizzo is the name of a Sicilian civil society association catering for the horizontal organisation of retailers who adopt an 'anti-racketeering' policy, shopkeepers who refuse to pay racketeering money to the mafia. Today, the association has NGO status, and three hundred retailers subscribe to its principles. Even so, it is estimated that 80 per cent of Palermo's retailers still pay the mafia's protection (ISTAT 2015).
4. Farmer-owner of a small plot.

Chapter 5

The Limits of 'Bad Kinship'

Sicilian Anti-mafia Families

Food and general views on legality were in no way the only points of conflict across co-op membership. An equally if more important ideological concern that drove the Consortium's project was the consideration of certain types of kinship as 'bad'. In anti-mafia cooperatives, the workplace is not intended to be conducive of kinship relations. Recruits are not allowed, for instance, to have a *mafioso* kinsperson (this stands for cousins up to thrice removed, inclusive). This situation would normally be paradoxical for such small communities where most people are related to each other. After all, people would routinely tell me, San Giovanni was composed of eight hundred households – which would indeed recall the 'eight hundred Barbetos' essentialist metaphor (see pages 19–20 the colloquial 'smell of mafia', a sensorial claim to mafia presence in a place) so rampant in San Giovanni. The interaction between 'family' and work bears interesting tensions, in such settings where kinship is particularly laden with negative connotations. This distance, and its expected failure, calls for a sharpening of analytic tools that can help us understand the context of 'work families'. The formation of flexible ideas of kinship to accommodate 'new' ideologies (anti-mafia) and collective platforms of work (cooperatives) in Sicily is the focus of this chapter.

The fictional modernist separation of family and work is still pertinent as a theoretical fiat in mainstream social science (see, e.g., Putnam 2007). Current anthropological routes have, of course, continued to stress the fictionalisation of this relationship (between 'production and reproduction'). Latourian interpretations in the line of 'we have never been modern' are often prominent in this discussion (Latour 1993; see Berliner et al. 2013: 436 for an account of the idea's broader appeal). It is, however, also useful to consider approaches stemming from political economy and feminism. This would enable a tracing of the mutual intelligibility of people's home-work idioms, rather than seeking mediations and translations. For the sake of the ethnography here, it can help review the divisions within cooperatives from yet another prism. This prism is located in significant cosmological ramifications in the lifeworlds of the co-op members. Moreover, the ethnography presented here aims to remind us

of a main route of anthropological inquiry's critique to modernist ideology: the gendering processes of the co-relationship between home and collective work institutions.

Ideologies of the 'home' and of the 'workplace' cannot be understood in separation. Rather, in the context of both anti-mafia and cooperativism, they are themes intrinsically interrelated in historic and current social configurations in Sicily (Rakopoulos 2014a). Any 'bad kinship' doctrine is meant to prove detrimental to the functionality and horizontality of cooperative egalitarianism. The anti-mafia co-ops' standpoint allows for the exploration of how economic institutions are interrelated with kinship in both crippling and complementary terms. Studying the reproduction and continuities of people's (co-op members' and their close kin's) pluriactivity alongside cooperative work opens up ways to redefine the very social fabric within which a cooperation operates. It also allows us to examine how the activities of co-ops reflect social dynamics around them. The entanglement with the home and the kin of co-op members is at the heart of cooperativist processes.

An epistemology that does not refute the notions of either home/family or work/labour but instead underlines their dialectical interrelatedness might offer a more accurate prism to tackle the collapse of modernist fictions in cooperativism. This is particularly salient in a context – such as the Sicilian anti-mafia – where modernist separation is thoroughly pursued from above, with the exclusion of certain types of kinship from economic life. This shaping of cooperativism as an enclave, carefully carving 'a room of their own' outside the influence of local kinship connections, has been a typical tenet of anti-mafia Sicilian co-ops.

Bad Kinship

As discussed, the 'Progress and Law Consortium' was formed to oversee the allocation to, and use of, all of the land by cooperatives. Libertà oversaw the public competitions held in 2001 and 2006. Libertà and the Consortium strongly ideologised cooperativism as an anti-mafia endeavour disassociated from kinship. This is documented in their pamphlets and newsletters, which express aversion to nepotistic patronage and corruption (Libertà 2008; 2009; 2010). This defaming of local kinship was premised on anti-mafia activists making analogies of *comparatico* (godparenthood) and cousinhood with mafia affiliation. Libertà agents saw the *comparatico*, a non-blood kinship institution of great importance in rural Sicily,[1] as a powerful mafia tradition of Spicco Vallata. The anti-kin-

ship stance of anti-mafia activists, however, extended to an overall suspicion towards anyone who was related to a *mafioso*.

Such relationships in Sicily are, of course, of a cognatic nature and may include parental and siblinghood relations, but they also retain some agnatic symbolism (by way of the clan male descendent membership in the mafia). This bilateral descent, so strong in establishing enduring links, lands someone in a network in Sicily. 'An individual is born into a kinship system and there finds, ready-made so to speak, a network of people with whom he has a series of jurally defined obligations', notes Boissevain in the 1960s (Boissevain 1966: 21), trying to distinguish 'naturalised' kinship by 'social' patronage among friends and friends of friends. Here in the anti-mafia co-op system, both these kinds of networks are prohibited: both by birth and by socialisation, one needs to prove they have steered clear from mafia. Importantly, the cooperatives were not allowed to employ anyone who had any *mafioso* in their 'social circle', including kin (up to the third degree of cousinhood, inclusive), and affines. This was not decreed in writing (i.e., in the text of the public competitions through which the co-ops were formed), but was a major aspect of the interview process conducted by members of Libertà and Matteo Mandola.

Workers then reconciled a relationship of kinship and work in a context that connotes certain types of kinship with negativity. The state model of anti-mafia cooperativism was underpinned by the idea that the community's well-being depended on the state's intervention, which was important in displacing and disrupting the problematic kinship-mafia juncture that was rampant in local discourse, especially among anti-mafia activists. There was schism in this process among work teams. While the manner in which co-op administration members constructed their recruitment echoed the ideology of an anti-mafia cooperativism detached from kinship, locals gradually entered the cooperatives through channels of kin or friends' 'recommendations' (*raccomandazioni*[2]).

The Background to 'Bad Kinship': Administrators' Biographies

Administrators had a story to tell regarding how cooperativism should avoid kinship connections at large. For most, their employment was continuous with their broader beliefs and ideas; working in the cooperative was 'more than *just* a job', as Mauro, the Falcone's marketing manager put it. It was even, as Ernesto told me, 'a mission' and 'a political project'. They took pride in acting according to the specific framework of regulations and ethics that set the official discourse of the cooperatives, a commitment to meritocracy and legality. In focus groups I organised,

Ernesto solemnly stated that his job was 'also about ideology' and 'a certain mission'. Marelio added that they 'embodied' civil society principles for San Giovanni, in that way acting 'as an adjunct to Libertà'; in that respect, they expressed dominant ideas set by the Consortium, following its meritocracy-based, legalist agenda. Their private lives and their lives in the office were part of the same continuum.

Administrators thus saw themselves as 'professionals' and strongly believed that their teams (in the Falcone, Lavoro e Altro and Borsellino cooperatives) were based on 'meritocracy'. They moreover claimed that the very term 'networks' was an indication of merit, as it was distinct from terms like 'family' or 'friends': it was, as Checco told me, 'neutral'. Most administrators thought that any cooperative formed through and along friendship or kinship lines was in principle a 'failed case'. Matteo, the president of the Consortium, stressed to me, as did the presidents of the cooperatives, that the experience of making a 'kinship-based' anti-mafia cooperativism in Spicco Vallata had been ill conceived.

In fact, this explains why in 2001 the Consortium had closed two small cooperatives, Akragas and Paradiso, set up in 1998 – without public controversy – in order to cultivate confiscated land that was allocated to them by the state. Composed of local family members, the cooperatives had worked alongside the Falcone in 2000. The Consortium closed them down 'due to the messiness that the kin relations of their members brought about', as Matteo told me. In the case of Akragas, the family running the cooperative had become indebted to a bank and used their own familial assets to pay back their debts, ignoring the Consortium regulations. Matteo strictly advised, against the will of the co-op members, that the cooperative should not merge family capital and state (confiscated) assets. At the time of fieldwork, years after their cooperative had been dissolved, the members of the 'Akragas co-op family', as they are known in the village, were still suffering major financial troubles. They refused to give me an interview. The father asked me to mention only that 'the experience of the confiscated land has been disastrous for our family, and we need to keep it in the past, not to remember it'.

The case of the Paradiso co-op was even more dramatic; the data I have regarding it comes from the hearings of the Palermitan court that oversaw its case. Enrico, the son of the family running the cooperative, was a friend of a person related to a minor *mafioso.* The *mafioso* 'recommended' two people to Enrico's friend, and the friend convinced Enrico to hire them. When the Consortium found that people 'affiliated' with the mafia were hired, it immediately took back the confiscated plots from the cooperative. The family-based cooperative was soon shut down.

The experiences of these two cooperatives exacerbated the Consortium agents' mistrust of kinship relations.

In order to sideline kinship, Libertà became the main channel for hiring and maintaining the administrative workforce. As part of their 'professional skills', administrators had to have activist credentials, obtained through what informants, such as Ernesto, called 'association experience' (*esperienza associazionista*). Such experience could include the Addiopizzo anti-mafia activism or showing motivation towards ethical business practice; for example, two administration members had master's degrees in corporate social responsibility.

When Ernesto explained the social networks in which he was embedded, he took pride in stressing his long-term friendship with Luca, the Falcone president ('We share biographies', he stressed to me). Luca, the son of a leading trade unionist, described what he called the 'cooperativist part of my biography' in terms of a combination of two interrelated activities: university activism and allegiance to the centre-left. In an interview, he also used the term 'shared biography' to describe his friendship with people like Ernesto, but he also used it in regard to other current cooperative members and people who (in 2009) were the Falcone's collaborators and suppliers.

Despite holding a PhD, Luca had not pursued an academic career because of what he called 'the nepotistic networks in the University of Palermo'. He and his friend Giulio Erice had been overlooked for lectureships, although they were promising academic agronomists. They nevertheless established contacts through research in the Faculty of Agronomy and went on to collaborate with each other after university. Today Erice administers the Tazza farm in Termini Imerese, on which the state had bestowed land sequestrated from a man accused of being a member of the mafia, and the two enterprises collaborate: Falcone provides Tazza with packaging, marketing and commercialisation services.

Luca's genealogy of political activism in fact includes his own kinship relations with people in politics; his involvement with *esperienza associazionista* and political activism was heavily influenced by his family background. His father was the president of the communication workers trade union (a strong union of the public sector in Sicily) and his brother was an MP in the Sicilian Assembly (the parliament of the autonomous region of Sicily). The lack of kinship ties that supposedly guaranteed and promoted administrators' meritocracy claims in fact refers only to kinship local to Spicco Vallata. It was that *locally specific* kinship that could potentially turn *bad*.

In Palermo, instead, administrators like Luca were themselves entrenched with kinship and friendship relations that played key roles in their own lives and careers.[3] Administrators were themselves embedded in kinship-informed hubs (not least because, as most were unmarried, they still felt attached to their parents). Their own kinship background informed and reproduced their class positions. Administrators' support of the Consortium's rhetoric refers to kinship relations of other people, people whom they did not see as equals: Spicco Vallata local workers.

When people joined the cooperative workforce as administrators, they were typically already linked together in 'horizontal' relations through past professional or political bonds, which determined future contacts and eventual job recruitment. Mina and Claudia had completed the same master's degree in Milan; Checco knew Marelio and Gianpiero from Libertà and Addiopizzo; Loredana knew Luca from his studies in agronomy and through Libertà. The list goes on, including everyone involved in the administration of the cooperatives. Gianpiero told me that some of the people in the administration were his 'lifelong partners'.

Along with the theme of shared biographies, the idea of 'lifelong partners' shows that social networking is understood as a process of building bonds of relatedness. Networking can thus be characterised as a relatedness idiom for the administrators. This in turn provided the lynchpin of recruitment: administrators would be 'brought into a co-op' on the basis of their network linkages – their 'shared biographies' with other administrators or the fact that they were 'lifelong partners' in a common political or ideological cause.

When administrator informants explained their own networking to me, they often condemned the nepotism and corruption in the city (Palermo) and public institutions (e.g., the universities) that had excluded them from other labour markets, as in the case of Luca and Erice. This throws light on how administrators distinguished their own networking practices as 'virtuous', as well as on the term 'virtuous circle', which they repeatedly used to legitimise their own practices. They had crafted the neologism as a play on the way they used the term 'vicious circle' to refer to relations of corruption and patronage influenced by the mafia. They deemed the 'virtue' of their networks to derive from their 'meritocratic' formation, part of their commitment to anti-mafia, seeing themselves as gatekeepers of legality.

When I asked him to elaborate, Ernesto told me that 'the household' was a 'particularistic unit', while 'networks' were the expression of 'broader interests': networks implied politicised solidarity, while households meant seclusion from society. Administrators thought the respon-

sibilities of cooperative members towards their families often restricted the development of cooperatives, as the obligations and dangers that cooperative membership entailed were difficult to reconcile with maintaining a family. Family and cooperative were mutually exclusive in this respect, especially when their interrelationship implied continuities with broader local relationships, including relations with *mafiosi*.

Kinship and friendship, 'friends of friends' (*amici degli amici*) and affinity (*comparatico*) had been historically (in the bigger picture, since Boissevain 1974 and up to Di Bella 2011) charged with mafia connotations. In the cases of Akragas and Paradiso specifically, administrators therefore deemed them 'vicious circles'. By contrast, Palermitans presented networking among activist social circles as virtuous. Claudia, for example, stressed the fact that not only was she not from Spicco Vallata but also, indeed, that she came from outside Sicily (she had moved in at thirty years old). She emphasised to me that she had 'shared a lot of time, ideas and thoughts' with Mina when their paths crossed studying corporate social responsibility in Milan. The fact that Claudia eventually joined Libertà and engaged in anti-mafia associationism 'brought her closer' to the Palermitan Mina and enclosed her in the 'virtuous circle of the anti-mafia', as she told me.

This project of calling the administrative anti-mafia 'virtuous' and withdrawn from kinship influence resembles Weberian 'ideal-type' concepts of the modern as involving the separation of family and kinship relations from work (2009 [1922]). Weber's notion of bureaucracy itself proposes an ideal type separation of kinship and office, which seems to reverberate with the ideas the anti-mafia cooperatives' administrators had. The legal and accounting separation of the business enterprise from the household was crucial for the emergence of modern Western capitalism for Weber – a prerequisite for the deliberate planning of rational economic action (1978: 63).

Anthropologists have challenged this hypothesis. Yanagisako's work, for instance, tackles the myth that 'advanced' capitalist enterprise is the *locus classicus* for such separation (she writes about the affluent northern bourgeoisie of Como). Critiquing Weber, she notes that

> while this separation may have been a significant innovation, Weber's error was to misconstrue the legal fiction of separation – which was put in place for the purpose of limiting individual and familial financial liability – as a de facto separation of family relations from business relations. In other words, Weber turned a legal fiction of the separation of the family from the firm into a social theory in which the family and the economy in modern capitalist society were cast as distinct institutions. (2002: 21–22)

Similarly, administrators took at face value the Consortium principle for politicised anti-mafia cooperativism, that family/kinship relations and cooperative membership were mutually exclusive, in a modernism akin to what Yanagisako attributes to the Weberian analytical model. Namely, they embraced the political fiction of total separation from kinship relations as part of their cooperative experience, creating a networked relatedness of their own.

The Consortium 'Progress and Law' picked Palermitans as administrators *because* of their lack of kinship ties to Spicco Vallata villages. Since Luca took over the presidency in the Falcone cooperative, they have been reproducing the role of the 'detached' administrator through networking among commuters to Spicco Vallata. Their teams' coherent 'virtuous circles' suggested borders within which the ideology of legality (including, of course, meritocracy) and development were contained. This ideology represented a 'moral universe' that the administrators thought was in need of protection from the contamination of kinship relations. Their specific common backgrounds (young, educated, middle-class) secured this system of reproducing the administration teams.

This was not merely in the abstract: in their everyday practice they detached themselves from the 'family' and the household, the sphere of immediate experience for the manual workers' cooperative recruitment. The virtuous circles, webs of relationships among equals unmediated by kinship, created a sense of a closed group of relatedness among Palermitan administrators – one distinctely different than the positive embracing of family life in the context of merging household and work-life into anti-mafia families.

Anti-mafia Families among Local Manual Labourers

While the ways administration members constructed their recruitment echoed this ideology of an anti-mafia cooperativism detached from kinship, local workers entered the cooperatives through channels of kin or friends' 'recommendations' (*raccomandazioni,* or in Sicilian, *raccummannaziuni*). If '*raccommandazioni*'[4] provided a thread between kinship and work, what does this thread consist of and how does it connect to people's conceptualisations of the values of family and cooperative – and indeed anti-mafia cooperativism?[5] The vast majority of my local informants were members of a nuclear family, with whom they shared a home. I discuss household composition in more detail in chapter 7. As Harris underlines, 'the household denotes an institution whose primary function is co-residence' (1984: 52).

'Virtuous clientelism', implying 'benign', non-nepotistic networks that provide routes to jobs, have been proposed as a way to resolve the 'Southern [Italian] problem' (Piattoni 1998). As recent works emphasise, much still turns around *raccomandazioni* in the increasingly precarious Italian labour market, a practice that remains a constant, albeit updated (Procoli 2004). Zinn views *raccomandazioni* more through a framework of corruption than of patronage, arguing that corruption, as a 'shared knowledge' that 'creates actors' personhood' has substituted for patronage as a 'hegemonic discourse in the current state of play' in the social sciences (Zinn 2005: 233; 2003). My investigation has contributed a sense of flexible family practices to this discussion (Rakopoulos 2017a).

Making 'Anti-mafia Families'

In 2001, Falcone was composed of fifteen members and no day workers. The members of this original team, coming from various villages of Spicco Vallata and from Palermo, had been gathered without knowing each other and without prior experience in cooperatives. Ten of the original members had gradually left the cooperative out of fear, lack of financial support or disagreements with other members. Of the remaining original five, only Luca had a decision-making role by the time of fieldwork (having been the cooperative president since 2004). Continuing relations of friendship, affinity and kinship supplied the Falcone's (as well as the other two cooperatives') manual workforce member-teams, formed among villagers, to substitute the members who had left. Permanent members brought in newcomers – mainly daily, contractual workers. Being 'recommended' became the only mode of recruitment to the cooperatives' manual workforce teams, marking a divergence from the public contests' principles. The kin of members and workers entered the cooperatives 'by default', as Enzo described it, explaining that the practice of hiring seasonal workers was 'as natural as the feelings of being related to someone'. Men were hired to work the plots and women for services such as the *agriturismi*; all these people were related to existing cooperative members.

Pippo introduced Adamo to me as a cousin he had 'mediated for'. Enzo brought in one son, Ciccio, to the Borsellino co-op and another, Lino, to the Falcone. Affinity relationships were also important: elder cooperative members secured jobs for their brothers-in-law (*cognati*) or sons-in-law (*generi*). Paolo secured a job for Donato, the boyfriend of his daughter. In some cases, relationships between the Falcone and Borsellino work pools overlapped: one's son-in-law could be another's brother, thereby

interrelating the two cooperatives' common kinship pools. Often, therefore, wages from two different cooperatives were brought into the same household. It was in those cases in particular that members associated the cooperative with home, seeing it *as* a home. People would use the phrase 'anti-mafia family' to describe these kinds of household settings.

Examples range from *comparatico* affinity to direct cognatic descent. Pippo introduced Adamo to me as a cousin he had 'mediated for and recommended'. Affinity relationships were also important: elder cooperative members secured jobs for their brothers-in-law (*cognati*) or sons-in-law (*generi*). Adamo presented Donato (the 26-year-old boyfriend of Paolo's daughter), saying, 'His father-in-law mediated for him'. Enzo Riceli was proud to state that his *raccomandazioni* had 'brought many distant relatives into both San Giovanni cooperatives'. When I traced this back to people he had 'recommended', such as Cicio and Pippo, they confirmed he had mediated for them. In some cases, relationships between the Falcone and Borsellino work pools overlapped: one's son-in-law could be another's brother. This suggests that common kinship pools lay behind the rhetoric of ideological 'solidarity' between the two cooperatives, reinforcing their interrelationship.[6] As he had been a member of Falcone since 2002, Enzo's *raccomandazione* for his own sons Ciccio (a Borsellino member-worker) and Lino (a Falcone daily worker) was undisputed.

Boasting that three men of her household worked for two different cooperatives, Santa concluded, 'our family, our Riceli home is a co-op', using the term *casa* (home: co-residential household). Her sons, Lino (20) and Ciccio (25), and her husband Enzo (49), saw their household as an 'anti-mafia family'; so did Santa herself who, like Rita, bracketed together family and cooperative, 'one being the other side of the other'. All four members of the Riceli family received some income from the Falcone and Borsellino cooperatives, albeit in differentiated ways. Enzo was one of the only three Falcone member-workers, who received a monthly wage (of 1,100 euros); Ciccio received a mean of 600 euros monthly, as being a member-worker of the Borsellino as his permanent contract was based on daily payments; Lino's pay, as a daily worker, amounted to a mean of 600 euros monthly as well; Santa received seasonal daily pay (mean of 150 euros monthly). This financial situation solidified their belief that theirs was 'the very definition of an anti-mafia family'. Importantly, this belief was not based on a common 'consumption pool' in the family, as each managed the major part of their finances independently.

Santa's best friend was Rita Giuffrè from Bocca, then fifty years old. Paolo, her husband, of the same age and origin, was a permanent worker in the Falcone and recommended his wife for casual jobs with the coop-

erative. I often worked alongside her and other cooperative members' wives. She too referred to the 'cooperative being our home', prompting other 'ladies of the co-op' (as they referred to themselves) to tell me about how their households 'spilled over' into the cooperative. Some ladies used the term 'anti-mafia family' to describe their households, in this way distinguishing their own from other local families. They employed the discourse of 'anti-mafia families' in different ways. On the one hand, they used it to refer to generational overlaps of family members in the workforce of the cooperatives; on the other, they used it to provide meaning to the cooperative experience itself and in this way to 'familiarise' their relationships with each other. They were proud to stress that being part of an 'anti-mafia family' was 'something special'.[7]

During the preparation of Christmas packages of cooperative products, I worked continuously alongside 'the co-op ladies'. I observed that Rita's and Maria's use of 'home' idioms to describe 'their' cooperative was often exclusionary, delineating the social boundaries of the cooperative group and setting the terms by which 'foreigners' were allowed into the cooperative by the grace of homely hospitality. In parallel to that, as exclusionary idioms can be extended, some women also used 'home' to describe Italy in xenophobic tones: Santa thought 'Islamic' immigrants had to convert to the Christian values of 'our home'.

Despite her friendly behaviour, Rita often reminded me that I 'had got the job because I was a foreign observer', while she and her friends had the job 'because we are the other side of the cooperative; the cooperative relies on us wives'. Many other women made similar associations between their family values and their cooperative experience. Maria, Pippo's wife, likened the 'unity' of a cooperative to that of a family. When Pippo fell out with the Borsellino cooperative, he told me that some of his ex-colleagues were 'conspiring against him'. Maria, who was particularly proud of her husband's involvement in the cooperatives, severely criticised him for using the term 'conspiracy', saying 'a co-op is like a family; conspiracies do not take place in it'.

Therefore, members' wives actively pro-family views complemented the cooperativist experience of their husbands and, by and large, of their families. Importantly, what Rita called 'the other side of the cooperatives' suggests that anti-mafia families were constituted as such by absorbing the cooperative into family values and extending family into the cooperative. Maria saw family as a unifying force: she applied this quality to the cooperative. This overlooked the fact that some members of the household received a regular wage from the cooperative while others, including herself and the other 'co-op ladies', only received sporadic payments

for daily chores.[8] The differences in pay and wage regimes of local men and women reflected divisions of labour and distribution of resources at home. The household divisions of labour, in turn, reflected the cooperative's labour organisation: women did not work the soil and were hence not granted member status in the cooperatives. The positions in the cooperatives' manual workforce were strongly gendered[9]. Rita's analogies between home and cooperative reflected this gendered division of labour, brought from the home to the workplace and vice versa.[10]

Women often discussed the reproduction of people, families and cooperatives in the same breath. Caterina, considerably younger than her colleagues, had moved to San Giovanni together with Piero, her husband, who was a member of Falcone. They had a six-month-old baby, born in the village. Caterina worked for Falcone only occasionally, and because of her pregnancy and the child's rearing, she had not done so for a while. This did not matter since she saw her recruitment to the cooperative and the birth of her baby as all part of 'the same process of bringing up an anti-mafia family'. In a discussion I had with her, Rita and Santa, Caterina went to great lengths to portray to us the importance of Falcone for her young family. As she narrated her story, 'the co-op is responsible for the whole of my life. I met Piero through the cooperative and my daughter was born within it. We were made a family through the cooperative'. 'No doubt her first word will be "co-op"', added Rita, petting the baby. Rita and Santa commented that their families had 'found the co-op on their way and changed through it, while Caterina's family grew within it'. This illustrates how the cross-fertilisation of family and cooperative sometimes took on naturalising undertones: reproduction of family and cooperative represented in literal reproduction (babies). Caterina affirmed that her young family was an anti-mafia family *par excellence*.

Apart from changing existing idioms of kinship by mapping family onto cooperative, the *raccomandazioni* acted as vectors of relatedness, giving a new directionality as actions that built upon enduring relationships. Examples of this include a range of different relations. These could be the 'brotherly' feelings Adamo felt for Pippo; however, they also included less fortunate cases such as Giuseppe, who constantly complained about the indifference of his Borsellino cooperative colleagues in not allocating him more more work as a day labourer. Pippo saw the efforts of Giusy, a Falcone member, as 'sisterly', as she used her influence to precisely find ways to allocate him more labour days. *Raccomandazioni* thus informed and reconfigured the meaning of kinship in Spicco Vallata, creating new linkages. This is one important reason why local workers defended and evoked idioms of kinship-based relatedness, as kinship

helped them to guarantee jobs in the co-ops despite the cooperatives' rhetoric on meritocracy. In the process of constituting anti-mafia families, merging the nuclear family and close kin with cooperative identity, the manual workforce stretched kinship bonds in order to maximise employment opportunities.

The broader question here is how this discussion feeds back into the debate about the role of kinship in shaping the phenomenon of anti-mafia cooperatives. Interlocutors from Spicco Vallata (manual workforce members and their wives) drew on the idioms of family and kinship to talk about other social relations and groups – most prominently, cooperatives. This practice proposed a cooperativism inclusive of kinship. It implicitly rejected the administrators' image of anti-mafia cooperativism, a model inspired by the Consortium's modernist ideal of escaping the grip of local relations by separating work from family.

People of the local workforce teams renew, revitalise and, at the same time, re-work ideas of kinship as a form of cooperative relatedness. Rather than promoting a modernist separation of work and family (with its corresponding 'meritocratic' networking relatedness), their practices proposed mediations between work and kinship – or cooperative and 'home' – in ways that incorporated the rhetoric of collective labour relations (Ashwin 1999). For cooperative workers, the conflation between home and cooperative was part of what it meant to them to participate in anti-mafia cooperativism. Nor was kinship an inflexible modality; rather, it could facilitate and host social transformation as members embraced changes in work *through* continuity in kinship and not *against* it. The workers' practice actually renovated the relationship between home and work.

Modern[ist] Separations: Flexible Families and Cooperative Work-Home Bridges

Keith Hart convincingly points out that we conveniently call juxtapositions of family and business 'corruption', although they happen practically everywhere (2000; 2005). The 'state of corruption', with its contaminating potentials (see also the next chapter) spreads through mechanisms, like kinship, that one cannot control or contain fully but that could be somehow documented and narrated (Gupta 1995; 2005). The official policy of anti-mafia cooperatives organised by the Consortium and Libertà was led by the enclavist idea that mafia affiliations, associated with family, should be avoided at all costs – and this in a period of routine investigation over 'crony' Italian power and capitalism (Lane

2004; Ginsborg 2005a). The anti-mafia agenda took an anti-kinship stance regarding recruitment. This conflicted with the dynamic interactions of home and work, and with the relation between kinship and cooperatives as collective endeavours. Kinship, on its cognatic format of anti-mafia families, was transmogrified into a flexible institution. Idioms of close kinship ('home') could facilitate and accommodate change in the rising opportunities for labour, with the establishment of cooperatives in Spicco Vallata. Manual workforce members, then, embraced changes in work, creating anti-mafia families. This was a mutually enriching process that enhanced ideologies of household *and* cooperativism and so shaped the workers' experience of anti-mafia cooperatives within a conceptual framework based on kinship. But as house and workplace relations are mutually constituted, our analyses should be wary of the possible dangers of reducing this relationship to economism.

Debunking that economism is due in the light of the ethnographic evidence above. For this reason, we need to be reminded that anti-mafia families' flexible homes worked in the specific case of cooperative-making. This implies a twofold debate: firstly, we need to be reminded of the role of cooperatives in the juncture of family and labour markets; secondly, we need to untie kinship from familism in the wider picture of kinship flexibilities in 'Mediterranean' anthropology.

Seeing co-ops as bounded units of analysis could be understood at best as what Gudeman calls 'enclaves of mutuality' (Gudeman 2008; see also the discussion in chapter 8). This take, however, unties co-ops from the broader social relationships (and labour market dependencies) that they actually operate within. Such an idea affects our unease to reflect on the co-op-wide society relationship. The flexible boundaries of home vis-à-vis co-op labour opportunities in Spicco Vallata, however, tell a different story.

Seeing co-ops as enclaves of mutual life introduces an alternative mode of modernist separation: one based on the co-op as an institution that protects local social relations from market forces. In fact, such relations and their solidification in community ideologies have an immediate impact on cooperatives. Conceptualising the co-op as a bounded institution leaves social life around it comprising a series of 'social externalities'. It takes for granted what it sets to unpack: the relationship of economy and community and the suspended, in-between position that co-ops hold in this juncture (Rakopoulos 2015a).

We might benefit then from seeing co-ops as any other peopled institution (Herzfeld 1992) – by institution we mean 'an established practice in the life of a community [and] the organisation that carries it out (Hart

et al. 2014: 16). Co-ops are organisations entrenched in a series of social obligations from which they cannot be disembedded. Seen in that way, we allow investigative leeway for flexible kinship in their constitution. This implies seeing co-ops as social configurations composed by members whose lives are entangled in other relations and obligations (more pressingly, to kin and family life) as much as they are tied to labour markets.

The issue of flexible kinship that is shaped from labour opportunities and shapes labour realities becomes central in this analysis. However, this should avoid seeing the work/kinship nexus instrumentally, as the Mediterranean literature has often done, as a means to resources (Goddard et al. 1994). This idea maintains, for instance, that kinship feeds into hierarchisation and cannot be bent or re-defined in ways other than as 'entrepreneurial strategies' (Pardo 1996: 94–95).

Salvaging family from familism is premised on recognising its dynamic and flexible features. In a changing Sicily, the continuities between home and the workplace mutually constitute both institutions and extend their meanings, reinforcing cooperative work. Accordingly, it is necessary to conceptualise the home and kinship idioms more openly in order to account for social mobility and change in Mediterranean settings and to deprovincialise the modernist fiction of home/work interrelationships taking place in southern Europe and *a fortiori*, the Souths of this world (cf Schneider 1998).

After all, long genealogies of association between kinship and industry have been noted in cases of family life and values penetrating capitalist milieus elsewhere – as, for example, in Lombardy (Yanagisako 2002; Ghezzi 2007; Bonomi 2008) – and beyond, where family links stretch (see Yanagisako 2013). This is salient where flexible familism contributed to the 'expansion of class' in industrial settings (Kalb 1997: 91). While we seem to have concluded that 'advanced' capitalism is laden with family life (what modernist purism would call 'cronyism' or 'corruption'; see Hart 2000), we are yet to fully account for the flexibilities of kinship vis-à-vis labour in the Mediterranean.

Pointing to the flexibility of kinship idioms does not, however, suffice. We also need to trace this flexibility's emancipative features (unlike the exploitative connotation 'flexible familist accumulation' has, as per Kalb 2005: 122). How these flexibilities operate in an environment (such as inland Sicily) conditioned by the fiction of mafia familism in both scholarly and popular jargon becomes then more urgent to stress.

Recent work points to transnational cousinhood egalitarianism in maritime Sicily (Ben-Yehoyada 2014) or flexible social stratification and an upwardly mobile tendency in inland pastoral communities in Sardinia

(Mientjes 2010). Such studies pave the way for further analysis, as they reveal how idioms of kinship can be stretched to accommodate different types of social mobility and lodge the impacts of world markets locally. This feature necessarily points to the dynamic interpenetration between home and work: changes in family affect the forms of industrial life and vice versa. This process can replace political idioms (such as fraternity) with new idioms of kinship, as in cousinage (Ben-Yehoyada 2014: 875).

To reconsider cooperativism's entrenchment with families in this way would imply that cooperativism develops *because* of workers' families' entanglement with it and not in the face of it. This implies a more open analytical attitude to cooperatives, seen as institutions that achieve more than the provision of protective enclaves for the continuity of family life. This line of inquiry resonates with a long streak of feminist analyses of the interactions between kinship and production processes or indeed the tensions between family values and market. The anthropology of this interaction shows how the boundaries between home and work are, by and large, blurry (Hareven 2000). We might benefit from reviving this tradition of a feminist anthropology of work by highlighting how the sphere of the home interlocks with economic practices (Zelizer 1995; 2005).

'Familism', in this line of thought, has proved to be an insufficient way of analysing how boundaries between home and workplace blur, as it rests on the assumption that there is already a fundamental gap between home and workplace and therefore already implies what is under scrutiny (Morris 1992). Rather than associating idioms of the home with an immobile, change-resistant world of 'tradition', including kinship ideologising (as per Goddard 1996), anti-mafia families show the interactions of waged work with the varied flexibilities of domestic arrangements.

Understanding how co-ops negotiate and are negotiated through the system of kinship *raccomandazioni* in Sicily speaks volumes on the wider home-work relationship in 'Mediterranean' modernities (of which there exists a large discussion, from Pina-Cabral 1989 to Ben-Yehoyada 2011). This line of thought can take us away from the stance of 'never been modern' and into the ground of a gendering economic anthropology process, that is, one that blends feminism and political economy, an approach that current anthropological critiques to modernist separations are yet to fully explore.

This is an approach that takes the lives of co-op members *outside* of the co-op context seriously. For instance, the administrators' networking promoted (and derived from) a model of anti-mafia cooperativism suspicious of kinship. The fact that administrators did not live their private lives in Spicco Vallata but commuted there from Palermo, thus effectively

separating work and home, meant that their imagined sense of involvement in the local community went unchallenged. Their lack of exposure to local obligations and networks involving *mafiosi* as well as their levels of remuneration (sufficient without seeking income *outside* the cooperatives' employment) allowed them to endorse unhesitatingly the legal framework of cooperatives' waged work.

Anti-mafia cooperatives in Sicily offer us a sound prism with which to investigate the interpenetrations of home and work-based institutions. They make new kinship forms spring where local and broader notions collide. This is particularly so because anti-mafia co-ops claim to operate on a basis of seclusion from certain aspects of social life (including mafia kinship and affiliation). Anti-mafia families, the flexible notion formed from this configuration, suggest how cooperatives in fact are constituted in interrelationship with (idioms of) home. Co-ops then function on an active endorsement of other idioms, more amenable to an anti-mafia arrangement – including alternative ideas of kinship. The case of these co-ops shows the contradictions of *enclave morality*, a system isolating cooperative work from the holistic richness of social life.

From Home to Co-op, and Back

I have argued that the cooperatives' two-tiered organisation implies that their reproduction is twofold; the relatedness idioms of that reproduction are not interchangeable between (class-informed) teams, which correspond to different spheres of relatedness and different class horizontalities. Both their idioms contribute to the making of the cooperative and both are seemingly about the same thing – equality/horizontality. There is even some seeming overlap in kinship 'talk'. Yet these idioms are in fact not only different but lead to mutual unintelligibility.

But what is more central here is that cooperatives' entrenchment with families is central to our understandings of cooperativism. Any sense of cooperation ideology and practice develops, in the case of workers, *because* of this entrenchment and not in the face of it. The consortium-led idea of 'incompatibility' of cooperativism and of personalised, family-based networks is therefore dubious. Cooperativism can draw from collectivism and political projects while simultaneously being informed by (different spheres of) relatedness. This is the way workers experienced cooperatives, which consequentially formed their belonging to anti-mafia cooperativism, although it developed without a specific rhetoric, like the dominant model of the administrators.

'Virtuous networks' in anti-mafia 'networking' constitute a sphere of relatedness as part of a class-informed modern paradigm of separating home from work (Yanagisako 2002; Zelizer 2005; cf. Latour 1993). Reversely, 'family' is not an ahistoric, static category, despite the idea that 'families' in Sicily often reproduce mafia. After all, feminist sociology has identified a rising 'moral familism' in the anti-mafia movement (Santino 2007: 104) in women resisting mafia family ethics (Impastato et al 2003; Puglisi 2005).

Within each team, shared idioms among equals (networking and virtuous circles, and kinship-based *raccomandazioni*) construct horizontal relations. As we shall see in the next three chapters in terms of gossip, land management and neighbourhood with *mafiosi*, dissimilar idioms produced certain degrees of conflict between the teams. Attempts for cooperative horizontality to cross over the strict division of labour in the cooperatives led to disjunctures (over what counts as, for instance, polite communication with people outside the co-op enclaves, in the form of contacts in the village or the fields).

Cooperatives are, by and large, incorporated into broad social environments. As shown in chapter 9, such environments – and their communalist ideologies – can harness contradictions within and without cooperatives, while everyday interactions in local ambiences, as those narrated in the next chapter, can also produce distress. Kinship, family and home ideologies and practices are also part of this dynamic. As with other aspects of their social lives, co-op members' social responsibilities – including kinship and the household – outside the cooperative *con*text, become the cooperatives' *text.*

The social relations in the home *become* the cooperative, while homes are shaped according to the broader setting within which the cooperative operates ('anti-mafia families', in the Sicilian case). Manual workforce members and their wives drew upon idioms of family and kinship to talk about other social relations and groups – anti-mafia cooperatives. This practice proposed a cooperativism effectively inclusive of kinship, which implicitly rejected the image of an anti-mafia modelled on the modernist ideal of escaping the grip of local relations by separating work from family. However, such cooperativist reality in Spicco Vallata was thoroughly guarded with symbolic boundaries, raised especially by administrators. Their use of gossip and appropriation of local rumours were central to this development, as seen in the next chapter.

NOTES

1. As noted later (see page 144), the co-op *braccianti*, like other local peasants, would fully appropriate this idea of affinity and would address each other this way. In my own experience of socialising among other social strata in Sicily – for instance, with precarious middle-class urbanites – it also has a slightly leftist twist in other contexts ('comrade'). But for Spicco Vallata, it is very important to emphasise that the contemporary use of these *comparatico* idioms among people of the anti-mafia cooperatives is completely separated from the historically (mafia) charged godparenthood fictive kinship idiom (Arlacchi 1986). More relevant are analogies with *compadrazgo* in Latin America to elucidate how idioms of work camaraderie develop as positively perceived kinship language (Nash 1979). In the previous chapter this is put in the context of the problematic view over 'fictive' kinship pertaining to the official anti-mafia ideology sustained by the Consortium.
2. *Raccomandazione* ('recommendation' or, more loosely, 'a reference') implies mediation: to recommend someone for a job. However, it also demarcates a variety and flexibility of meanings in Spicco Vallata and in Italy at large, most often associated with kin but also with friends (Zinn 2005). *Raccomandazioni,* typically registered under the classic rubric of patronage, are intrinsic to the discussion on Italian modernisation, although it remains unclear whether they transgress or reproduce class stratification (Sylos-Labini 1975). Ginsborg notes their organic role in the Italian political system (2003a: 101, 202), stressing social mobility but also 'crony capitalism' (Ginsborg 2003b: 68). While they form 'a system guaranteeing jobs' (Assmuth 1997: 160), they also reproduce a mafia-affiliated 'atmosphere of clientelism' (Schneider and Schneider 2003: 105).
3. What obviously comes to mind here is Bourdieu's problematisation of 'meritocracy' and his emphasis on the reproduction of certain fields (such as the academy) taking place through 'genealogical' succession, where kinship is also a factor (1988).
4. My decision to use the Italian term rather than English equivalents (literal: 'recommendation' or, more loosely, 'a reference') is not meant to indicate a presumed unbridgeable translation but to demarcate the variety and flexibility of meanings attached to the term in Spicco Vallata and in Italy at large (Zinn 2001). *Raccomandazione* implies 'mediation': to recommend someone for a job. Palermo has been called 'sponge-city' (*città-spugna*: Cole 1997; 2007), as local middle classes have achieved social mobility through accessing jobs in the public sector via *raccomandazioni*. Chubb notes routinised political party practices 'of 30 *raccomandazioni* per day' in Palermo (1982: 93), which echoes Bayart's (2008) description of African 'opportunity states'. The sociologist and activist Danilo Dolci's accounts have stressed how *racommandazioni* from the powerful have framed the working lives of the poor since the 1950s (Dolci 1958; 1964; 1968), proposing forms of political mobilisation inspired by Gandhian approaches to tackle these problems (2007).
5. I should also note in advance that, in Spicco Vallata, 'household' and 'home' are used interchangeably.

6. In fact, the presentation of 'solidarity' among cooperatives was a common idiom used to establish political alliances with institutions, as explored later in the chapter.
7. The cooperatives were then symbols of class distinction locally as well as in the case of the Palermitan administrators (Bourdieu 1989).
8. Women's discourse on the co-reproduction of families and cooperatives rested largely on accepting the very low valorisation of their own work. This idea was based on the historical positioning of female labour in Spicco Vallata: working the fields was an exclusively male job, which women were not allowed to do. As I argue in the following two chapters, this condition was also partly informed by local mafia ethic. Ironically, this gendered work ethic was a point of continuity between mafia and anti-mafia families, constituting the norm of the local anti-mafia families and the cooperatives in which their members worked: some in leading roles with steady income (men) and others in secondary roles with sporadic daily pay (women, who, as mentioned, were never members of the manual workforce teams).
9. For instance, the term 'manual' itself seems selectively applied in a gendered way: packing Christmas boxes is seemingly not classified as 'manual' but 'services'.
10. Chapter 7 will explore 'traditional' gendered divisions of labour as a local 'continuity' reproduced unchanged, despite the 'rupture' cooperatives claimed to inaugurate.

Chapter 6

The Use of Gossip

Setting Cooperative Boundaries

The idea of moral borders is salient throughout this ethnography. The discourses of 'clean and just' that co-articulated with the food activism pursued by the co-ops' administration are indicative of a degree of separation and distinction. So were certain views of kinship and relatedness close to mafia – relations sealed out from the co-ops by a strict seclusion based on ethical boundaries of meritocracy. This idea is drawn from conversations with co-op members, overwhelmingly administrators, and is the basis to explore the administrators' social activity in San Giovanni as well as their associations while outside the cooperatives' offices.

Central to this were the contacts they established with people who wanted to collaborate with the co-ops. These activities will be analysed in the remainder of this chapter, in terms of border marking and crossing as well as of the management of personal and cooperative reputation. The narrative here illustrates how administrators shielded the cooperatives from certain local influences, elucidating how they traced who was a *mafioso* in the village and how they negotiated such information, shaping their own and their cooperatives' self-image as against the San Giovanni mafia. Their attempts to reinforce anti-mafia change suggest interesting continuities with local codes, as they appropriated gossip,[1] a practice continuous with local 'cultural codes' (cf. Schneider and Schneider 1976), to seclude the cooperatives from malign ('unclean') influences. They stand, in this way, as another form of moral quarantine in 'a sea of socio-cultural malice', a phrase uttered to me by Luca in an unsuspecting moment.[2]

Gossip is of fundamental importance in the ways people experienced their involvement in the anti-mafia cooperatives. It became an anti-mafia resource because administrators used it to create boundaries around their enclaves of 'good'; while locally, as a cultural code, it in fact blurred these boundaries between mafia and anti-mafia. The ethnography shows how locals used it in different ways and most importantly as a form of metatalk: to examine who talked with whom. Co-op persons most often utilised it to prove their anti-mafia credits or to solidify the 'moral borders' between mafia and anti-mafia. Following Schneider and Schneider's

notion of 'reputational networks' (1996: 9), I show how, depending on the person, reputation through gossip may be used to blur or to set boundaries.

Continuity with, and interactions between, the histories of mafia and anti-mafia have been hinted throughout this book. The ways administrators followed tactics hostile or simply suspicious of kinship is indicative of a tendency to separate the co-ops from local social life and solidify the anti-mafia cooperative phenomenon as a presence slightly aloof from the doings on Spicco Vallata ground. In this chapter, I decipher how actors sought to deal with this problem by using gossip to constitute mafia and anti-mafia as *separate* categories. However, as some vignettes below show, the local code of gossip was also used by other people to *blur* mafia/anti-mafia distinctions. How did people in public spaces speak to and about each other in San Giovanni – and what kind of idioms brought them together or kept them apart?

Gossip is twofold: there's gossip about who was a *mafioso* and what it meant to be one and, especially, about who maintained contacts with people considered significant in San Giovanni. Indeed, the police themselves tracked gossip, and 'affiliation' of someone to mafia was akin to a legal category. This dimension further frames the problem of horizontal relations in the cooperatives, offering insights into moralities and practices. Gossip impacted on the equity relations among members of the cooperatives as well as on the relationship between cooperative members and the local community.

The narrative serves two aims. The first is descriptive: I shall elucidate the role of administrators in the local community, highlighting instances where they were exposed to local rumours as well as moments when they instrumentalised these rumours to demarcate a separation between the blurred categories of mafia/anti-mafia on the ground. The second is analytical: I suggest that the administrators' plan to shield the cooperatives from local influence, in envisioning and forming cooperatives as 'enclaves of good', also takes discursive forms. Their commitment to virtuous networking and their idea that land boundaries were moral borders is here reproduced in their appropriation of local gossip. Focusing on contamination, they deploy information for purposes of surveillance of other cooperative members. This attempt to set moral borders *around* the cooperatives was informed by their own status as outsiders to San Giovanni's social life and reflected their lack of kinship ties to the area and their suspicion of locals' anti-mafia commitment.

Flows of Rumours in San Giovanni

Claudia, a thirty-year-old administrator for the Falcone co-op, could not imagine that men visiting the newsagent around the corner from the Rex, a local *bar*[3], entertained mafia sympathies. She was unaware of the kin relations between Rex regulars and the co-owner of the newsagent, a man called Salvatore, who had spent three years in prison for 'mafia allegiance'. Once, as Claudia and I entered Salvatore's newsagents to buy cigarettes, she inquired whether they sold 'anti-mafia periodicals'. Receiving no answer, she flipped through the magazines and fished out the only available copy of the '*S*', an anti-mafia-committed investigative journal. Salvatore's brother-in-law, who sat behind the counter, gave us a cold, hard look as he handed her the change. Claudia did not sense his hostility. Some weeks after, when I met the brother-in-law again, he explained that he recognised in me 'someone who lived in the village and was hence able to understand' his look of contempt for my companion.

A few days after my visit to the newsagent with Claudia, I was spending a sunny afternoon coffee break at the Rex with some of the members of the Falcone cooperative administration when Valentino Barbeto, a mid-range *mafioso*, appeared in the *bar*. He was greeted by many of those present, but not the co-op members. Valentino had a dandy-like persona, with his expensive sunglasses and gleaming-white-teeth smile, like a typical male icon from Italian glossy magazines. He was popular in San Giovanni and the younger brother of the legendary *mafioso* Giovanni Barbeto, and Valentino had spent a few years in prison himself. He approached me and asked if he could borrow the *Giornale di Sicilia* once I was done with it. Marelio, a cooperative administrator, quickly told him that I would indeed give him the paper as soon as I had finished. I noticed in Barbeto's smile and nod that he understood I was a stranger to the mode of newspaper sharing widely practised in bars of the village. While I had assumed that the cultural gap between these two individuals (self-categorised respectively as mafia/anti-mafia) would be unbridgeable, in this case Valentino and Marelio formed an easy consensus out of common sympathy for my ignorance of a local custom.

These two different vignettes, both involving Sicilian periodicals, elucidate the administrators' varying degrees of knowledge of local codes. Adamo, from the manual work team of the Falcone, told me later on, when we were talking about the Claudia incident, that 'the Palermitans just cannot get some stuff', indicating that there were local idioms and

shared codes of meaning that only natives of Spicco Vallata were able to grasp. In my wider observations of the Palermitan administrators in San Giovanni, I noticed that some scrutinised the locals' channelling of information flows through gesturing, engaging in a game of Lotto or offering a coffee to somebody they knew or wished to meet. Ernesto told me that there was more in spending time in bars than simply occupying one's leisure time:

> Ernesto: For us it is a way to learn the local society, see how they behave and think, finding out who is on this side and who is on the other side . . .
> Theo: What do you mean by this and other side?
> Ernesto: Well, studying locals' behaviours in bars, me and my friends can learn, in the long run, not only how to behave in San Giovanni but also who is sympathetic to our cause, and how, and what they do for it, and whether they are pro-mafia or anti-mafia, and so on. So, you learn where the boundary is, between mafia and anti-mafia, in the village. And of course, you learn how to behave and meet people.

Sharing the same newspaper was one way to meet and discuss local and national issues, which local men did vociferously almost as soon as they entered a *bar*. The *Giornale di Sicilia*, a conservative and mafia-tolerant newspaper printed in Palermo, was the main means of official information in the bars and the most promoted newspaper across all newsagents in the village. People consumed it cover to cover between a coffee and a sweet on small tables, with friends throwing in a terse comment or two on football or politics. Rarely did anyone read an article from start to finish. Skipping through the pages as others filled in with informal commentary, readers were satisfied to learn the news and talk to their friends at the same time. The paper provided the headlines and photographs, while the 'real news' was filled in by the live commentary. As the Rex bartender told me, 'no Sicilians really buy the paper, most copies are sold to cafés – but everybody reads it. The *Giornale* is a paper read and shared but not bought.'[4]

The reading and accompanying counter-reading – or, rather, counter-speaking – of newspapers shows the sense of community that is conveyed in San Giovanni through the layering of trust that does not simply 'buy into' the official printed information but, rather, re-negotiates it through filters of grounded personal knowledge channelled through rumours, which locals were more likely to believe than the newspaper itself. These rumours were 'from the source', as people put it: from the so-called 'great men'[5] of Spicco Vallata (the active *mafiosi*) or from people linked to mafia networks around the island. There was no doubt about the validity of information derived from such sources. News spread around as 'Chinese

whispers' were more reliable than the contested 'news' printed in the paper.

As the village lacked public spaces such as piazzas or parks, the *bars* attracted locals for recreation and socialising. In total there were thirteen *bars* in San Giovanni and San Turiddu, strung out along *via Porta Palermo,* the road linking the two villages. The administrators of the Falcone and Borsellino cooperatives took their lunch breaks either at Virilia or Rex, spending most of their free time in San Giovanni in these neighbouring *Porta Palermo bars*. These were relatively close to the cooperatives' offices and generally popular, offering a less exclusively male ambience. By visiting these bars regularly and interacting with the locals, cooperative members gradually *learnt* the local codes of indirect communication – common gestures and indirect speech forms employed by the local men when discussing the news.

The *bar* was the locus where male sociability was performed and indirect communication techniques developed their full range of meaning.[6] In San Giovanni, the strongly gendered space of the cafés made them the preferred public space for male gossiping (although those engaged in this kind of talk would not call it 'gossip' but 'rumour-talking'). To circulate convincing and interesting information was a manly capacity, and it was only certain men, like the *mafioso* Baffi (see more in chapter 9), who monopolised narratives about the mafia, local politics and power, construed in this semi-public ambience. This was a task performed with a combination of taking extra care to be distant from others but be half-heard nevertheless. Bars provided the setting for the reproduction of the blurred boundary between the public and the private, in which the figure of the *mafioso* was central as a metaphor of communication through silence (Siebert 2000).

The bars were also where cooperative administrators negotiated mafia and anti-mafia boundaries. Certain gestures signified specific things: a subtle touch of the speaker's nose delivered the message that someone was '*in odore di mafia*' (literally: in mafia odour), that is, of suspected mafia allegiances. Cooperative members replicated this gesture at the Rex as an inside joke. Nose touching became a humorous, albeit secretive expression, shared among friends when they 'sensed' *mafiosi*, a gesture conveying uncomfortable ambiguities that they nevertheless found amusing. Similarly, they often mentioned *puzza* (stench) to denote that they suspected someone in their company of being a *mafioso,* evoking an intuitive sense of unease.[7] At the Rex, I also noticed that men pressed a thumb against the right cheek to indicate that someone was a *mafioso*. This gesture, at once straightforward and indirect, indicated an idea of mafia

potency: accompanied by raising the eyebrow, the finger slightly pointing to the sideburns, it emphasised machismo. However, social interactions involving people from the 'opposite sides' of mafia and anti-mafia manifested connotations that not everyone shared, as is evident in Claudia's case.

Meeting in bars often entailed allegiance to the 'great men' of the village. Informants spoke of old *mafiosi* who spent 'all their elderly lives' at that *bar*. Adamo told me he was surprised, as a child, to see that the father of his fellow classmate Torinese always sat at the *bar* Circolo. 'Didn't he have a job to do?' he asked his school friend. Later, as he started going to bars himself, Adamo realised that '*this* was Torinese's real job: to check and control the flows of people in and out of the *bar*; this was his territorial control'. While for local workers such knowledge was acquired during their coming of age in the village, in the case of administrators it had to be learnt. On one occasion I was enjoying my morning coffee at the *bar* Circolo in the company of Pasquale, a young cooperative administrator from Palermo. The place was the favourite of Mimmo Netti's: the old *mafioso* and his friends gathered there to play cards. He had a reputation for being a peaceful, sage kind of old-school *cappoccia* ('gentleman', 'leader').

Another *mafioso*, the much younger Ignazio Baffi, a forty-five-year-old construction entrepreneur fresh out of *colleggio*,[8] walked into the *bar*. All the men present, working and pensioners alike, greeted him warmly and many seemed to compete for his attention. Meanwhile, Netti and his company, immersed in the play of cards, and generally distant, remained silent. Among the men at the barstools, one offered the newspaper and asked if he would like a coffee: 'So what about a coffee, Ignazio?' (*il caffè lo vuoi, Ignazio?*). I noticed that the man making this offer was Mr. Tratone, Adamo's father-in-law, a pensioner who rented out office space to the cooperatives. Pasquale and I were surprised to witness the particular enthusiasm with which Pitone welcomed Baffi. Later on, discussing the event, we agreed that he had as much of a right to 'hang out' at a 'mafia-friendly' *bar* as we did.

Of the village's thirteen bars, not all were mafia-affiliated, of course. *Mafiosi* would visit the most central ones. In that way, the anti-mafia/mafia rhetoric was somehow inscribed in the local landscape, as certain spots of the village were renowned for being *mafiosi* favourites. The main church was one such spot, as leading *mafiosi*'s alms were displayed in full view – and the *bar* just opposite was a known space for card-playing and gambling.

The intricacies that involved locals such as Pitone with *mafiosi* were entangled with loose local links of relatedness. This meant that Pasquale, lacking any kinship or friendship relationships with the village, felt unable to explain Pitone's loyalties to me. Not long after Baffi had made his entrance, Malva, the mayor of San Turiddu, also entered the *bar*. Baffi himself treated him to a coffee. Malva remarked smilingly to a few other sympathetic men that he was in the habit of meeting Ignazio Baffi in a central *bar* as 'an act of transparency', as this way their discussions were open to the 'public'. Probably the reason why the politician highlighted this transparency paradox (speaking to a *mafioso* in 'public') was because of his role, at the time, as the president of the 'state-local anti-mafia apparatus', the Consortium. Pasquale confessed to me that learning of the blurred boundaries of mafia and anti-mafia in such palpable way – that the incumbent president of the Consortium was a friend of the *mafioso* – was distressing to him but also useful to realise.

Offering coffee was a means to publicly recognise another man's respected position in the local male community, 'an act of honouring someone', as a bartender told me. Such recognition was often associated with people's mafia connections; for instance, treating *signori* such as Baffi or Netti to a coffee or a sweet was a noble task. This reveals, *in micro,* a tendency to exchange gifts and favours among the higher echelons of local society, as well as among the underprivileged peasant population, with certain local *mafiosi*. One is reminded, again, of Carlo Alberto Dalla Chiesa's memorable phrase that anti-mafia activists liked to cite to me often: 'The state gives as a right what the mafia offers as a gift' (see page 9). To start with, this idea resonates in a fascinating fashion when thinking back to mafia confessants' gifts to the state (Moss 2001; cf. Rakopoulos 2017c). Despite claims that the mafia engages in free gift-giving (Pipyrou 2014), the truth is somewhat different. The mafia needs the backing of consent in mobilising networks and organising structures of support. Such exchanges and gifts sometimes had repercussions that would at once put the mafia to shame – for wrongdoings – and be a source of pride – for the eventual functioning of the rule of law – for Libertà and the Consortium in Spicco Vallata. For instance, Tazio, the mayor of Bocca and a Consortium member, was arrested for mafia affiliation in 2006. 'Thankfully, his dealings were revealed soon enough', as Matteo explained to me.

The reciprocity of such dealings was hard to penetrate in fieldwork, although I did observe and partake in the most ubiquitous aspect of it: offering coffees and meals to shady figures like Baffi. Such petty exchanges were thus the main means of engaging with others at a *bar*, such as offer-

ing to buy a piece of pastry for the man who first got hold of the newspaper in order to claim access to the news and his company. In this way, consensus and popularity developed around the circulation of the newspaper and gifts of pastries (sweet in the morning, savoury at noontime) rotating among the men. The 'public, yet hermetically sealed' (in the words of Piero) position of bars as the hub of such information streams was fundamental to the development of sociality in San Giovanni. Locals communicated in *sussuri* (whispers), gestures, dialect jargon, narrations and rhyming jokes in these semi-public spaces. I consider the gossiping and whispering as important data precisely because the actual validity of information conveyed through rumours cannot be established.

After going through the whereabouts of such whispers, situating them in the sites of male commensality in San Giovanni, I would like to turn my attention back to the idea of putting co-ops in moral quarantine and forging enclaves of good practice. The ethnographic narrative so far might have discussed administrators as somehow removed from local life; however, their appropriation of the *sussuri* was often exemplary. Their use of gossip played a crucial role in fostering this protection from mafia influence locally.

Marking Boundaries: Idioms, Actors, Practices

The very idea of influence often acquired epidemic connotations and operated in a jargon of allegories drawn from medical disease. Specifically, cooperative administrators and Consortium politicians frequently used the term 'mafia' alongside idioms of insidious growth and contamination. They characterised flows and networks deploying interests of people thought to belong to mafia clans as 'mafia diffusion'. The mafia was compared to disease and indeed to cancer, a language shared by public officials (such as judges and Consortium politicians). Reale's mayor talked to me of the 'need to isolate the contaminated cells in our society'. The mayor of Fonte, another Consortium village, characterised the influence of the San Giovanni clans into his community as a 'metastasis' (invoking the spread of cancer cells to other parts of the body), a term also used by sociologists in Italy (Sciarrone 2009). San Turiddu's mayor Malva, despite his friendship with Baffi, told me in an interview that the '[mafia] lump had to be removed from the body of our community'. Keeping track of gossip regarding *mafiosi* guaranteed, for cooperative members, the preservation of legality: they saw it as a mode to frame and contain this contamination and a net to impede its spreading.

The metaphors of diffusion and flows spreading throughout the (community's) body indicate the way that cooperative administrators conceptualised *mafiosi* as potentially contaminating any social networks in which *mafiosi* participated, even marginally. Any connection with mafia links was deemed to be morally challenged and permanently at risk until 'the lump is removed', as Gianpiero emphasised to me, unwittingly echoing Malva. Gianpiero, not only a Borsellino administrator but also the head of Libertà Palermo, reflected the association's views. Pamphlets and leaflets of anti-mafia civil society associations spoke of the perils of 'the disease of the South' (Libertà 2009; Addiopizzo 2009; cf. Lumley and Morris 1997).

Libertà construed this paradigm in terms of mafia as a nucleus that transmitted its corrupting influence to the political and economic order. Nico, a member of the Borsellino cooperative, compared the members' anxiety about becoming exposed to 'contamination' with the fear of polluting clean water: a social network was like a river with a dead body lying in its stream; when the clean waters pass over it, the stream becomes polluted from that point onwards. In that respect, cooperative administrators saw a flow (of things, commodities, ideas, jobs, labour and similar resources) as wholly 'impure' when a *mafioso* occupied a broker position in it. The contamination imagery was constantly evoked in documents and informal discourses among the cooperatives' administration, the Consortium, local policy actors such as the mayors and civil society agents such as Libertà activists. Some of this discourse incorporates the flow of gossip and informal information gathered in bars and public spaces in Spicco Vallata.

Contamination calls for containment and hence articulated the administrators' tendency to form 'moral borders' while, conversely, underlining the 'cleanliness' of the cooperatives with their strictly demarcated moral universe. By knowing through gossip what was said and who said it, the administrators formed discursive moral borders around the cooperatives (akin to the moral borders formed around land). This form of gossip in San Giovanni was constructed as *metatalk*, because tracking gossip was to talk about talking. A person was 'clean' not only when they were not a *mafioso* or a *mafioso*'s relative but also when it was proved that they did not speak with *mafiosi* or relatives of *mafiosi*, as this could be contaminating for the cooperatives. This metatalk meant sharing information about who shared information with whom. Paying attention to or tracing whispers, cooperative members identified who was 'talked about' (*chiaccherato*). My attention to gossip here suggests analogies with what Favret-Saada says about witchcraft in France: aiming to study prac-

tices, she included discourse in her analysis, pointing out how 'the act, in witchcraft, is the word . . . witchcraft is spoken words; but these spoken words are power . . . to talk, in witchcraft, is never to inform . . . words wage war. Anyone talking about it is a belligerent' (1980: 8). Although the mafia is more than words, reputations and resources (job positions, state funding) were attached to spoken word, as it can, in specific contexts, be instrumentalised.

Ultimately, the administrators rendered gossip a powerful resource for the dominant model of anti-mafia cooperativism that they promoted. This was a vision in which the local community was regarded warily, seen as imbued with problematic notions of tradition and where the state and law enforcement should be present at all times.

Setting and Blurring Boundaries

For this reason, tracking informal information became part of the cooperative administrators' workload. It involved investigating how 'clean' the people who approached the cooperatives were by examining the discursive networks in which they were enmeshed. Secluded in their virtuous networking, Palermitan administrators performed this in two main ways. First, they traced information by consulting the prefecture and the police. The police provided an outline of a person's relationships with the authorities, as documented in their official archives. Secondly and more important, the administrators followed informal means of gathering information, including paying attention to random local gossip, especially the *sussuri* that took place in bars. The instrumentalisation of gossip therefore developed in a twofold way. On the one hand, state authorities documented rumours and shared this information with the cooperatives' administrators; on the other hand, the cooperatives tracked rumours on their own behalf. In doing this, they were in fact replicating the state's surveillance practices – but were able to penetrate further. Police practices correlated with the cooperative members' interest in local informal information.

Specifically, the state's gossip tracking resulted in 'signalling' (*segnalazione*), documentation confirming a person's contacts with *mafiosi*. A law-enforcement entity (the *Carabinieri* or the police) inscribed the person's name as a 'mafia contact' and informed the cooperatives that the person was to be avoided. 'Signalling', therefore, referred at the same time to 'official documentation' regulations and to informal gossiping techniques. As demands for labour intensified with the development of the cooperatives, this situation dramatically influenced the anti-mafia

cooperatives' recruitment, as the cooperatives could not hire 'signalled' people.

When an agrarian labourer (*bracciante*) asked a cooperative for a job or when a peasant who cultivated organic grapes approached the cooperatives proposing collaboration under supplier status, cooperative members mobilised a variety of control mechanisms, partly based on gossip. Firstly, through rumours documented in the police's records, they traced whether the person was 'clean' (*pulito*) and therefore suitable to collaborate with an anti-mafia cooperative. The administrators did not accept 'non-clean' people as members, workers or suppliers under any circumstance, as they thought that this would introduce 'contamination'. The case of Leonardo Barbeto (cousin of *mafia* leader Giovanni Barbeto) is typical. After his release from prison (he had served a three-year prison sentence for 'being a member of a mafia association'), Leonardo managed a Barbeto land plot that bordered a Falcone land tract (as discussed later in chapter 9). When he approached his old acquaintance Giusy to ask for a possible temporary contract as a *bracciante* in the Falcone cooperative, she calmly replied, 'Are you serious? If *I* am to take *you*, I might as well consider closing the cooperative down altogether!'

Checking by anti-mafia cooperatives' administrators on whether people approaching them were clean, through actual existing data and through informal but valuable gossip in bars, was deemed by the Consortium to be a most efficient way of surveillance. Nevertheless, the cooperatives were double-checked themselves for cleanliness by the state's law enforcement agencies. Ironically, given the use of 'signalling' by administrators, the police sometimes 'signalled' cooperative members themselves and communicated their conduct to the cooperatives' presidents. For instance, Piero once entered a *bar* at San Turiddu for his morning espresso and saw the local *Carabinieri* marshal having a coffee with young Aiola, the first cousin of a San Giovanni mafia clan leader. Piero ignored this seeming paradox and had a brief trivial chat with both men.

The next day, he had the police at his door: he was advised not to approach that person again, since he was a *mafioso.* The police officers told him that they were obliged to communicate this information to the president of the cooperative, and after that 'it was the cooperative's own issue' to decide on Piero's future. When Piero went to the police department, he complained that he had approached Aiola only because the marshal was there and that indeed the marshal introduced him to Aiola. The police replied that they often spent time with known *mafiosi* and 'it was not his business imitating that conduct'. Therefore, the police

took advantage of the mafia/anti-mafia discourse as well and insisted on monopolising this system.

'Signalling', in this way, did not directly inflict on the rule of law, but it did affect the lives of cooperative members themselves. At the very least, it made them realise that they were not immune from state surveillance. More seriously, it could lead to the signalled person's expulsion from a cooperative. The case of Pino is similar to that of Piero: he underwent a *segnalazione* as he 'kept contact' with his village's mafia boss. Informants confirmed, however, that what the police meant by 'contact' was that he had simply stopped to say hello when he and Netti met on the street. In a small village like San Turiddu it was difficult to avoid meeting anyone, and Ninno's civil engineering office was on the main road, some thirty metres from the stairs to the main church and to Circolo, Netti's hangout *bar*. In fact, I came to appreciate myself that his was a strict policy: Pino introduced Netti to me, as we met him by chance at Circolo one day. I thought the fact that I had met him was perfectly inconspicuous and actually part of the daily routine of walking around with a local co-op worker.

This strictness is indicative of the normative practice of using gossip to strategise the next moves of a cooperative. Such tactics meant identifying people through specific flows of information in their villages. These flows corresponded to networks of acquaintances, affiliations and sympathies of the police because of their determination to control reputational networks and the setting/crossing of boundaries. The normativity in this practice peaks in the role of the police in negotiating the zone among mafia/anti-mafia behaviour, a role important to the nature of these imagined boundaries that were often demarcated through gossip. The police are of course the embodiment of the state's monopolisation of force, and re-establishing that position had a lot to do with re-establishing legality, normality and, indeed, the perceived boundaries of mafia and anti-mafia. This implied that police officers had to be strict with cooperative administrators as well, and were often quite arbitrary in the way they redrew these boundaries, operating to a degree illegally, at least insofar as their own actions were very much unregulated. As the local *Carabinieri* marshal told me, 'I go about looking for gossip to decide my next moves, basically asking *mafiosi* about *mafiosi*. You do the same thing, Theo. I look for informers, you look for informants'.

The boundaries were imagined through the channel of either words attached to people (such as 'fox', or '*pere pere*') or words that people shared with others (the discourse about 'who is talking to whom'). As mentioned, I follow Favret-Saada's take on the power of words being actions,

having no autonomous meaning outside the practice of hex (1980); in San Giovanni, they construed 'moral universes' (and resources attached to them, such as jobs, or funds). The social connections sharing words were, in their turn, formed in what appeared to be mutually exclusive patterns shaped by law and the informal information around relatedness and friendship. Therefore, internal strategies in the cooperatives involved informal flows of information, as well as firm references to definitions of 'mafia' in criminal law and procedure. Often, people actively evoked the language of law, playing with its applicability, in order to back their suspicions. Hence, they talked of Baffi's release from prison as a legal mistake and circulated rumours in the village that he should have been imprisoned for ten years more, but a bureaucratic mistake in the *wording* of his sentence led to his early release. Tracing these whispers through people back to their source, I found that the person who had initiated them was the local *Carabinieri* marshal.

In that respect, gossip's relationship to the law, the police and state power is explicit and structural. In gossip becoming a resource there is a discursive realignment, translated into structural effects, since the banality of everyday contact is decontextualised to fit within a defined category of power and ethics, a moral universe, informed by specific values.

Pursuing 'The Clean': Gossip as an Anti-mafia Resource

As mentioned, the *bar* was the locus for the process of rumour tracking. The case of a prospective supplier from the neighbouring village of Camo further illustrates this. As Falcone members collaborated with the sequestered farm Tazza, which cultivated an olive grove, they became increasingly interested in olive oil extraction. Tazza was administered by a friend of Luca's, Giulio Erice, whom he had met through Palermo University's circles (see page 106). Moving around the area where Tazza was located, Luca and his virtuous-circle-network friend Paolo were anxious to find a 'clean' (*pulito*) olive mill. Tazza was a long way from San Giovanni; therefore, Luca had no information about who to trust in the area. Some locals suggested that the co-op members might find relevant information in Camo, a village located about forty minutes from San Giovanni. There, they could speak with a local olive mill owner who could potentially become an excellent supplier.

Piero decided to go to Camo indeed, and I tagged along. Before we did anything, though, he asked Luca to find out whether there were negative penal records on the olive mill owner in the prefecture archives in

Palermo. Nothing came out: the entrepreneur had even received public funds for his agricultural business enterprise. The documents proved that the mill manufactured organic oil exclusively, that the quality was high enough and that the owner was 'clean'. Piero's job, however, included not only performing a quality control for the prospective cooperative collaborators as an agronomist but also 'tracing a clean person through a *spicciola* [minor but detailed] research on what people said' about those who could become the cooperative's prospective collaborators. He described this process as 'a small-time control [*controllo spiccio*] that I do myself, often the most important one, as it reaches to webs of contacts the prefecture cannot arrive at'. He generally inquired of local providers or similar contacts 'what is said in the village' about the prospective collaborators or workers. Through this kind of gossiping, the cooperative established some security with regard to their next moves in 'dealing with people who are clean'.

I accompanied Piero in his car as he drove to Camo: his first task there was to establish whether the mill was sound and appropriate for the job. We went to the centre of Camo, a sizeable village, to meet inconspicuously with a grain supplier to the cooperative and ask him what he knew about the olive mill. Although the supplier hardly knew anything, he introduced Piero confidentially to the owner of the *bar* where they took their coffee. The barman told us he trusted 'the anti-mafia': he himself was a member of the Addiopizzo organisation of anti-racket retailers. His choice to join the Addiopizzo had resulted in his *bar* being burnt down by the main local *mafioso* clan of the village a year ago – the state had helped out with subsidies for reconstruction. Piero knew from this that the barman would be very much attuned to local gossip regarding mafia allegiances. Indeed, when asked, the barman revealed that the supplier with whom the Falcone cooperative was about to sign a partnership contract collaborated with that local mafia clan. The relationship with the *mafiosi*-brokers guaranteed the olive mill owner a steady supply of olives and a loyal clientele as a result of the mafia's social influence.[9] The cooperative cancelled the agreement with the olive mill. Piero explained to me that

> small talk in bars is the most efficient way to find out about people's cleanliness; the whispers you hear here and there make you aware of local doings. Of course, we do not want to collaborate with a supplier who walks arm in arm with these people ['*vá a bracceto con questi*'].

The cases of Pino's and Piero's 'signalling', as well as the Camo vignette, highlight the fundamental assumption I identified regarding gossip in San Giovanni: sharing information is precisely about information shar-

ing. In the context of anti-mafia gossip, people speak about who speaks to whom. This *metatalk* renders gossip a prominent material resource for what I am calling the process of constituting the co-ops as enclaves in Spicco Vallata – the administrators' intellectual and cultural labour of setting moral borders. Moreover, it is a means of accessing further material resources, thus forming part of the ongoing social arrangements for constituting the anti-mafia cooperatives. By clearly dividing local social relations into distinct moral universes, access to the cooperatives is ensured only to those free from contaminating contact with *mafiosi*.

In these conditions, anti-mafia cooperatives rendered rumours and gossip an instrument of internal policymaking and an even further affirmation of the administrators' leading role in them. The role of gossip as fundamental in reputation-building is widely documented (Ghosh 1996; Kirsch 2010). What is original in the case of the anti-mafia cooperatives is the way tracking gossip in the gendered spaces of the bars is linked to processes of separating the cooperatives from their broader social ambience. Where anthropological accounts have characterised gossip as a resource for accumulating reputation (Engle Merry 1997), here gossip is a resource in a different way: a means of exclusion/inclusion in the work of creating a bounded universe shielded behind 'moral borders', which diverged from local values. However, the attempt to construct work and experience horizontality within the cooperatives – an important ideal – is trumped by the use of gossip by the administrators, as it separates cooperatives from local people, including the workers of the cooperatives themselves, thereby forming a hierarchy of reputations in which the administrators, because they are 'free' of any local connections, come to be the local representation of an 'uncontaminated' anti-mafia element.

Schneider and Schneider's classic monograph proposed that 'control over networks' is the source of the mafia's brokerage power (1976). In a more recent book, they identified hierarchical 'reputational networks' as an important means of social cohesion in Sicily, which impacts production and reproduction patterns, building people's and families' 'respectability' (1996: 195–96). The tremendously important discussion on the *pentiti* (informators, literally: repentants) among the Sicilian mafia is also telling, especially when the mafia confession is seen as a gift to the state (Moss 2001). Rumour has been a central anti-mafia resource, one the state has drawn from since the 1930s in order to capture and isolate *mafiosi* (Coco 2013). The information leaked by mafia repentants, although detrimental for their own reputation, was a main source of understanding the mafia (Allum 2006; Dino 2011). Indeed a cognitive anthropology of

the mafia might imply paying attention to leaked information. Such data allows one to imagine the organisation through confessional narrative. It is a method that works its way back from repenting *mafiosi* in order to construct a broader historical framework in which mafia selfhood is located (Rakopoulos 2017b).

My ethnographic discussion builds on these insights. Utilising reputational networks, administrators of anti-mafia cooperatives render gossip a resource, appropriating it from the local context to use against the mafia. These networks mediate categories of cleanliness, as well as anti-mafia that are further linked to other resources (land and labour) available through the cooperatives. Focusing on the flows of discourse and the modes of communication helped them to construct the binary mafia/anti-mafia and their conceptual separation in daily discourse.

As noted above, cooperative members instrumentalised information gathered through gossip as often as state actors did, although with more effective penetration of local networks. The gossip character of such communication was often seen as a way to 'know a territory' and infiltrate those spheres of information considered too intimate for the state to reach. The discourse of 'cleanliness' creates a difference from state actors, demarcating (in sensorial terms) the social ambience of the anti-mafia cooperatives. Whereas gossip and rumours blur the boundaries within which the people of the cooperatives were meant to act, they were also used to register people on one or the other 'sides'. This was also true of the 'signalling' of the cooperatives and the Camo vignette.

Gossip in Spicco Vallata meant both to tell stories (gossip with a narrative) and to talk about talking (gossip about who talks with whom). The anti-mafia cooperatives' administrators mainly utilised the latter form to identify who was a mafia affiliate. Gossip thus helps to set the limits of the law's applicability in that it conveys *meta-information*. In that respect, when a person was thought to have had contact (i.e., speak to, share words with) with someone recognised as a *mafioso* in legal terms, that person would be excluded from the cooperatives. Using gossip to strategise the next moves of a cooperative meant identifying people's location in specific flows of information in their villages. These flows corresponded to networks of acquaintances, affiliations and sympathies.

Gossip consequently entailed controlling channels of cleanliness – as mafia contamination transmits through words – through sharing information and talking with people perceived as contaminated. There is more interest in speech about speech, in knowing who spoke to whom than what they said. Gossip appears as metatalk to seal co-ops' enclave borders, checking on alliances and liasons. Words here, as in the Bocage (Favret-

Saada 1980), are not dangerous because of their content but because of their mere existence, addressing someone considered potentially contaminating. The usage of platforms evoking and conveying informal information in the form of gossip construed cooperatives' ethical positionality. This included the use of indirect communication, rumours, whispers and gestures, as well as of the purity-and-danger language of contamination. Reproducing a clear distinction between 'the mafia' and 'the anti-mafia', administrators employed gossip to distinguish sharply betwwen these two 'moral universes'. This has had impacts on the work relations of the cooperatives, in the process of the administrators' seclusion behind the iron cage that these 'moral universes' construed.

(Far from) Moral borders

Informal information in the form of gossip is surely important in the everyday lives of locals, *mafiosi,* state authorities and the cooperatives' administrators. But it also involves contradictions. First, the ways gossip was used creates fuzziness in the mafia/anti-mafia distinction. As people in the village's bars circulated flows of information construed to lie in the zone between mafia and anti-mafia, gossip was a vector of resources for locals (barmen and *mafiosi* in particular) *and* for state authorities. Anthropologists inhabit that area inside and outside of the law (cf. Harris 1996; Di Bella 2011). That area constitutes a grey zone permeating the cooperative endeavour in Spicco Vallata. Secondly, the administrators rendered gossip a medium of separation in their need to quarantine co-ops from 'malignant' or 'contaminating' features of local society. As has been discussed regarding food activism, the use of gossip was for administrators part of their attempts at protective seclusion.

That type of enclaving was particularly the case in San Giovanni, where administrators perceived *mafiosi* and people affiliated to them as a threat of contamination with local livelihoods. As the administrators came from networks unrelated to San Giovanni, their use of local information secured and consolidated their positions in the cooperatives. They participated in gossip flows not in order to engage with the life of the local community but to identify local mafia affiliations and distinguish themselves from them. Their idioms of contamination and cleanliness served this aim.

This point feeds into my general argument about the specificities of the division of labour of the anti-mafia cooperatives. The outcome of how (and to whom) people speak to strategise the next moves of a cooperative

implied locating people in flows of affiliations and sympathies in their villages: 'whispers' around local people often challenged their position and status. The flows of gossip functioned as the demarcator of their 'moral universe'; alluding to contamination was a means of securing this universe's boundaries. Gossip sits comfortably alongside views of food or practices of kinning and dekinning across the co-op workforce and reminds us of the material realities that information and ideas of contamination are imbued with and embedded in.

For instance, as explained, the administrators commuted to San Giovanni in the morning and returned to Palermo in the evening. The cooperatives were their work space; Palermo was their home. The separation of work from kinship links is a fundamental premise on which activities such as gossip-tracking are based. This separation is an axis of the antithesis between the two teams of the cooperatives, reproducing unequal relations within them. In the following chapter, I suggest further ways to tackle this moral and practical facet of the co-op division of labour. Like institutions existing outside and around cooperatives, like kinship or indeed rumours and reputation, paid and unpaid work must be taken seriously if we want to fully comprehend the extent and nature of cooperativist realities – in Sicily and beyond.

NOTES

1. The core of my ethnographic attention in describing and analysing gossip is verbal communication – taking gossip *stricto sensu*, as speech about speech. However, throughout the chapter I also refer to non-verbal communication that accompanied verbal gossip, as these discursive means are part of the broader framework of indirect communication in which cooperative members are locally entrenched.
2. The phrase is situated right at the opening of this story (page 4).
3. A *bar* in Italy, unlike the use of the termin English, is a coffeehouse, where espresso is consumed while patrons usually stand; sweets and pastries are also on sale; there are a few tables available and perhaps a couple of newspapers. Most of the clientele spend just a few minutes in a *bar,* the time it takes to consume a coffee shot, while others, locals to specific *bars,* hang out there for hours, especially in bars that have a gaming room at the back, where elder men would play cards. (Here, when referring to more than one *bar*, I use the term 'bars' in order to avoid confusion (in Italian, the plural is *bar*).
4. Incidentally, this perspective offers a potential counterpoint to Anderson's notion of 'print-capitalism' (2006: 37, 48): the convergence of capitalism and print technology in spreading information and eventually in nation-building.
5. The term 'great man' is used as an analytical category in the anthropology of Africa (Bayart 2009) and reminds us of the Melanesian Big Men (Godelier 1986);

it is operative in discussions about historical agency of people and collectivities (Sahlins 2004). In the context of this ethnography, 'great men' or 'gentlemen' (*i grandi*, *i signori*, *i cappoccia*) were emic designations to speak of *mafiosi*.

6. The gendered element is prominent in analyses of indirectness (Hendry and Watson 2001). The entirely male-centred *bar* of Sicily, not much unlike the tavern elsewhere, becomes the locus of sociability in the form of commensality, dominated by codes of male 'hearty' friendship in Mediterranean ethnographies (e.g., Papataxiarchis 1991; Almeida 1996; Desai and Killick 2010).
7. Sperber (1996) suggests a hierarchy of senses, ranging from sight at one extreme, which has the most rudimentary terminology based on it (colour words), to smell at the other, which is evocative since all one can say is that something smells *like* something else. Akin to symbolism, smell evokes a field of associations; it relates to connotation instead of denotation (Sperber and Wilson 1995). The emic idea of embodying smell (mafia stench) as an attribute people carried with them underlines the intuitive basis they evoked to think of mafia.
8. 'College' is a popular slang term, referring to 'prison', and suggesting the educative potential of the prison for *mafiosi* – educational in terms of criminal experience.
9. There is an apparent conflict of values here: what wins a good reputation for some, mafiosity, is seen as a contra-indicator by Piero.

Chapter 7

'Wage Is Male – But Land Is a Woman'

The anti-mafia co-ops' division of labour is solidified by the most unexpected external factors. Gossip in the specific sense of *who is talking with whom* might be one of the most surpising: it became a major resource for administrators, in its capacity to identify people with whom the cooperatives could collaborate. This further separated the administrators from their local co-members in the cooperatives, as it forged an anti-mafia cooperativism suspicious of local practices – including kinship (as seen in chapter 5) but with some appropriation of local practices to police the moral borders of the co-ops, as discussed in the previous chapter.

But distribution and hierarchy of labour in the co-ops is mainly about *labour* – and indeed, I shall argue here, labour taking place *outside* the co-op environment. This book opened with a vignette on the standardisation of labour that co-ops brought to Spicco Vallata. Here, I discuss the interactions between the 'standardisation' of people's registered work status (i.e., the legal regularisation of labour relations) in the anti-mafia cooperatives and their supplementary informal activities in pursuit of a better livelihood. Local practices aimed at guaranteeing households' livelihood security have evolved alongside the cooperatives' standardised employment. These practices involve 'ghostly' activities (Smith 1987); these activities, as shown later, are often illicit and indeed in line with the local mafia's 'ideologies' (Lupo 2015: 161–84). People's struggles to maintain the regular, cooperative wage work alongside these local practices make the official, visible political economy converge with an invisible and strongly gendered realm of local livelihood practices.

Local co-op members' 'mixed' statuses as employee/wage earners and independent peasant proprietors are at once reinforced *and* contested by the standardisation promoted by cooperatives. Their informality is exacerbated by the legalistic regulations of a work culture brought in from the co-ops, presenting their members with new problematics in the lives of their households. In the case of registering land in wives' names, standardisation, ironically, facilitated the flow of unemployment benefits that could be classified as illicit.

'Standardisation' and Work in the Fields

Most cooperative administrators were convinced that the process of formally valuing agricultural waged work and promoting labour rights would be accompanied by ideological change. Luca told me that 'once a labour regime is standardised, it would drag peasants away from mafia sympathies. . . . Their ideas will follow their conditions of living'.[1] This normalisation/standardisation involved a net pay of at least 51.62 euros per day (plus an extra 7–9 euros for specialised skills such as 'tractor driver'), as well as taxes plus national insurance contributions accumulated towards pensions.

The *braccianti* of the cooperatives were also smallholders alongside their cooperative employment. They earned wages from the cooperatives by working in the confiscated land plots and also worked on their own land tracts (*pezzi di terra*), mostly vineyards.[2] Most of them, when I asked, acknowledged that the pay from the cooperatives was 'pretty good' – but they always added that it was 'not enough'. A part of their income came from selling their own grapes to the local wineries, such as the Santoleone, of which they were also producer-members. As independent producers, they called themselves *contadini* ('peasants'), a term that encompassed all landowners, regardless of the production scale (their mean landholding was a modest 3.5 hectares).

Loredana, a thirty-five-year-old female administrator for the Borsellino cooperative, was sceptical about the extent to which the standardisation of labour 'could work', querying whether local workers took it seriously. She complained to me, mocking the Sicilian dialect of cooperative workers:

> When local people applied to join the cooperatives, they expected *the* stable job,[3] . . . integration into a system of a stable monthly wage [*u trabbagghiu fissu . . . a sistemazione*]. . . . I have discussed with all members about their views of what the pay and the overall remuneration might be like. People think that by entering the co-op they have found a steady wage. This condition is an expected Sicilian disease.

Silvio, the president of the cooperative, shared this view of his colleagues, and indeed he thought the workers' attitude to demand a steady wage was counterproductive.[4] The production-team members regarded these two young and educated administrators as ignorant of agricultural matters despite the fact that they were the cooperative's agronomists and the only members with a degree. They thought that the administrators'

Illustration 7.1: Workers in the vineyards, applying wire over the vines. Photo by Diego Orlando.

insistence on 'promoting the standardisation' was naïve if they could not back it up with a full monthly wage for all members, administrators and workers alike. The explanation administrators gave for the fact that they – unlike everyone in the manual cooperative workforce, apart from three member-workers of Falcone – received a monthly wage was that agrarian work was seasonal, unlike their work, which necessitated their constant presence in the office throughout the year.

Unlike Gianpiero, Silvio, Loredana and other cooperative administrators and representatives, whose views on pay were often disliked by local workers, I was frequently invited to homes of *sangiovannari* to spend time and discuss their experience of wage work with the cooperatives. I soon found that what people mostly wanted to talk about, perhaps heated by the flow of their homemade wine at the dinner table, was their experiences of working their own plots rather than their paid work for the cooperatives. I spent large parts of my fieldwork working alongside them in the cooperatives' vineyards, joining teams of five to fifteen men every other morning throughout December, April, August and September (months of intense agricultural work). In that context, I witnessed their sense of pride in working on ex-mafia confiscated land.[5]

The cooperatives modelled the recruitment strategies for their manual workforce teams on the gendered distribution of labour common in

Illustration 7.2: Falcone workers about to take a cigarette break in the vineyards. Photo by Diego Orlando.

Spicco Vallata. The absence of women on every plot of the cooperative land informed the manual workers' work identity. Manliness in turn was fundamental to the definition of their worker subjectivities and was also a form of loose celebration of their class identity. Men experienced working the soil of the cooperatives' plots as an expression of masculinity. Their work discourse often evoked stamina and courage – here seen as especially masculine characteristics – which they thought were needed to undertake not only the labour process but also the 'anti-mafia burden'. In both the manual and the anti-mafia aspect of their labour as fieldhands, they distinguished their work experience sharply from those 'of the office'.

Working on the confiscated land was thus 'even more masculine', Enzo noted.[6] These understandings formed bonds of camaraderie among workers and established their practice of calling each other '*compare*' (godparent, but also metaphorically, comrade). This condition also underlined the distance between the administration and manual workforce teams, marking the cooperatives' division of labour. Often, men working in the vineyards recited sexist jokes to contrast themselves to the 'kids in the office' or to celebrate the manual labourer's manhood compared to the ambiguous manliness of the 'pen pusher'.

Through masculinity, the *braccianti* emphasised the moral superiority of their work experiences, which they brought into their new identities as wage workers in the cooperative ambience. Phrases like 'one poor man's cock is better than that of one hundred rich men' celebrated the presumed sexual capacities of 'the peasant' and the abilities of manual labour, while associations between their own work making the land fertile were also rife. At the same time, they often used self-mockery to ridicule the exclusively male work of the countryside and derided the exclusively male world of the fields ('In the village you get pussy, in the plot arse'). Men asserted that promiscuity and sexual potency were 'naturally' stimulated by work in the open air, whereas they considered the 'closed' environment of the administrative team's office unhealthy and emasculating.

Despite this overt manliness, they emphasised their fidelity and family-oriented ethics, which 'anchored' them, as they said, to their homes (and anti-mafia family idioms). As Pippo Pitrè put it, 'in the village, we refrain from these jokes: we are faithful to our wives and honour their presence in our households'.[7] Men's experience of their employment in the cooperatives was not only masculinised as a daring political activity but it also fed into their family-oriented livelihoods.

Male workers hardly ever talked about their wives' contributions to their household income. Importantly though, the idea that the wages earned in the co-ops' field-work were a manly endeavour was juxtaposed to what they saw as their wives' 'land property'. Pippo had put it perfectly in a telling phrase: 'Wage is male – but land is a woman'. The phrase symbolically indicates that what the men called the position of 'the wife' ('*a mugghieri*') was fundamental for the constitution of the household economy. They also alluded to 'other income sources' coming from 'the position of the wife', which helped with their households' financial needs.

Pippo and his cooperative colleagues, second- or third-generation plot owners, had become mainly wage earners. The factors at play in this process stemmed from the coexistence of farm earnings with wage income. This was itself the consequence of the recent transformation that the cooperatives had brought about, as they hired peasants under standardised contractual employment terms. But I did wonder what these 'other income sources' were that men kept mentioning. Were they linked to the standardisation process that cooperatives brought to waged work, introduced into local discourse by the administrators? The clue to answering these questions seemed to lie with the status of land tenure for the cooperative workers' households.

Registration of Land to Wives

The Pitrè and Riceli Families: Work, Plots, Benefits

I became increasingly aware that households had other sources of income alongside daily wages from the cooperatives and their earnings from selling the grapes from their vineyards to the local wineries. Many informants mentioned unemployment benefits and wages from other sources of agricultural work. From discussions, therefore, I identified a fourfold income for cooperative workers' families: cooperative wages; the trading of their grapes to wineries; waged work; and, exclusive to daily workers, unemployment benefits. At the beginning, I thought it odd that people were cooperative workers *and* landowners and yet eligible to claim benefits, as they told me they were. In Italy, being registered as unemployed while owning and running a firm, such as a farm, however small, is prohibited by law.

As noted, domestic arrangements in Spicco Vallata were usually organised around a nuclear family with landownership as the central feature of familial economic life. In the majority of the households I studied, I visited the homes of cooperative workers or people affiliated to the cooperatives who were all members of nuclear-family-based households. Commensality and co-residence of a family were the primary factors denoting the limits of the households, which were consequently conceptually identical to the limits of the family. There were cases of both virilocal and uxorilocal households among the twenty-five for which I have detailed data, but the fact was not central to people's own understanding of family life. Inter-generational co-residence was also surprisingly rare, occurring in only three local families where the cooperative member was not married.

Most households were composed of a husband (the effective land proprietor and waged worker), a wife (housewife and sometimes in irregular waged employment, and also the nominal landowner, as explained below) and children, whether of school age or slightly older (studying, working in waged employment or helping with the family plots). Despite women's absence from agricultural work and their restriction to the domestic sphere, the households' 'family firms' (*aziende*) were registered to wives who routinely appeared as *capoaziende* (i.e., owners of the family's land). Conversely, husbands, who were the actual managers of the plots, were called *capofamiglie* (family heads), a title descriptive of the domestic sphere rather than that of economic enterprise. The econo-

misation of the domestic and the domestication of the economy cannot be missed here.

Male power is vested by the state: male heads are made answerable to the state, since the household as an institution becomes visible to the state through the identification of one person who represents it. Harris calls this process 'a partial devolution of power to adult males' (Harris 1984: 59). In Spicco Vallata, this devolution has been forged in terms of wives, as those who are accountable for the household's landownership, although this condition did not reflect a matriarchal organisation of the household.

Pippo and Maria Pitrè, a couple from San Giovanni, were the first to explain to me the details of the gap between legal title and the actual practice of land tenure, as I spent a considerable amount of time in their home. This ethnographic data confirms Jeff Pratt's findings from Italy, where he notes, 'Those who do have joint property rights in land do not necessarily produce together' (1994: 104).[8] Of course, the term *property rights* in Sicily does not reflect the actual ownership of the plots and is only nominal. My findings are also in line with Pratt's on how agrarian transformations (in his case in Tuscan agriculture) led to wage labour eventually becoming the main source of income for rural families (1994: 66). Pippo and Maria's story can help elucidate the point here.

Pippo, a *sangiovannaro*, fifty-eight years old when I met him, used to be a member of the Borsellino cooperative but had resigned a few months earlier (due to conflicts with the administration over the fact that, as a member-worker, he did not receive a monthly wage). He eventually decided to go back to work as a daily labourer for the Falcone, as he needed the money. I rented the apartment he owned at the centre of the village.

Elena, Maria and Pippo's daughter, always left dinner early to study for the university entrance exams in her room. The fact that she had chosen Parma (an Emilian city) for her studies reflected her father's involvement in the cooperative, ideologically inspired by Emilian 'red cooperativism'.[9] However, when talking about how the family would finance Elena's studies, Pippo barely mentioned his cooperative pay. Rather, the plan depended on the year's harvest turnover: he talked more about harvest expenses, including wages paid to friends who would help, than his own wage from Falcone.

Maria was a return migrant to the village. Her parents had left San Giovanni at a young age as landless peasants, before the agrarian reform of 1953. They had immigrated to Argentina,[10] where Maria was born and raised. She went to live permanently in Sicily in 1985, marrying into the

Pitrès, to whom she was related, hardly knowing anyone else and having no family assets to her name. When she married Pippo (her second cousin), her dowry did not include any land at all. The Pitrès themselves were a relatively poor family, whose assets included a house and four hectares of vineyard that Pippo had inherited from his father, acquired initially through the 1953 reform. Nevertheless, she appeared on the title deeds as the owner of the Pitrè family's plots. 'I had nothing waiting for me here, when I emigrated,' she clarified. 'It was my husband who sort of gave his plots to me. . . . We agreed for him to transfer them to be registered in my name, and here I am, owning four hectares today'. The transfer had taken place as soon as the couple married in 1986, as happened with most peasant families. The scheme was widely practised in the area, and the reason for it, I was told, was tax avoidance. Registering land to wives minimised the couple's joint tax liability, as the assets were shared between husband and wife.[11] The practice of female landownership, discussed below, rather than being 'traditional' as it was called locally, dated back to when tax avoidance started around the mid-1950s (in the post-agrarian reform impetus) for most local families, as it did with the Pitrès.

On several different occasions I asked Pippo the same question I asked both manual daily workers and member-workers: what were the specific sources of his family's income, given that Maria was not in waged employment? Like most other daily workers, Pippo worked for the Falcone cooperative for about one hundred days a year, earning an annual net income of about 5,200 euros. The wage he received from the cooperative for those workdays provided the basic subsistence for the family. The Pitrès budgeted around that 'family wage', as they called it. Unlike the steady wage from the cooperative, farming involved risk and unpredictability and therefore could not be reliably determined. Pippo, like others, calculated that the cooperative wage provided for roughly 40 per cent of their annual income, while farm earnings yielded around another 20 per cent. He was disappointed about the fact that, with the dire prices of the grape varieties he cultivated (Cattaratto, Viognier and Nero D'Avola), he had to sell a kilogram of grapes for 0.20 euros to the big Santoleone winery of the area (see table 7.1). The rest of their income came from 'other sources', apparently related to his wife's position in the household economy, on the one hand, and to his relations with other peasants on the other. This is what he initially told me as we worked together at the cooperative's vineyards. Working at his friends' vineyards, exchanging labour and cash with them, provided another 20 per cent of his earnings. Therefore, the family's livelihood was planned according to a multi-source income, sources that seemed connected to each other.

Table 7.1: Santoleone Grape Prices, in Eurocents

Prices of Harvest 2009 SANTOLEONE WINERY	
MERLOT	26.50
SYRAH	25.00
NERO D'AVOLA	24.00
CABERNET SAUVIGNON	26.50
SANGIOVESE	21.50
NERELLO MASCALESE	21.00
PERRICONE	21.50
CHARDONNAY	30.00
VIOGNER	30.00
CATARRATTO	20.00
INZOLIA	20.00
TREBBIANO	18.00
GRECANICO E DAMASCHINO	20.00

Source: Santoleone cantina cooperativa, 2008
Figures: eurocents per kilogram

At our third dinner, he finally disclosed that the rest of the family's income (the final 20 per cent) stemmed from the fact that the plots were registered to Maria and had been since 1986. What he, like other men, had mentioned to me while working in the vineyards about 'other sources' now made sense: it was state welfare provision. This came in the form of unemployment benefits for Pippo, who legally appeared as unemployed for roughly 250 days a year. The fact that his waged work was now officially registered with the state made him eligible for benefits for the days of the year he did not work. In fact, a good 20 per cent of the Pitrè household's income came from this source. However, if Pippo had the farm registered to him, he would not have been eligible for these benefits, as he would have appeared to the state as a professional farmer. When Pippo started to engage in registered waged employment for the cooperatives in 2000, he immediately became officially employed and therefore entitled to security, pension and welfare benefits. When asked about this, he commented that 'here in Spicco Vallata, everything is a bluff' (*é tutto una truffa ccà*).

The incorporation of local male peasants into daily waged employment for the cooperatives thus consolidated the pre-existing informal practice of 'traditional' female landownership, grafting on further positive attributes. What was already a widely deployed practice by peasant households, apparently for tax purposes, had become an unexpected source of additional income. Locals thought that state policies imposed structural

constraints on their households (taxation) and therefore felt justified in using these strategies, pointing as well to the lack of welfare provision for housewives. In Spicco Vallata, as in the rest of Italy, women working as housewives were not recognised as workers in the state's employment registers. Hence, they could not claim unemployment benefits, although, according to state regulations they were not in employment;[12] in fact, they were eligible to claim only the lowest, 'pauper', 'social pension' of 160 euros a month when they reached sixty years of age. For this reason, the Pitrès planned ahead, taking advantage of the couple's sixteen-year age difference to improve Maria's pension. With Pippo due to retire in a few years, they planned to arrange a reverse transfer of the land's ownership, from Maria to Pippo; he would then head the *azienda* himself and 'hire' her as an employee until she became entitled to her pension. This way, she would be able to put together some years of registered employment, over this time paying the minimal state contributions to be eligible for a pension when she 'retired'. She did not actually intend to work on the farm in her fifties; in fact, like most married women in San Giovanni, she had hardly visited the plots she owned.

Similarly to the Pitrès, other anti-mafia families with this household livelihood pattern also followed the strategy of nominal female landownership. In the Riceli family, from the village of Bocca, all three of the male family members were employed by the cooperative. The father, Enzo, after years of cooperative employment, had brought his sons into the cooperative through his *raccomandazioni*. Santa, Enzo's wife, did only petty jobs for the co-op on a daily contract basis and never worked in the fields. 'Agricultural labour is not for us women – everyone knows this in Spicco Vallata,' she clarified when I asked her.

Santa was proud, however, to be the *capoazienda* of her 'anti-mafia family'. The Ricelis owned a couple of vineyards that they had bought when they returned from Switzerland, where they had lived for twelve years, between 1985 and 1997. Enzo had initiated the idea of moving to Switzerland because, he said, hard as he had tried, he could not find work in construction jobs in Bocca; Santa had agreed, and two years after they married, when they were both twenty-four, they emigrated there. The 1980s saw a sudden burst of public works construction in Spicco Vallata, where a significant amount of Cosa Nostra's heroin profits was invested, for money-laundering purposes[13] (Sterling 1991; Stille 1996). Such works included the Palermo-Sciacca highway, which today passes just outside San Giovanni. Enzo told me that workers were paid cash-in-hand by *mafiosi* middlemen, precisely to facilitate the *mafiosi*'s money laundering.

Table 7.2: Two Families' Incomes (numbers are approximate)

	Pitrès	**Ricelis**
Family members	Pippo: working in co-op Maria and Elena: not working	Enzo: member-worker *on permanent wage* Lino: member-worker *on daily wage* Ciccio: *daily worker* working in co-op Santa: working occasionally
Wages from co-ops	5,200 euros annually [shared among members]	Enzo: 13,200 euros Lino: 7,200 euros Ciccio: 7,200 euros Santa: 1,800 euros [each member kept most of his or her own earnings]
Privately owned land: earnings from grapes [agrarian profit only]	3.5 ha 2,500 euros annually [shared among members]	4 ha 2,700 euros annually [shared among members]
Wages from informal work	2,300 euros annually	Enzo: 2,000 euros Lino: 1,000 euros Ciccio: 1,000 euros
State benefits	Pippo: 2,200 euros annually	Lino: 2,000 euros Ciccio: 2,000 euros Enzo: no benefits, as he was in permanent, continuous employment, on a monthly wage Santa: no benefits, as annual workdays to make her eligible did not suffice

Most of the workers on such schemes were peasants: grape prices were dropping in the mid-1980s, and construction work was more profitable than cultivating vines. Enzo himself had worked on the Bocca reservoir construction project but became disillusioned with how much the project was controlled by the mafia, and so he sold the two-hectare vineyard that he had inherited from his father and went to Zurich with Santa. Their son Ciccio was born there shortly after, and Lino three years later. When they returned to Sicily in 1997, they immediately bought four hectares of healthy vineyard close to Bocca, with the official purchase being registered in Santa's name for the usual tax reasons.

In the case of the Pitrès, the transfer of land from husband to wife took place at the time of their marriage in 1986. For the Ricelis, the family's investment in land, after their return migration, was directly registered to the wife, Santa, in 1997. She was therefore, from 1997, a *capoazienda* in a

household with three men who joined the wage employment of the cooperatives; this conscious family plan began with Enzo in 2000, and the sons followed in 2005. Although Santa appeared as the landowner, Enzo and Santa clarified, when sharing their life stories with me, that the money for the land purchase came from Enzo's waged work in Switzerland, and it was his idea to buy land in Bocca in the first place. Santa's landownership 'produced' benefits in this 'anti-mafia family' *only* for the daily worker Lino, as Ciccio and Enzo, who were cooperative member-workers (indeed, Enzo was one of the very few member-workers on permanent wage), were never registered as unemployed.

Wives as Landowners in Anti-mafia Families: State, Mafia, and Local Codes

The case studies of the Pitrè and the Riceli households are characteristic of the broad pattern among anti-mafia families in Spicco Vallata: in all households for which I have data, where at least one member worked for the cooperatives, the married woman, as the nominal *capoazienda*, had all the landed property in her name.[14] This not only includes land brought to households of anti-mafia families through the wife's marriage dowry (as was the case with Tano, a Falcone cooperative worker, and his Tarini family) but also households where the wife brought no property at all to her new household.

Registering land to wives was established practice for both anti-mafia families *and* mafia-affiliated families. These strategies are therefore continuities of practice in which local cultural codes are sustained under anti-mafia cooperativism, despite the cooperativist model, and solidified in a standardised political economy of waged employment as proposed by administrators.

Married women embraced their exclusion from working in the fields: Santa and Maria felt that joining men in farm work would be 'absurd'. Rita Giuffrè also emphasised to me that, although her brother Carelli, her husband Paolo and her future son-in-law Donato worked in the cooperative's vineyards, she was very happy that her paid work for minor tasks within the cooperative kept her away from the fields. The cooperatives also, as mentioned earlier, employed women for work in the *agriturismi*, the co-ops' two country houses that operated as boutique hotels (as well as, of course, in the administrative teams).

There is an interesting issue here regarding the mafia's role in shaping this gendered division of labour. Local people pointed to mafia proto-

col specific to Spicco Vallata as a significant factor: the cultural influence of the monosexual mafia had led to the historical phenomenon of women being excluded from working in the fields. The example of Antonia Barbeto, analysed in chapter 9, may be taken as indicative of San Giovanni mafia norms: when her three male children were arrested and charged with being Cosa Nostra members, her stance on those of the family's vineyards registered in her name accorded with the model of women's absence from farm work – she simply abandoned the fields. Further evidence in support of this argument can be found through a local comparison. Workers such as Pippo or Enzo often contrasted the male monopoly on agricultural work in their Spicco Vallata villages with the neighbouring town of Alcamo, where women did work in the vineyards. Visiting the fertile Alcamo valley, just outside Spicco Vallata, I witnessed women working as field hands alongside their male family members myself. Importantly, in Alcamo, informants suggested that there had historically been different mafia configurations. Evidence from the local press confirmed these oral informal communications: seemingly women did have leading roles in Alcamo mafia. As soon as local male clan leaders were arrested, they were replaced by their wives, who thus moved from occupying roles in the home to fulfilling roles in the local mafia: 'from family to clan', as the local press noted ('*S*' 2009: 15).[15] This could suggest that there is a correlation between female work activity in the fields and contingent characteristics of the Alcamo mafia.

In fact, directions of causality should be left open: it is probably the historical interaction between cultural codes local to Spicco Vallata and the mafia that explain this situation. Such practices are rooted in localised labour regime histories that spill out of a framework of local political economy influenced to a degree by the mafia. In Alcamo, for instance, a different historical development of the mafia produced conditions where gender had different implications from San Giovanni. Despite the lack of grounded ethnographic data from Alcamo, there is evidence of women being active in the local mafia, fulfilling roles traditionally adopted by men, which relates to the fact that, in Alcamo, 'female labour in the fields was not devalued' ('*S*' 2009: 14).

Anthropology supporting a shift 'from structure and agency to livelihoods' (Rigg 2007: 29–39) 'draws on families' strategies to position landownership in an opaque status in order to guarantee their 'livelihood security' (Chambers 1998: 121). I have talked at some length in chapter 5 about how cooperativist and familist idioms merge in the context of the Sicilian anti-mafia. But household-based accounts may be too blunt an instrument to explain why families in villages so close to each other, San

Giovanni and Alcamo, follow such differently gendered tactics regarding work. Pointing to the complexity of both internal and external factors, in Spicco Vallata women's main income contribution to the livelihoods of their families was their position as 'firm owners' (*capoaziende*) – referring to the household land – largely through transfers of land that men had acquired through inheritance or purchase or as dowry in marriage and not through work in the fields. Ethnographic work from southern Italy, interestingly, confirms that the exclusion of women from farm labour is not a general characteristic of Sicily or of the greater area (Schneider and Schneider 1976; Assmuth 1997; Pratt 1994). Pratt notes that in sharecropping, women's work was not 'exclusively concerned with [home-based] activities', and in fact [women] were not 'isolated from a public world' (Pratt 1994: 38; similarly, Silverman 1970). Their domestic work is integrated in a wider system of political economy and indeed is organic to the functioning of its structure (Goddard 1996).

Joining anti-mafia cooperatives constituted a double mechanism for local families. On the one hand, it impacted on their status in the village as anti-mafia families. For local men who worked as cooperative *braccianti*, this had further positive implications by boosting their feelings of manliness. On the other hand, participating in the cooperatives' regulated employment offered a surprising opportunity to sideline state regulations, as it was done in the face of the administrators' claims to legality and regularisation of the local work regime.[16] This widely adopted livelihood strategy entailed assuming the known risk of a state fine for benefit and pension deceit, since the government pursued legal enforcement on benefit fraud.[17] Registering land to wives continued, nevertheless, as it now entailed a wide range of financial benefits for families related to state welfare policies.

This informal economy appears as a combination of employment and informal livelihood in the interweaving of the domestic with the broader political economy. Work is one example. Examining the PAYE (Pay as you earn) scheme in Britain, Mollona argues that the benefits provision, based on definitions of what counts as valid work, allowed and implicitly encouraged informal labour opportunities (2005). This logic also applies to the earlier discussion on the boundaries of home and work, which in this case also prove blurred, both within *and* outside the cooperatives' framework.

The introduction of registered wage work in Spicco Vallata via the cooperatives (the 'standardisation'), almost unpredented for the lives of many, affected the relations of their families with welfare state provisions and policies. The sociological literature on labour regulation alludes to the Fordist security and stability of employment framework and the

accompanying labour rights (Beynon 1984), although this framework has long been abandoned in most EU countries. The normalisation that administrators talked about resonates with ethnographies of Eastern Europe describing people's aspirations to become part of a 'normal society' or sometimes speaking of 'a return to normality' (Rausing 2002: 127; see also page 17).

However, local people's livelihoods were not 'normalised' or 'standardised'. This is the point on epistemological priorities that Chambers underlines: we risk error when institutional categories such as 'employment' count more than people's actual livelihoods (2000). Men and women in Spicco Vallata negotiated the visibility of their 'real' roles vis-à-vis the state in such a way as to claim more income from its welfare policy. Continuing with the practice of land registration to women, they were able to accommodate the legal normalisation of the cooperative employment. One is reminded of the unintended consequences that arise when the 'normative discourse' of development agencies and the state fail to take local categories seriously – a James Ferguson (1994: 26) point as well as a leitmotif in our Sicilian story.

Formal, informal and no space in between

While formal employment remuneration through cooperative wages was not sufficient, people's involvement in cooperatives added a surprising further source of annual income to families through unemployment benefits, negotiated through the informal practice of registering wives as *capoaziende*. The forms of waged work in the cooperatives, articulated together with other, informal means of livelihood (made possible, indirectly, through involvement with cooperatives) did bring transformations in people's lives. This was not only because of the financial gains that labour standardisation brought to households but also because the regulation regime shifted the meaning of informal local practices.

This chapter has elucidated this interrelation of informal and formal economic practices, where 'political economy' and 'livelihood practices' are each an element *within* the other. Overall, participation in the cooperatives thus floods into people's livelihoods in ways that cannot be contained in the political economy of waged labour entailed in cooperativism. The rhetoric of *a* (single) model of anti-mafia cooperativism, assumed by administrators and state agents (the Consortium), failed to encompass the implicit model of cooperativism practised by workers – the experience of participating in cooperatives for their anti-mafia families.

In these gendered household practices there are continuities in 'cultural codes' between local and mafia contexts, as Schneider and Schneider (1976: 84) have suggested. Michael Blim provides a neat account of the Schneiders' argument, claiming that, while they sought to

> disassociate themselves from [Banfield's] blaming of underdevelopment on the Southern Italian and Sicilian people and their familist values . . . , they did so ambiguously by arguing that . . . the cultural values so nearly the same as Banfield's familist values were the consequence of as well as the response to powerlessness and economic failure. (Blim 2006: 9)

In other words, the problem was that a political-economy-focused analysis did not fully displace the 'honour and shame' literature, as it kept the premise of 'cultural codes'. But such codes inspire practices that co-articulate with anti-mafia cooperativism (see chapter 5). The contemporary relevance of local codes lies in their dynamic character and development in a new context, alongside regulated wage labour. Just like how anti-mafia families formed, articulating conjugal household idioms to co-op employment, here the gendering of informal income opportunities outside official labour also articulates with co-op employment. This work outside labour, with its strongly gendered attributes, signals a survival of local codes associated not with honour and shame but with the shady figures of political economy – the fragility of people's livelihoods. This implies looking at the salience of the informal economy to determine the ways people pursued their income sources alongside registered work. Their livelihoods articulated with both informal and standardised means of income in order to guarantee a decent living, mainly because of the low level of the cooperatives' wages, since most workers, as already noted, were not paid a monthly wage, unlike administrators. Workers' interlocked condition 'between' informal and regulated activity became a matter of gendered household plans and political mobilisation – as will be seen in chapter 8. Defending the informality of such codes as a matter of community became a vital political idiom that mobilised *sangiovannari*, often alongside *mafiosi*.

The integration of male peasant-workers of Spicco Vallata into a regime of standardised regulation/registered work ('employment'), then, affected the established livelihood practices of local households in different ways. On the one hand, it reinforced the practice of legally registering land to wives, and facilitating unemployment benefits for their husbands. On the other, the regime formed part of a broader state strategy to regulate and standardise labour relations, which resulted in the penalisation of local 'mutual aid' labour schemes – the matter of the following chapter.

NOTES

1. Luca's account here seems like a slightly 'vulgar', simplified Marxism or, indeed, the discourse of modernisation as changing mindsets through imposed restructuring of economic activity, as explored in post-colonial contexts in relation to moral economies (e.g., Taussig 2010 [1980]).
2. The co-articulation of waged labour and land cultivation meant that informants were at the same time both workers and independent peasant producers. There is a vast literature on people whose livelihoods combine peasant and worker statuses, including ethnographies of Italy (e.g., Pratt 1994; cf. 2003). This experience has been identified as a 'mixed' one according to the Portici school of sociology; in Emilia, the combination of farmer and labourer identities was incorporated within broader development plans (Mingione 1994). In Sicily, it has been linked with household subsistence but has not contributed to broader growth (Centorrino et al. 1999). Instead, this 'mixed' mode has remained in place as a way of sustaining the livelihood of local households, precisely due to the 1953 land reform, which fragmented land in small tracts, a situation reproduced in inheritance patterns.
3. Ethnographies of western Sicily stress how 'the stable job' was an idiom of the non-productive middle classes of the city rather than a characteristic term of the rural workforce (Cole 1997; Chubb 1989).
4. As noted (see table 4.1), of the manual workforce's members, only four out of ten in Falcone and none in the other cooperatives had a monthly wage; although all of them had permanent contracts, they were paid on a daily basis.
5. I refer to both daily workers and member-workers as 'workers' in this chapter, unless otherwise stated.
6. This echoes ideas on the articulation of anti-mafia activity in terms of bravery (as hinted historically in chapter 3).
7. Because of the gendered nature of my fieldwork, the fact that I am a man meant that I was not exposed to some of the gendered contradictions in households (Morris 1992), about which researchers should be cautious. I have not been able to draw much data for analogies with women's get-togethers. The ethnographic discussion here does contribute further work on the significance of men's proverbs (Brandes 1980) in understanding husband-wife relationships. There are, indeed, many points to be made by studying these symbols, gestures and sayings among men in public spaces (such as the workplace) to yield an idea of relations in the private space between husbands and wives (for Sicily: Blok 2000). Herzfeld underlines the performance of masculinity in Crete (Herzfeld 1985).
8. Admittedly, a different history of land tenure (sharecropping as opposed to latifundia) as well as a more rigorously attentive exploration of a large household sample by Pratt (1994) in Tuscany are key factors accounting for this marked differentiation. Having acknowledged this, I should stress once more that my research focused only on families of anti-mafia cooperative members.

9. The consumer co-op representatives from Emilia who often visited San Giovanni influenced anti-mafia cooperative members, describing the wealth of Emilia.
10. This toponym, like all others, has been changed to anonymise the case.
11. This is an interesting 'diverging devolution' (Goody 1976: 21), implying inter-spouse trust. As with the Pitrès, I have tracked an additional sample of twenty-two married families who followed this tactic; I have not heard of any couple who had separated, so I regrettably have no data to explore what happens in case of divorce.
12. The fact that they were not 'actively seeking waged work' (understood as regular employment) is not relevant in this context; their husbands (and in some cases, like the Ricelis, their sons) while not seeking regular waged employment either, were receiving unemployment benefits.
13. San Giovanni *mafiosi*, especially Barbeto, were the key figures in international heroin trafficking at the time.
14. It was not possible to use the Italian Land Cadaster (the national land registry) to establish the exact picture of land tenure in the village overall: one can refer to the Cadaster for details about *any one specific plot* but not all the plots of an area. When I consulted it, to establish the ownership history of some plots confiscated from *mafiosi* and bestowed on the cooperatives, I found that in fifteen out of nineteen cases the plots of the *mafiosi* were registered to women: wives or straw-women.
15. I quote from the actively anti-mafia periodical *'S'*, an investigative weekly. The editor, whom I met, was a hardliner regarding mafia. For instance, he once told me that capital punishment should be introduced for *mafiosi.* Many articles, like the ones cited, for fear of mafia retaliations, were anonymous.
16. Pointing out contradictions in informants' positionalities is not intended to somehow delegitimise them or diminish the importance of their efforts to improve the workings of the local economy. Highlighting the discrepancy between discourse and practice is useful because only by acknowledging it can we – anthropologists and informants *together* – start to understand the constraints and possibilities under which economic endeavours such as cooperativism take place.
17. This discussion proliferated later, related to the international discourse on the sovereign debt crisis, where it has been said that Italy's (assumed) immense public deficit and adjunct sovereign debt are largely due to such schemes of employers' contribution avoidance.

Chapter 8

Community Trouble

Cooperative Conundrum

This chapter discusses the nexus between personal relations and cooperatives, drawing from the tensions already described previously between labour in the co-ops and informal income opportunities around and outside their framework. Exposure to the demands of market institutions has been noted as the major factor in the development of hierarchies and unequal divisions of labour within cooperatives.

I just discussed how state and cooperatives unintentionally reproduce women's roles as registered landowners *because* of the standardisation of labour the state and cooperatives promote. The cultural codes that surround these roles also reflect state policies (the benefits system) and cooperatives' strategies (not hiring women as fieldhands) and are therefore relevant to both mafia and anti-mafia families. While registration of land to women was not a novel idiom but indeed a well-embedded cultural practice considered foundational for local livelihoods and views of community life, the role of wives as *capoaziende* became more entrenched in the broader political economy when their husbands entered regulated employment, as it brought an unimpeded flow of unemployment benefits for their husbands when needed.

The continuity in cultural codes shows itself to be compatible with cultural variation and pluralism in a changing Sicily (Schneider and Schneider 2006), which proves the historical dynamism of the concept as these codes adapt to novel circumstances – anti-mafia families, benefit strategies and the like. Inasmuch as it counts for employment, and all work within the household is non-valorised in monetary terms, registering land to wives opened up the potential for more income opportunities as well as for stratification within co-ops.

The dynamics of such practices implies they can be open to manipulation by powers external to the co-ops, including the mafia itself. After all, my overall analysis of dynamics within anti-mafia cooperatives avoids assuming that it is simply the influence of access to markets that compromises internal cooperative relations as well as the specific political role ('anti-mafia') that co-ops had locally. In this way, 'community participation' appears more of a problem than a solution. The point here is

to demonstrate that cooperative participants may well belong to different 'communities'. Hence, appeals to cooperative 'mutuality' (Heckscher 2015) can – unwittingly – very well contradict economic democracy in cooperativism. On the one hand, local workers of anti-mafia cooperatives are drawn towards ideas of community pertaining to alliances with localised, stratified struggles. Such peasant dissent, however, can reproduce unequal relations of power that can even reflect mafia rhetoric and practice. On the other hand, the co-op administrators' understanding of community in state-sponsored ways also endangered the co-ops' work relations.

Building on points already explored, the chapter hence proposes to rethink the dichotomy between 'community' and 'wage employment' as mutually dependent, albeit contradictory. The aim is to examine cooperatives within the tensions that their politicised anti-mafia principles create as they relate to their participants' livelihoods. These principles are rooted in idealised versions of what community can stand for. Most of the data presented here relate to peasant mobilisations in Sicily, where co-op members actively participated alongside *mafiosi*, guided by a sense of 'community' radically different to the anti-mafia co-ops' community ideology.

This begs for revisiting a widely influential theorisation of community and economy's dialectics, pertaining to the work of Stephen Gudeman on tensions between market and community (2008). The 'base', centred around the house is, for the influential economic anthropologist, a way to think and construct the community. Some of this discussion speaks to the present book's anthropological conceptualisation of cooperatives that moves beyond seeing them as enclave institutions committed to specific views of community. Such views can resonate with what community 'is' (or indeed should be), what community participation implies and how community economics can be served by cooperativism. The normativities ingrained in these politicised drives of cooperatives are put to the test in the complex Sicilian landscape, where people's lives can involve both the social life of mafia and that of anti-mafia. Gudeman's take can help, but we should be attentive when we rely on dichotomies or relational pillars, however subtle, between community and economy. We can benefit, instead, from reviewing whether community is, or can be, a starting point for cooperatives at all. Our Sicilian lens here implies that a path laid for cooperativism by normative distinctions between community and economy, where mutuality is served by the cooperativisation project, can prove slippery.

While I have mainly focused on women when discussing anti-mafia families, including the narratives of 'female' land tenure, the claims to community I refer to here are 'manly'. It is men, situated in the

public space that talk about women and about land. Gendered divisions of labour in agriculture, often surrounded by 'mystique' (Ferguson 1994: 160–66; Mosse 2004: 62), help comprehend people's livelihoods outside the terms of a standardised wage-employment political economy. I have talked already about the masculine idioms of co-op workers I've observed when working the fields. Their irregular, seasonal and contingently gendered agrarian work is central to the constitution of smallholders' political organisation and dissent.

Claims to Community Participation

It would be a methodological mistake to commence the analysis from that idea of community. What matters here is inquiring on what exactly is meant by community *on the ground* – and the point is that there are many ideas on community, and thus many 'communities' in the co-ops. Learning what happens in co-ops' workforces when groups have different viewpoints on what community is could be the anthropological endeavour here.

We can start a critical anthropological take on this problem by being reminded of the work of Susana Narotzky and Gavin Smith. Along these lines, and in the context of the corporatist hegemony of references to 'community' in regionalist rhetoric in Spain, Narotzky and Smith propose a critical reading of 'community' ideologies (Narotzky 1988, 1997: 120; Narotzky and Smith 2006). Both Narotzky and Smith criticise explicit references to cooperativism as 'community economics' for being a state-produced ideologically manipulative scheme that reproduces hierarchy (G. Smith 1999; Narotzky 2004).

The analysis that follows here, arguing beyond the paradigm of cooperatives as community economics, does not see market influence as the only cause of the shortfalls of cooperativist principles, unlike the implicit criticism of the market and the political system, in Smith and Narotzky. References to community, some of which can be state-sponsored, can also hide existing conflicts among co-op participants, as in the case of the anti-mafia cooperatives. The data here raises the question of 'which community' is meant when community participation is understood differently by members of cooperatives and especially when *different factions* in an already stratified division of labour make claims to different understandings of 'community'.

My argument hence draws on definitions of what community *is understood to be* within our research participants' paradigms. In these Sicilian cases, one cooperative faction sees the state as representative of commu-

nity – as against the Mafia. At the same time, another faction holds an understanding of community that is informed precisely by the personalised, unequal relations of patronage associated with the Mafia. How can we locate 'community' in such contemporary cooperativist configurations?

The main aim of the analysis that follows is to question the concept of cooperatives as 'community economics', in order to suggest an anthropological approach that takes into account the internal factions' differing concepts of community. This is associated with a different kind of ethnographic discussion than the chapters on food activism, kinship and householding ideologies and practices. Rather than the somehow introverted ethnography of those chapters, which focused on co-ops' inward-looking institutions, what follows draws from members' activities outside the realm of co-ops – activities, however, that constitute, partly, the social life of co-ops. The question driving the ethnography here is how claims to community often reinforce inequality and reproduce social phenomena, such as the mafia, that cooperatives are meant to diminish.

Community for Cooperative Administrators

As discussed throughout the course of this book, the Consortium was delegated to distribute all confiscated land within the eight municipalities of Spicco Vallata and oversee its use. The rhetoric used by the Consortium in this redistribution of assets presents a just state actively intervening to restore to an (idealised) community what has been 'stolen' from it. State documents explaining the rationale behind the confiscations (Focus 2001: 1) present *mafiosi* as having 'usurped' the agricultural land from what was allegedly 'in the common domain,' available to 'the community' (Focus 2001: 4). As discussed, the land was allocated to the cooperatives because 'they represented the community' (Libertà 2009: 2) and were founded to promote 'an economy of legality and solidarity' (Libertà 2010: 2).

Administrators subscribed to the Consortium's claims to community, despite the fact that these claims are largely imaginary. Specifically, there was only one short-lived historical case of collectively owned land in Spicco Vallata during the 1946 peasant land occupations (Santino 2009), but rhetorically the confiscations all draw on this post-war revolutionary interlude in the late 1940s (Rakopoulos 2014a; see also here, pages 67–69). Accepting the Consortium's state-produced rhetoric that the confiscated land symbolises 'a resource for the area, an opportunity for development and civil growth' (Frigerio and Pati 2007: 5), the cooperatives' administrators perceive that the newly created cooperatives can 'democratically accommodate the land returned to the community' (Frigerio and Pati: 37).

The Consortium's promotion of state intervention in Spicco Vallata aims at the restitution of assets to 'the community' (Frigerio and Pati.) in the sense of 'reconstituting unlawfully usurped land back to the collectivity' (Focus 2001). According to the administrators then, the cooperatives represent the 'collective'.

As administrators commuted every day from Palermo to work in the cooperatives' offices in Spicco Vallata and were not living there permanently, their understanding of community with regard to the co-ops' activity was divorced from local experience and was more aligned to the urban civil society in which their lives were embedded (see the analysis of the 1990s anti-mafia movement in Schneider and Schneider 2002b; 2006). The administrators' legally bound regulation of labour, which they called 'standardisation' presented work in the cooperatives as legal, remunerative, safe and non-hierarchical.

The core idea driving administrators was that anti-mafia cooperativism was providing employment and all their enclaving attempts were made in the good faith of protecting this environment that offered local agrarian jobs. But as seen extensively throughout this ethnography, the actual livelihoods of co-op worker-members were more complex. As remuneration from the cooperative was not sufficient to make a living, the local co-op workers continued to seek other means of livelihood. Workers, unlike administrators, engaged in the informal activities already described, outside the cooperative framework, to complement their family income.

It should be noted that the idea (and ideal) of cooperativism *as a form of work* (implied in the politicised project of curbing the mafia) is critical because it opens the way to rethink the definition of work beyond labour. This is, of course, already in contradiction with legal definitions, notably the one encapsulated in the standardisation of waged work on the model of employment. The work of what Marxists call social reproduction (Narotzky 1997: 158–59) always falls off the map since it is mostly not commodified and also generally assumed to be mainly women's work. (At the same time, the work of creation of *non*-market value [e.g., political], such as the cooperatives themselves, is, if anything, even more ignored *as labour*). Taking this hidden labour into account re-signifies the range of meanings of informal practices. It also points to the direction of politicisation around defending this informality. Developing against a backdrop of registered ('standardised') work, these practices become impregnated with new potentials vis-à-vis not only the co-ops but also state regulation at large. Informal work activities become a crucial facet of social reproduction, as important as 'employment' (Narotzky 1997: 36–37) and, in the case of benefits, dependent on it.

Smooth employment relations in the cooperatives were *also* dependent on informal work, as informalities alleviated stratifications (within the manual workforce) and across workers and administrators, bringing all members to comparable income statuses. But co-op workers were also part of a greater community of smallholders, with its own political agendas and everyday concerns. Mafia was part of that community. It was, at the time of fieldwork, no longer the grandiose and violent mafia of the Tarinisi operating in an international heroin ring, with Barbeto as the San Giovanni main figure, but rather a more low-key group, operating in an agrarian configuration.

As agrarian wage labour in Spicco Vallata has historically been unregulated and highly exploitative, some local networks in the informal economy were controlled by the mafia (Lupo 2011; and as shown in the urban context of Palermo, per Falcone 1993; Cole 2007). In this setting, the anti-mafia cooperatives' promotion of regulated work proved unable to contain local workers' practices that derived from other, more immediate definitions of community, including ongoing relations with *mafiosi* (as shown in the following section).

'Mutual Aid': Informal Work Exchange among Co-op Workers and Other Peasants

In late October 2009, just after the harvest, peasants (including most of the co-op's worker-members[1]) took to the streets, angered because they thought that the prices offered by local wineries for the grapes their vineyards produced were exploitative, averaging twenty eurocents per kilogram (see table 7.1). They demanded compensation for their losses through EU subsidies administered by the Sicilian Autonomous Region. In a 'spontaneous protest', unrelated to the local agrarian unions, thousands gathered outside the majestic medieval building of the Parliamentary Assembly of Sicily. A coffin engraved with the words 'Spicco Vallata' was on public display, symbolising the death of the area. One man from San Giovanni was quick to explain that 'there has never been so much law enforcement and regulation of our activity . . . and so we have to be more vocal'. Some demonstrators held a banner that read: 'Stop penalising us, stop the fines.' By 'penalisation', they meant the enforcement of the law against *lavoro nero*, or unregistered work. After the success of the anti-mafia cooperatives and the administrators' talk of 'standardising' labour relations, state agents had taken the issue of registered work more seriously. The police often raided the fields to check on labourers' documentation proving their legitimate, contractual work. The employers were penalised with heavy fines for unreported work.

In discussions I joined at the demonstration, people kept repeating the phrase, '*Ci rubiamo tra di noi*', which literally translates as, 'We are stealing from each other'. Although whimsical, the phrase has a telling contextual translation: 'It's mutual stealing'. In the heated atmosphere of the demonstration, the expression was a response to accusations and criminal charges that they as 'employers' were robbing their 'employees' of social security contributions. As a co-op worker clarified to me, 'if this is stealing, it is mutual, as between us it is turn and turn about: today's "employer" is tomorrow's "employee"; so we are "stealing" from each other. Demonstrators referred to this reciprocal exchange of labour as 'mutual aid,' alluding to it as a 'community practice'; payment for work exchanged hands under the table. A day's work normally amounted to a mutually agreed average of thirty euros. People from the cooperatives shared the viewpoint that it was unfair for the state to penalise peasants for their informal mutual aid networks.

However, deployed in a discourse of friendship and conviviality in the village, the claim of mutuality did not recognise the unequal relations of power in this agrarian labour market – and the way mafia patrons benefited from the system. In fact, the practice of 'mutual aid' was informed and encouraged by local *mafiosi* landowners, who aimed to further radicalise the demonstrations. Sharing with dissenting peasants the term 'mutual aid', they identified in this system a 'Sicilian way of life' that they wanted to defend, drawing on discourses of 'community' understood as shared by all peasants. The rhetoric on the maintenance of 'community mutual aid' obscured the class differences involved. The implied integration through community mutual aid was equally premised on friendship relations among peasants *and* on the mafia's overarching patronage.[2]

In November 2009 in Principe, a Spicco Vallata village, seven hundred peasants gathered and burned their citizen ID cards in a public ritual disowning their Italian citizenship to express how they felt 'abandoned and penalised by the state.' The anti-mafia cooperative administrators condemned the event as excessive and dangerous. The role of *mafiosi* and politicians close to them was fundamental in encouraging *sicilianismo* in the event, as *mafiosi* influencing the demonstration hailed 'the unity of the peasantry' and the 'common interests of all Sicilians'. *Mafiosi* who had prompted the Principe event called for similar activism across all Spicco Vallata villages and publicly encouraged Sicilians to 'follow the French farmers' example' (a reference to demonstrations earlier that year) in rejecting the state and its symbols. The *Carabinieri* police marshal thought that such massive 'resistance' could hardly be prosecuted, so the police were deployed in an observational role only.

The activity of the *mafioso* Baffi, who we have encountered earlier (see, e.g., page 126) is characteristic. He was a widely popular figure, recently out of prison, and regarded as an incumbent mafia 'boss' of the area. The day after the Principe event, hundreds of peasants, among them co-op workers, gathered in the municipal hall of San Giovanni to discuss the way forward for their demonstrations. The hall was packed. All the chairs were given to senior San Giovanni citizens, while the younger crowded where they could. At one point, Baffi grabbed the microphone and addressed the public of fellow '*contadini*' (peasants), smiling confidently as he started speaking. His speech animated the crowd. He advocated a mild Sicilianist separatism, an idea with which Sicilians today identify very loosely and not in an explicitly political fashion, but that has a long and tormented history with the mafia playing a leading role, especially in the late 1940s and early 1950s (Paternò 1977; Spataro 2001).

'His charisma speaks for all of us,' said an old man sitting beside me. Baffi attacked the police prosecution and insisted that the 'mutual aid' system was 'established as a tradition in the area' and was something that 'Sicilians just do and should be proud of doing.' He repeated this tactic a few days later at the next gathering. On that occasion, he appealed to 'Sicilian unity' and expressed 'disregard for the miserly state of Rome,' which 'wants to suck taxes out of Sicily' and 'penalise local peasants'. Baffi told me later that 'the law enforcement uses anti-mafia talk to put fines on us, as if everyone here is a *mafioso.*'

I noticed another *mafioso* I knew, Numia, of the same generation as Baffi, who was present there to discuss with peasants in an affirmative manner. This was particularly odd because Numia was not a farmer but actually a barber, a profession whose interests were totally unrelated to the event. His presence there confirmed that the local mafia was invested in influencing, in 'giving a tone' to the event and the mobilisation, as a farmer told me confidentially. Right beside me stood an old gentleman who introduced himself as 'just another *contadino*'; I soon found out after asking around that he used to be the personal driver of Toto Riina, the leader of the Tarinisi clan, back in the 1980s.

That same evening, I joined Pippo for dinner. Having spent the whole day in the event, talking endlessly, we were starving by 7 PM. He took me to the pizza place at the central square, a beautiful establishment run by a cousin of Barbeto, unrelated to mafia. There, we noticed Baffi dining with the mayor Malva, who also came from the event and in fact had acknowledged the *mafioso* while the latter was on stage. We went by their table to greet them as Pippo knew them both, and we all had a brief chat.

Baffi was 'angered with the politicians' although he noted that 'Malva was different'.

This high concentration of *mafiosi* as well as their acceptability with peasants and local elites alike in the *contadini* dissent was indicative of their intentions. The *mafioso* Baffi's appeal to this assumed sense of community among the peasants allows for comparisons between the two realms in which cooperative workers were involved: what *they* recognised as community (the 'mutual aid' informal work exchange) and what their administrator colleagues saw as community (the standardised employment in the cooperatives). Both made ideological claims to be among equals when in fact they were segregated across class differences.

'Community Economics' in the Context of Cooperatives

The discourse of a 'community-based' way of life involving a 'mutual aid' system is a logical attempt to safeguard a long-standing repertoire of commodified informal economy practices considered illicit by the state in a context where the rising tide of anti-mafia activity in the area has reinforced the state's regulatory mechanisms. Community rhetoric hence forms an integral part of the reproduction of the mafia's power to exercise labour patronage and instigate a cross-class sense of belonging to a peasantry that is in fact stratified.

The appeal of *mafiosi* like Baffi was cross-class. His abstract claims to the values of community and 'mutuality' as ways of life reproduced this class stratification. By obscuring internal stratification, the mafia's influence on peasant mobilisation intensified many people's beliefs that 'only unity can save the peasantry'. In the same way, through their struggles they aimed to incorporate this informal status *within* what were becoming increasingly more complex livelihoods involving ever more regulated wage employment frameworks.

It was popular with the administrators in Palermo to think that the formal would subsume the informal – as in the rhetoric of anti-mafia cooperativism – based on ideas about community promoted by administrators and state agents (the Consortium Progress and Law). The cooperatives, however, did not succeed in fully encompassing locals in a realm of stable employment as they, unlike the administrators, continued their practices of seeking income outside the regulated cooperative framework.

The administrators' ideal of cooperativism as a form of regularised work in a state-protected community was of course implied in the politicised project of curbing the mafia. Looking at labour more broadly –

beyond formal waged work – it becomes clear, however, that informal work activities are a crucial facet of social reproduction, as important as 'employment' (Narotzky 1997: 36–37). The integration of peasant workers of Spicco Vallata into a regime of regulated work ('employment') in the cooperatives, then, conflicted with their established ideas of community associated with informal work.

An influential theorisation of 'community' in the context of cooperatives is Stephen Gudeman's argument on the tension between market and community in the modern economy (2008). For Gudeman, economies vary depending on the degree to which people produce for the self or group (community) or for others (market) (2001), a main local model being 'the house', counterpoised to and set outside market exchange, and aiming to 'maintain' what are actually subsistence economy relations (Gudeman and Rivera 1990). In this model of community economy, the 'base', the making and sharing of a commons consolidates the community (Gudeman 2001: 27–30). Caring for the base 'is a central concern in community, for the base makes a community as it is made' (36).

Relating this framework to the dynamics in Spicco Vallata, however, suggests certain deviations. For in Spicco Vallata, the hidden exchange of money for labour is glossed over as 'community economy'. Invoking this local 'way of life' draws on ideas of mutuality and, alongside those, claims to income; maintaining the 'mutual aid' scheme was a crucial financial matter. But the local 'traditions' it refers to should be questioned – the 'mutual aid' scheme of work cannot be classified as exchange *as* mutuality (2008: 27). In Spicco Vallata, exchange of money implied commodification of labour. In comparison, the notion and use of 'community' by the Consortium Progress and Law and among administrators denotes a sense of decommodification of land – setting it outside the market. Among peasants there seems to be a making of (ideas of) commons as political claims; but there is hardly a sharing of commons in what seems an internally variegated and compartmentalised peasantry where the mafia obfuscates difference.

Moreover, for cooperative workers it is the cooperatives' employment that forms 'the base' of their livelihood. The base here is neither work on their own plot nor the system of mutual exchange that is a supplementary transaction of work for extra cash. In fact, although the remuneration of the manual workforce from the cooperatives was nowhere as good as the administrators', wages from the cooperatives were the main source of income for their households.

The workers' idea of a moral economy, as often happens in agrarian movements (Edelman 2005), centred on belonging to the immediate

community, exchanging face to face favours and minor work for pay and pursuing their livelihoods outside of and parallel to the 'standardised' formal economy of cooperatives' wage employment. Hann's critique of the moral economy concept is hence relevant when approaching the mafia's endorsement of the 'mutual aid' practice (2010: 196). It is important to note that neither Polanyi – associated with the moral economy concept (1957) – nor E. P. Thompson (1971, 1991) – considered to have fathered the notion – account for the fact that the normative nature of a moral economy appears to include activities that are of ambiguous moral content, for the sake of bettering people's livelihoods. Hann has already noted this problem, hinting to the ambiguous morality of the moral economy (Hann 2010). In the case of Spicco Vallata, peasant 'community' struggles often develop in ways not beneficial to the majority of the differentiated peasantry they presumably represent (McMichael 2008).

Gudeman points to the dialectic between the different realms of 'mutuality' and 'market' (2008: 24), drawing on the presumed solidarity of community relations that rest on self-help and subsistence agriculture (Gudeman 1978; 1986; Gudeman and Rivera 1990). Nugent points out (1981) that in Gudeman's earlier work he downplayed the issue of commodified work, arguing that 'the ghost of subsistence' overshadows the introduction of wage labour into what Gudeman (1978) calls the 'community' sphere. In Gudeman's recent books, this scheme looks more open to cross-influence: aspects of mutuality in the market are acknowledged (2009: 26). In that respect, cooperatives form enclaves of mutuality, used by a community in relation to a market in ways often detrimental to other participants in that same market (Gudeman 2008: 103).

This is where it is important to note that the cooperatives are configured into 'factions', formed by task-specific tiers whose members come from different places and social classes. When assessing what 'community' might mean for co-ops' different conceptualisations of community by members of different factions thus generates differing relationships to the cooperatives' core aim to curb the mafia.

The administration faction's take on community is skewed from the relationality of their class position, vis-à-vis the locality and the state. The Consortium's promotion of state intervention in Spicco Vallata, endorsing an abstract 'discursive normativity' (Ferguson 1994: 30), aimed at the restitution of assets to 'the community' (Frigerio and Pati 2007). Administrators, being Palermitans, middle-class and not owning land, were more inclined than workers to align with these normative lines, their sense of the 'community' being divorced from local experience. Steinmetz's idea of the languages of the state's situatedness in social cir-

cumstances (1999) can be applied here vis-à-vis the urban civil society in which the administrators' lives were embedded, in line with Schneider and Schneider's analysis of the 1990s anti-mafia movement (2002b).

'Community' – so charged a term in Spicco Vallata – for workers implied viticulture cooperation intrinsically entangled with the anti-mafia movement's local history. The values they endorsed were relational and dynamic: their cooperative participation expanded notions of kinship, creating anti-mafia families, and endowed work with masculinised idioms, as workers felt proud that they 'embodied' the co-ops. Continuities in their livelihood practices and the proximity with neighbours' land plots (especially as seen in the next chapter) caused creative, albeit messy, interactions with fellow locals – even *mafiosi* – to occur. These interactions allowed for interconnections between processes outside (e.g., informal work) and inside the cooperatives' activity (waged labour), often merging co-op work with local life (e.g., in 'uncomfortable' encounters at confiscated plots, as will be seen later), this way imploding the cooperatives' 'standardisation' framework.

It might be reasonable to point out that the community appeals and jacquerie-type dissent of peasants and co-op workers alike in Spicco Vallata cannot be accounted for with notions of (post-)peasant 'hybridity' (Kearney 1996: 68). The plural attempts of co-op worker-members to defend their livelihoods are not exactly hybrid, I think. 'Hybridity' suggests mingling. But even though people build on entirely diversified and often contradictory categories of income, here the two realms of formal and informal labour correspond to two different, juxtaposed ideas of community. The first is the Consortium Progress and Law's idea that community is achieved through state intervention; the second implicitly pitches community *against* state regulation. These ideas interpenetrate and cross-fertilise each other in the experience of the peasants involved in anti-mafia cooperatives. But they cannot be 'hybridised' because informal labour and standardised employment cannot be brought into the same space (the cooperatives) without friction.

The Problem of Community

The state's intervention entailed the promotion of 'legality' values and relationships antithetical to local obligations, from kinship to local reciprocities. This came at the cost of egalitarianism and industrial democracy within the cooperatives, and the earlier ethnographic narrative is another configuration of this idea. Branding and enacting community

values was another such field of inegalitarian effects. To brand co-ops as community-participation initiatives can often lead to the reproduction of unequal structures as well as structures reproducing inequalities out there 'in the community'. Unquestioned claims to 'community' for cooperatives might unwittingly render them amenable to contradictory influences. In this case, mafia influence and legalistic state discourse compete to become the main determinants of what 'community' stands for.

The community participation for which co-ops strive contains interacting realms of labour markets protected by the state and a set of labour relations rooted in mutuality with the workers' peasant neighbors. However, the latter are exposed to manipulation by the classed interests of the mafia's agrarian labour patrons. The co-ops, then, contain both 'realms', in Gudeman's sense (market and community), and their community participation practices are rooted in different ideas of community, which inform diverse ideas of labour. Thus, co-ops are more complex and contradictory than often realised.

The reason is not *only*, as is often argued, their exposure to impersonal institutions such as states (Narotzky 1997) and markets (Kasmir 1996) or, indeed, neoliberalism (Vargas-Cetina 2005; Stephen 2005) but *also* their members' everyday embeddedness in sets of personalised relations of a stratified and classed character, glossed as mutuality. The personalisation of industrial relations – the instigation of diverse views of community – in this case proves detrimental to their egalitarian functions. But most importantly, community here (like kinship, food activism or reputation in previous chapters) operates as an idiom of division or a standpoint that exacerbates stratified difference.

The realm of personalised community is both commodified and unequal, while the realm of abstract markets is accessed by institutions (including cooperatives) typified as impersonal but actually peopled. Cooperative stratification is reinforced and reproduced by different conceptualisations of 'community' among co-op members' groups. Such conceptualisations, although enriching the co-ops' social fabric, also undermine their 'anti-mafia' consistency and ideological coherence.

My reading of Gudeman's scheme on tensions between community and market calls for such contextualised nuances, acknowledging the penetrative power of local actors (in this case, *mafiosi*) influential in the reproduction of 'mutual aid' informal economy schemes. In Spicco Vallata, cooperatives' work is conceptualised in different ways by different members. By and large the administrators subscribe to legal categories of regulation, such as co-op employment, and the workers to non-regulated practices of mutuality. Both these state-sponsored and

mafia-related categories in turn build strongly pronounced community idioms. Their 'mixed' livelihoods and 'pluriactivity' show that these realms permeate each other.

The fact that the main bulk of the cooperatives' workforce moves in both the impersonal market of regularised, 'fair' work relations *within* the co-ops and the personalised mutuality among peasants (and *mafiosi*) *outside* them suggests that the realms of market and mutuality are not entirely exclusive but continuously exercise interchangeable influence on each other. This can even take place within work institutions set on an agenda defending one such realm and condemning, if not struggling against, the influence of the other, such as the anti-mafia cooperatives.

How the everyday problems of the cooperatives regarding their land management played out on the ground has its own story. The multiple fractions and fissures within the co-op workforce resonated with other forms of conflictual relations around them, including those with their *mafiosi* neighbours. As the local agrarian community was composed, as we just examined, by *mafiosi* and anti-*mafiosi* alike, the relationality of their proximity became a contested issue. The rich social life it produced was ridden with the riddles of the contradictions I mentioned earlier when discussing community. The issue became largely how to reconcile being different but also being similar with the anti-mafia's enemies: the *mafiosi*.

NOTES

Some of the material in this chapter has also been published in 'Which Community for Cooperatives' (2015).

1. As discussed, workers earned wages from the cooperatives by labouring the confiscated land plots and also worked on their own land tracts (*pezzi di terra*), mostly vineyards; therefore, a part of their income came from selling their own grapes to the local wineries. Most, when I asked, acknowledged that the pay from the cooperatives was 'not enough'. They called themselves *contadini* (peasants), a term that encompassed all landowners, regardless of the scale of their production; their mean landholding was a modest 3.5 hectares. While the 'standardised' employment of the workers linked them with the co-ops' anti-mafia concept of community, their work as independent peasant producers implied other influences, drawing from other ideas of 'community'.
2. As elsewhere in the Mediterranean region, people's 'rural pluriactivity' went with a partial integration into wage dependencies arranged around claims to continuing the 'cultural tradition of a place' (Narotzky and Smith 2006: 27 and 31).

Chapter 9

Divided by Land

Mafia and Anti-mafia Proximity

The co-ops' story offers an interesting case study of the relationship between agrarian transformation and civil society/political projects. But it is also an insight into the juncture between similarity and difference in an agrarian society. After all, although most of their revenue came from rackets and drugs chains, many contemporary Sicilian *mafiosi* have been landowners for three or four generations (Blok 1988; Santino 2006; Dickie 2013). In Spicco Vallata in particular, a realm where viticulture reigns over all other economic activity, confiscations fragmented the areas of land that mafia families held, especially vineyards, which were divided into a number of plots (Lupo 2011). Breaking land down in pieces meant that co-op members were exposed to everyday interactions with many *mafiosi* who still cultivated the nearby plots ('family' land) that had not been confiscated.

Neighbourhood (*vicinato*) was a local concept, popular with *mafiosi* and anti-mafia co-op members alike. I will here analyse neighbourhood where social difference is examined through interactions between people categorised as mafia and antimafia respectively. We have already seen the odd peasant coexistence of mafia and anti-mafia agents. As the spatial playout of power struggles and difference arises at the neighbourhood level, this chapter focuses on those dynamic sets of relations pertaining to neighbourhood. Through it, I explore the social consequences of agrarian change and the condition of neighbourhood as a socio-spatial proximity of agents with different, and indeed inimical but surprisingly not irreconcilable, views of the world, despite the polemic undertones in their contact and conduct (Chauveau and Richards 2008; Cramer and Richards 2011). The aim is to embed this discussion in the broader theorem of similarity and difference between mafia and anti-mafia and critically contribute to definitions of difference, proximity and neighbourhood.

I will then examine the social configurations that follow land restitutions and are related to political projects of land reform (mainly, post-socialist, as per Hann 2007 and Verdery 2002; 2003; 2004). The point of comparison here is the role that land redistribution plays in political projects that try to lead, and claim to represent, community as 'amending

wrongs' of the past (Fay and James 2009). The social presence of *mafiosi,* a lingering social reality of active neighbourhood agents in the face of restitutions, distinguishes the Sicilian context from that of post-socialist discussions. Here, rather than pores in the land, we have on-going neighbourliness.

In this chapter I again highlight how these relations are on-going and rooted in projects that overlap as well as how this elucidates the embeddeness of co-ops in surprising social liaisons. Previously, such a point was made evident through discussions of the curious overlaps between anti-mafia and kinship or mafia and community that presented cooperatives with some contraditions. They were also brought forward in the unexpected divisions that ostensibly unifying ideologies of activism or practices of gossip brought about. Here the border-setting and the border-crossing between mafia and anti-mafia, from claiming ideological difference to re-affirming similarity, become more tangible. It is a situation that crucially unsettles the enclaving attempts in anti-mafia co-ops and illustrates their members' broader embeddedness in local sociality.

With confiscations and their shortcomings, we are being reminded of James Scott's reading of high modernism (1998; 2010; 2012), an idea of statal projects' detachment from grassroots realities in a critical fashion. While Scott conceives of the state as a field of externality towards society, in Sicily the anti-mafia state project competes for local ideas of community with the mafia. The intersubjective neighbourliness between people on each side nuances their antithesis. What is more, because an uncomfortable neighbourhood is not seen as a static outcome of state-level shifts but as the live interaction of players with different agendas on the ground, as per debates on post-socialism (as per Pine 2007 and Alexander and Humphrey 2007), this last chapter's narrative also brings us back to the 'from clans to co-ops' thought pattern of the book. Not all mafia land was confiscated, obviously, and that allowed for the paradox of a clans and co-ops neighbourhood.

The Story of Two Land Tracts

The Land Confiscations

I have already described how Matteo Mandola, the managing director of the Consortium Progress and Law, argued that state confiscation 'corrects' the *mafioso* 'usurpation' of land that had 'originally been in the common domain' and was available to all. Mandola, along with other lawyers and legislators involved in the confiscations and distribution laws,

told me that the law's aim was to isolate the *mafiosi* and place them at some distance from local people. The ideas on bad kinship and the exclusion of the co-ops from kin connectedness was part of this framework (see chapter 5, especially pages 103–109). This claim was also made to me several times by many cooperative administrators.

And yet, this insisted-upon creation of social distance and formation of a community immune from the mafia never fully materialised. What posed as a massive difference that was deemed unbridgeble was in fact a condition of oft-radical similarity in a reality more complicated than analyses of the anti-mafia project's legal-political configuration might suggest (Gunnarson 2015; Orlando 2003). This was similarly played out between local anti-mafia co-op members and local *mafiosi*, with co-op administrators more aware of drawing lines – and boundaries – between mafia and anti-mafia. As a member of the Falcone co-op, manual labourer Enzo, told me once,[1] 'Plot boundaries are an issue made of people, not just borders…. They are what people make of them'.

To understand this complexity, it is worth considering again the nature of the confiscations law, which *did not* apply to all mafia land in Spicco Vallata. The agricultural tracts considered in this book have different histories of acquisition, but in local contextual terms all fall into two broad categories. One sort comes to a mafia family as dowry or through the legitimate savings of the *mafioso* himself; in local discourse this is typically described as *familiare* (family) land. The other sort comes to a *mafioso* as a result of his illicit activities – for instance, extortion or money laundering – and is typified as *propria* (own) land. It was only this land that eventually became confiscated.

Mafiosi tended to buy, using drug funds, all the land tracts surrounding their original familial land, thereby raising their property and clout exponentially. As the outer circles had been acquired through drug money, they were confiscated. The anti-mafia cooperatives therefore 'ringed in' the mafia, since the latter had its legitimately acquired land in the centre of a series of concentric circles of owned property. This situation allowed for constant interaction between anti-mafia cooperative members and *mafiosi* through the contiguous land plots each controlled.

This is where a second central issue arises, one that runs through this book's analytical narrative; it concerns the social divisions within the anti-mafia cooperatives, which reflect a history of social relations that pre-dates the co-ops. As we have seen, the local worker-members cultivated small tracts of land (mainly vineyards) and worked for wages in agrarian settings for generations. Importantly, most had a history of agrarian labour on *mafiosi* land and longer histories of social relations

with them, while administrators, on the other hand, rarely, if ever, visited the land plots. These two issues interact in the uncomfortable coexistence of family and confiscated land in the Sicilian landscape, as both workers and administrators were exposed to neighbourhood and degrees of familiarity with *mafiosi*. The co-op members had different reactions to these contacts, which often were related to their social background. Such contact with *mafiosi* infuriated the co-ops' administrators, while Spicco Vallata workers saw it in a positive light, as I shall show through two stories below.

'Familiare' *Land: The Story of Antonia Barbeto's Plot*

The Barbeto family has been central to the history of Spicco Vallata, Sicily, and indeed Italy itself. Their patrilineal genealogy produced three generations of leading figures of Cosa Nostra. The Barbetos, a multigenerational family of *mafiosi*, owned plots of land near their now-abandoned home on the outskirts of San Giovanni. The vineyards on this land were inherited by Antonia Barbeto, who then handed them to her older sons Giovanni and Vincenzo, both *mafiosi*, who were arrested in 1996 (Giovanni had already been convicted in absentia). The vineyards had not been confiscated because the mother was not part of the mafia and thus her assets did not derive from 'mafia activity'. The vineyards were therefore deemed *familiare* (familial) property.

Strolling around the impressive villa of the Barbetos with some of the Falcone cooperative workers, I ended up walking amongst the vines. Adamo and Nicola, both workers of the co-op, recalled a time in the mid-1990s when they worked together there on the harvest and agreed that the plots had, until recently, been very productive. Both men remarked what 'a pity' it was that, although not confiscated, these vineyards now lay uncultivated. They inspected the vines and showed me that the soil was no longer productive.

Antonia Barbeto had never involved herself in managing this vineyard, nor did she start to after Giovanni was imprisoned. Adamo said that he 'felt for the vineyard: 'It just shows how they feel for it . . . the mother could not cultivate this *familiare* plot, which she feels belongs to her son.' I enquired further as to what the workers' designation of this plot as '*familiare*' meant. Initially I had thought that, if vineyards belonged to a *mafia* family, they would be confiscated. Discussing these questions with lawyers and the Consortium administrators responsible for overlooking the confiscations project, I learned that the term 'familial' implied belonging to the family unit. From the point of view

of land confiscation, the term designated plots that had not been confiscated since it had been proven that the *mafioso* owner had acquired them through means other than the 'usurping' entailed in 'mafia accumulation activity' (Frigerio and Pati 2006). Inheritance and dowry were the main techniques by which *mafiosi* acquired land tracts with *familiare* status. In the particular case at hand, Antonia Barbeto had bequeathed the legal title to a male child (a *mafioso*).

Adamo and Nicola are linked to this story of landownership through two kinds of relations: co-op membership on the one hand and a history of labour, as well as a relationship, with the Barbetos on the other. Through the land, they find themselves linked both to the cooperative, as members, and to the Barbetos, as ex-workers. These two kinds of contradictory affiliations each stand for the two axes of relations described earlier: the relationship between mafia and anti-mafia and between local anti-mafia workers and *mafiosi*. These are sets of relationships that are historically defined; for workers, they involve their own histories of work relations. *Familiare* also gives a sense of the familiarity between *mafiosi* and their old workers, in the sense of 'belonging to the family, not to the mafia'. In both cases, familiarity muddies the purities on which the anti-mafia project relies. Neighbourhood with *mafiosi* does this also. The co-existence of mafia *familiare* land side-by-side with their confiscated plots yielded surprising continuities in local practices. As with kinship and ideas of community, familiarity and neighbourhood belong to histories and continuities of social relations. I shall consider this further through the story of the plots of Mimmo Torinese, another local *mafioso.*

'Propria' *Land: Torinese's Confiscated Tracts (and the Neighbourhood Thereof)*

Torinese was a renowned farmer. Like many of the village *mafiosi*, he had invested racket money in buying land, in addition to and adjoining his original familial land in a conscious strategy to expand. Some of his plots were now confiscated and managed by the Falcone cooperative, and some still belonged to his family due to their *familiare* status. Some cooperative members had vivid memories of working for the Torinese family. Even today, there were continuities with that recent past: two cooperative seasonal workers, outside their co-op work, still sporadically worked for the Torineses on their many *familiare* plots. Many of these Torinese plots, in turn, bordered on plots confiscated from them and now managed by the cooperatives.

When convicted, a *mafioso* has to prove the innocent origin of his assets in order to retain them (see also page 14). If he cannot support his claim that he acquired a landed piece of property in lawful ways, the property is presumed to be the outcome of his mafia activity and is thus associated with his mafia membership. By contrast to the category *familiare*, this is locally called 'own property' ('*proprietà propria*'). Land that falls into this category is confiscated because it is legally presumed to have been acquired through illicit means.

For example, Mimmo Torinese owned a vineyard in the territory of Reale (a Spicco Vallata village) that was used to launder drug money in the mid-1980s. The *mafioso* was the San Giovanni mafia leader from 1996 until his conviction in absentia in 1999 (he had taken over local mafia power after the downfall of the Barbetos). The land plot was confiscated in 1999 and passed to the property of the state. The Reale municipality then transferred its usufruct rights to the Falcone anti-mafia cooperative under a renewable free lease contract, valid for thirty years. Additionally, a related winery building surrounded by these vineyards had finally been confiscated from Mimmo Torinese in 2007. From March 2010 onwards, it became Cento, the cooperative's winery, bottling under the Falcone label.

Right next to a piece of confiscated land now used by the Falcone cooperative and also lying beside their winery, itself the product of confiscation and allocation, was a Torinese *familiare* tract that had not been confiscated. Early one April morning, Enzo and Piero, two local worker-members from the Falcone co-op, were working in this part of the Falcone vineyard with the Torinese *familiare* plot just a few yards away from them. Suddenly, Enzo's cell phone rang. It turned out to be Mimmo Torinese's forty-year-old son Ciccio, just out of prison, complaining, in the Sicilian dialect, that there was a problem with plot boundaries: he was asking to meet someone from the Falcone to discuss it.

The incident caused distress amongst Falcone administrators. Its president, Luca and its vice president Mina were particularly upset. They were absolutely against a meeting with people they were 'unable to reason with'. They insisted that the cooperative should call in the police as soon as possible; even if there was to be a meeting to discuss property boundaries, they wanted the *Carabinieri* to be present. 'Our boundaries are not to be negotiated at a *mafioso*'s phone call; these lands are not *just* plots; the state is invested in them,' Luca asserted to me. However, after they saw that the manual workforce team was adamant that there should be a meeting with the *mafioso* neighbour on this issue, Luca and Mina yielded to the workers' demands.

The meeting was therefore arranged for the next morning at 6 AM. It took place at exactly the boundary spot between the Torinese family plot and Falcone's confiscated plot at dawn. The facial features of the *mafioso* were barely visible in the dim light, causing some distress; but the meeting went well. When I asked Enzo about it later in the day, he reported that '[Torinese] is a well-mannered gentleman. . . . His ways were noble and kind and he was very gentle and careful with us'.

Familiarity can take many forms. Having one's cellular phone number marks a familiarity already unacceptable for co-op administrators. Answering a phone call acknowledges that familiarity (Archambault 2013). Moreover, Ciccio Torinese's 'noble and kind ways', in addition to the fact that the co-op members had past or on-going work relations in that *familiare* plot, carried an intersubjective understanding on mutual sharing of the land. The remembrance of the 'past continuous unity of these plots', as Nicola suggested, was juxtaposed against the current experience of working a now-fragmented domain of confiscated and *familiare* plots where the historical connections of land had been reconfigured – leaving behind, however, on-going, lively neighbourhood relations between mafia and anti-mafia. For those cooperative members who, like Nicola, remembered working past harvests for the old *mafiosi* owners on these same plots, this sense of a 'lost past' was intensified. The remembrance of the land plots' unity reinforced the sense of neighbourliness that local workers maintained, namely that the boundaries of confiscated plots were less rigid in practice than in legal discourse.

What is more, Enzo and Piero realised that (ironically?) Torinese *did* have a rightful claim over the disputed piece of land between the two properties; he proved this to them by providing the legal documents during the meeting. Surprised, the co-op members checked them and admitted that the *mafioso* was legally right; they had, albeit by accident, extended their plot's boundaries, and trespassed on their neighbour's *familiare* property. The prestige of the *mafioso*, proven by his demeanour as reported by Enzo and Nicola, made him loom great; more imposing a figure than the current spread of his holdings would suggest him to.

Of Neighbourhood and Difference

These two stories show splits in landownership and across the relations between co-op members. Both hamper the working of the anti-mafia project. They revolve around the kinds of engagements and continuities with mafia that the project finds it hard to deal with: the perseverance

of social relations (including labour histories or senses of 'noble and kind ways'). In my discussions with co-op members, the term 'neighbourhood' was not merely about physical space but appeared, rather, as a relational concept: it referred to the material realities of bordering plots across which people came into contact. As Adamo said, 'Here are the confiscated plots [managed by cooperatives], there are the non-confiscated plots [still managed by *mafiosi*], and among them, there is life'. The conceptual significance of their social experiences is important: the local workers, because of their long relation with the plots and with some *mafiosi* neighbours, were hardly repelled by *mafiosi*.

The task here is to decipher why the term 'neighbourhood' is not only true to the empirical data (*vicinato*) but is also analytically useful. Neighbourhood life can be a vigorous social process that embraces localised, face-to-face sociality, morality and lifeworlds, a scale of relations altogether different from the logic of groupings posed in difference. A stress on intersubjectivity and the formation of a 'we-relationship' among neighbours is relevant here (Henig 2012: 16–18). Such intersubjectivity within and across groups is shaped through a correlation of continuity and change: the 'we' can at times cut across the mafia/anti-mafia divide and associated differences. This 'we' can survive (or even be reinforced by) major changes: in the case of Henig, post-socialism and post-war transition in Bosnia.

The anthropology of post-socialist contexts has largely set the scene for exploring land restitutions and their socially configured outcomes. Interestingly, that is shaped in a 'from plan to clan' formation – from centralism to disarray (Stark 1990) – whereas this ethnography follows a 'from clans (to state) to co-ops' movement. At any rate, the conceptualisation of social relations around land found in this anthropology of 'transition' does not suffice to adequately tackle cases such as the Sicilian land restitution and resulting uncomfortable neighbourhood with *mafiosi*.

To be sure, post-socialist literature has noted the assignments of land rights to 'corrective' or 'successor' cooperatives in decollectivisation processes (Hann 2007: 302). In Sicily, a conceptual and political relocation of what land signifies is also pursued via a long and politicised (often anti-mafia) history of cooperativism that emerged from grassroots needs for organisation across local peasants (see Rakopoulos 2014a). But while in the post-socialist literature restitution laws appear as a meta-narrative (one following and renouncing socialism), the land's new (but *not* post-mafia) configurations in Sicily are parts of a political project to overcome the (still active) *mafiosi*.

In the theory stemming from transition literatures, land is typically understood to be 'embedded' in the broader social relations in whom actors managing property are involved (Hann 1998: 1; 2009). In Sicily, there are tensions in the corrective cooperatives' internal relations, engendering further differentiations among members in the management of land. But unlike a transition, we have the coexistence of a project – the anti-mafia – and a group that revolves around historical but ongoing sets of social relations – the mafia – often entangled between them in 'community' rhetoric.

This coexistence results in people feeling that they belong to sets of social relations – involving locality or work history – that pre-date the cooperatives and the anti-mafia project and often contradict it. To highlight, as in post-socialism, the 'embeddedness' of landed property here (as per Hann 1998) would tell a different story – especially in the Sicilian context of contested views of community and concurrent sets of social relations. As Peters (2009: 99; see also Thelen 2011) pointed out, models like 'embeddedness', stemming from post-socialist contexts, cannot be universal. In Sicily, rather than 'embedded' land in transition, we encounter belongings of people in diverse yet overlapping threads of social relations. These people are 'embedded' themselves in nexuses of relations that can, if momentarily, transcend their land boundaries and their ideological divides.

The continuities, fissures and disjunctures that followed the restoration laws in transitory environments play out on two levels: firstly, across the 'murky' boundaries of land plots; and secondly, between local forces on the ground and a newly centralised power. Instead, in Sicily, continuities and fissures are deployed as parallel and competing realities between the social presence of *mafiosi* and an anti-mafia project developing alongside them. Let's unpack this more carefully.

Firstly, to analyse neighbourhood, ethnographers of post-socialism stressed the fluidity and 'porosity' of land restored to communities (Verdery 2003; Humphrey and Verdery 2004). Katherine Verdery's 'politics of elasticity' underlines that new land claims arising from restitutions involved murky negotiations, often imperilling local relations (1996: 159). A lot of debate has stemmed from Verdery's notion of 'fuzzy' property, focusing on the ambiguities of configurations that lack clarity of borders and ownership (Sturgeon and Sikor 2004: 4) or associating the temporal aspects of this fuzziness with the endurance of social ties (Fay and James 2009: 9). The case of 'clans to co-ops' in Sicily, instead, illuminates two concurrent (rather than successive) social realities in which agents form active and intersubjective relations. What lingers is not inertia from the

past. Clans are not gone, giving way to co-ops fully, although their land is bestowed to the co-ops (Bucchieri 2003). In these concurrent and even competing realities, the fact that the anti-mafia project and mafia-familiarity social relations are supposed to be mutually exclusive does not prevent the crossing over of (existing) categories of 'us' and 'them'. This crossing and its communication do not take place through a fuzziness of property (Sturgeon and Sikor 2004); in fact, the property categories (confiscated and *familiari*) are firm, and the way legal documentation supports them is not disputed (as shown in the Ciccio Torinese case). The contact between people does not take place through 'pores' across land plots but through a neighbourhood across different plots.

Secondly, while a discrepancy between local forces and the state is also central to the post-socialist literature, the Sicilian case elucidates their interrelation, especially in co-op administrators' practices. In Verdery's work, the distance between conception and execution of a land restoration law (2003: 380–82) appears beneficial, toting the side of local political elites, who enact laws in ways that deviate from the government's planning (2003: 388). Elsewhere – and proposing a *seeing like a mayor* approach, to complement Scott's *seeing like a state* one – Verdery notes that, in Romania, 'a local sphere obedient to central directives was a laughable image' (2002: 27; 2003). In line with Scott's overarching argument, the anthropology of local elites seems to underline the distance of the state's meaning from the imaginings of those supposed to enact its aim locally. Similarly, Creed points to the oxymoron of 'conflicting complementarity' between the state and locals' strategies in land restitution (1998: 8). The anti-mafia cooperatives' administrators, however, are endowed with a sense of the state's mission (as illustrated in Luca's words: 'These lands are not *just* plots; the state is invested in them'). In this process of protecting and ignoring what the state 'is seeing' on the local level, Sicilians are promised (and to an extent experience) a movement, from a 'malignant' private to a 'benign' public apparatus – from clans to co-ops. This also stands in contrast with post-socialism, where conflicts are produced because of a movement from the state to the private, 'from plan to clan' (Dunn 2004: 79).

Sicily's case, therefore, helps us situate belonging and difference in dynamic grounds. In Spicco Vallata, there are two different realities (the anti-mafia and mafia) that emerge and interact through the fact of geographical proximities. The cooperative members mediating this interaction belong to sets of relations that involve *both* mafia and anti-mafia. We encounter sets of categories that correspond to the concepts of the anti-mafia project (e.g., 'mafia') but also others that undermine it (e.g.,

locals, Palermitans, neighbours). They are all in constant renegotiation through neighbourliness, which consists of phone calls, memories and conflicts.

Neighbourhood bridges difference and similarity in the proximity between mafia and anti-mafia agents. It is not just the spatial fact of closeness (or even of social relations) but also the closeness of sets of relations that were not *supposed* to be close to each other in the first place because of the anti-mafia project's political nature. The spatial play-out of power struggles and difference is set on the stage of neighbourhood. This stands as the definition of uncomfortable neighbourhood – the socio-spatial proximity of two opposing sets of relations, with their respective views of the world, that emerges out of an interaction and a struggle over the souls of 'the community', that is, the people through which the anti-mafia tries to articulate to their project. These people, as the familiarity raised through a phone call might illustrate, can partake both in the anti-mafia project and in local sets of relations where *mafiosi* are present. In turn, this works as the definition of neighbourliness, which alleviates the uncomfortable condition of neighbourhood. A return to ethnographic discussion will illuminate this further.

Continuities with Uncomfortable Neighbours: Moral Borders and Lines of Contact

In the story discussed earlier, I noted the contiguity with the Torineses' plots (confiscated and *familiare*) and the contact with Ciccio Torinese. Opting for a non-conflictual and 'civilised manner', cooperative members saw the *mafioso* through a prism of neighbourliness rather than sharp moral difference. It is through such communication that people of the manual workforce team actually experienced the boundaries of the confiscated plots as lines of contact. As Enzo told me, land plot neighbourhood was an 'issue made of people, not just borders'.

In fringe cases, administration members thought that it was impossible to establish any genuine contact with *mafiosi* neighbours: their actions, it was believed, would always be driven by treachery. Further, the members thought that the boundaries between the *familiare* and the confiscated plots needed to be defended. For most administration cooperative members, the *mafiosi* belonged, as Mina, its vice president, told me, to a 'different *universe*', marked by a separate capacity for moral judgement. In defending physical land boundaries and by invoking the authority of law, Mina expressed her sense of this utter difference, protecting what

she saw as the moral world of the cooperatives. For this reason, the general belief was that court action was the most appropriate solution to all problems regarding disputes with the mafia.

Some of the Falcone administration members, in fact, stated that dealing with plot boundaries was a strategy of 'defending their borders', while others expressed the view that land boundaries were akin to 'borders of morality and legality'. Sometimes, they explicitly asserted that 'the Italian state was represented' by and within the confines of their plots, therefore marking *familiare* land as not just 'non-state' but as a threatening, 'anti-state' land. As Silvio, the president of Falcone, put it in an interview, there was 'a lot to defend in our boundaries, not just land, but whatever both we and the state stand for, in Sicily'.

Many manual worker-members, on the other hand, felt some degree of familiarity with *mafiosi* and insisted that these ideas of the administration were out of kilter. As Pippo stated, adding ironic emphasis to the word 'mafia',

> they [the administrators] think we border *The Mafia* [*faccimu confini con A Mafia*], some abstract thing; in fact, our plot neighbours are actually people from the village; yes, they are what they are, mafia and violent . . . once . . . , but they are farmers, people like anyone else around here, in the end of the day; they have their morals. And, after all, they are our neighbours.

The constitution of neighbourhood here is formed in shaky, intersubjective terms as workers and *mafiosi* are part of the same locality, sharing life conditions, despite the fact that they recognise gaps due to a violent history among them. Both administrators and manual workers relied upon terms that evoked a rhetoric of war: 'peaceful coexistence', 'boundaries', 'borderlines' and 'diplomacy'. These all constitute a range of metaphors, which implies that the process of cultivating the confiscated land was akin to experiencing the front line of a war. Workers did not use the war metaphor and did not vilify the *mafiosi*. Instead, based on a historical and current intersubjective understanding of neighbourhood as a continuum of plots, they felt that contact with *mafiosi* was the best way to resolve neighbours' problems.

On one occasion Adamo told me, 'We, people of the area, have been brought up close to our current neighbours, next door to them'. In this way, their opinion on strategising over relations with *mafiosi* took the past into account. Characteristically, the *Carabinieri* marshal from San Giovanni told me, regarding the relation between local mafia and the anti-mafia cooperatives, that 'they need to learn to live together' (*bisogna imparare il convivere*). He argued that the current neighbourhood between

co-op workers and *mafiosi* was an indication of how innocuous 'the anti-mafia' was: 'The cooperatives don't mean anything to the *mafiosi*; they don't bother them. The simple fact that they are working right next to Torinese, and he offers them water, for instance, means that the *mafiosi* are just not bothered'.

An active neighbourhood is therefore central to this context, as even the *Carabinieri* officer frames relations through this model. The debates within cooperatives concern what to do with neighbours, who is wrong and who is right. The debate set by a state authority figure external to the co-ops shows how neighbourliness could shape the dynamics of anti-mafia altogether.

This illustrates that the administrators thought of the plot boundaries as borders for their moral universes, while manual workers did not discount the possibility of contact with *mafiosi.* Indeed, to a certain degree, they recognised them as 'valid' and potentially moral people. This was rooted in these locals' common experiences with many *mafiosi* before the confiscations: their tolerance of *mafiosi* was continuous with these we-relationships constructed on through the experiences of living together (*convivere*) with them in the village before the arrests and confiscations. Through this living together and the establishment of a we-relationship predating the cooperatives, neighbourliness developed among them. As a result, the Consortium's attempts to establish, via the confiscations, a local separation of *mafiosi* from anti-mafia people was not successful.

Neighbourliness meant that turbulent moments with *mafioso* neighbours were resolved through face-to-face meetings. It came to be accepted not only that such a neighbour had a right to ask for a discussion *in quattro occhi, come signori* (face to face, like gentlemen) but also that he could be law-abiding and that his immediate claims might be sound. This face-to-face contact, workers thought, was dignified and gave a sense of good neighbourliness relations, expected from both sides. In this way, they understood social neighbourliness as the mutual constitution of an intersubjective relation stemming from land proximity. Piero, a worker, often de-essentialised *mafiosi* by respecting the documentation that they used to support their legal claims rather than immediately suspecting them. He fiercely criticised the 'zero-tolerance' stance of his administrator colleagues, which he found 'neither polite nor fair', but also counterproductive:

> Because of their lack of experience, these colleagues don't know how to work these things out. . . . We really have to show that we do not fear contact. What they do, instead, is to just express distress. . . . They have to

> see what the ex-proprietor wants, when he approaches them, right there, at the plot. It is a matter of being civilised.

Paying attention to the damage done to local social relations because of the confiscations of certain plots and the non-confiscation of others reveals an interplay between different ideas of neighbourhood. This is based on what a tract's boundaries stand for: moral borders or lines of possible contact. This differentiation mirrors the different values privileged by each co-op member's group. The actual experience of working the land, as suggested by workers, points to a different understanding of neighbourhood than that held by administrators.

The administrators, by and large, subjugated the moral judgement to the political project. The workers, while acknowledging the political project, retained an autonomy of their senses of morality from the political. That autonomy has the shape of precedence over the history of social relationships and to the intersubjective condition of neighbourhood, the way they experience it. Social relations endured and, in fact, were reproduced throughout this patchwork of different pieces of land. In the earlier cases, nevertheless, there were different, divergent senses of how plot boundaries were important affirmations of moral behaviour and of local codes of conduct. Land boundaries represented more than the materialisations of a legal scheme: they also become signifiers of contact with locals and *mafiosi.*

For the anti-mafia administrators, *mafiosi* and their land plots are matter out of place; they were not supposed to be there. The fact that they *are* is the beginning of the act on stage. What has been under question in this analysis is who is proximate to whom among and across the social categories (*mafiosi*, workers, co-op administrators). Difference among cooperative members and between cooperative members and their neighbours is rooted in the fact that *mafiosi* are active actors on the ground. My argument poses an idea of neighbourhood that is experienced in – to an extent – intersubjective ways, to understand how the actors' belonging within one group did not impede them from social interactions with (the) other(s).

Towards an Anthropology of Neighbourliness

Like borders of a state, the plots' boundaries represented for administrators a clear division (between mafia and anti-mafia) that would be

threatened by social paths of contact connecting the un-confiscated and confiscated land. Invisible borders were set around impalpable structures of 'immaterial but objective' (to nod towards Marx) relationality: gossip, kinship, food ideology. But land bordering was obviously more tangible, both as a separating and as a linking factor. Legal-political projects of land change, such as the anti-mafia (the way administrators served its cause), operate on the assumption of a moral unity of cause – which they realise on grounds they cannot count on (Mundy 2007). The familiarity of neighbourhood breaks the unity of the moral, the political and the legal into its various threads. These threads, visible through the prism of neighbourliness, are composed of sets of social relations that pre-date the cooperatives and the anti-mafia project.

This argument is a contribution to an anthropological take on proximity and the narcissism of minor differences between enemies bordering each other (Blok 1999). Regarding projects of land reform, it stands as an analytical theme with general validity, beyond pointing to the existence of actors' empirical differences on the ground. Difference is mitigated via the threads of sociality that permeate the application of the project. While on paper, mafia and anti-mafia are categories developing on opposite sides of land boundaries; on the ground they are both pregnant with sets of social relations crossing these boundaries. Local people then see land as the fulcrum of these relations; in land's palimpsest, overlapping relations build onto each other, as past obligations persist into the post-confiscation period. A seeing like a state (Scott 1998) approach cannot fully account for this situation. In Sicily, although the confiscations brought rupture, continuities persisted, and they materialised in the neighbourliness of plots and people, not so much *in the face of* the radical legislation's rupture as, indeed, *because of* that rupture.

The confiscations brought mafia and anti-mafia together while attempting to neatly separate them. While unifying claims to community or activism eventually divided co-op people (like elsewhere, see Nuijten 2003), further fragmenting the cooperatives, constituting property on two opposing sets of legal claims actually had surprisingly unifying results. This oxymoron established the existence of concurrent, sometimes overlapping, state and mafia. It marks a difference from Scott's approach as it poses a critique to a unidirectional politics of the institutional gaze. In Sicily, *mafiosi* are active players, who have their own property agendas. Rather than being solely the messy result of, as per Scott, a powerful state's policy, neighbourliness with *mafiosi* is an intersubjective social configuration in which some people from the cooperatives engag, with reluctance. Unlike radical high modernism (and its socialist expressions),

the permeability of *mafiosi* in the landed landscape is posed as an ongoing renegotiation of the state's appropriation and the cooperatives' use of land.

These social relations developing around land are not mediated, as in the post-socialist literature, through 'messy' or 'blurry' boundaries on the ground. Boundaries, of course, do seem blurry to the administrators, who thought instead that a recognition of their neighbours as valid actors would jeopardise the state's project (the state 'invested in this land', as Luca would have it). To see land boundaries as 'blurred' and, by association, landed property rights as 'fuzzy' (as per Verdery), implies acknowledging an original state of firmness or the capacity to standardise these rights. This idea solidifies a view of the 'thingness' of property itself (Beckman and Beckman 2006; Dorondel 2009). Rather, boundaries present conflicting obligations and sets of expectations. Relations do not take place through a 'porosity' of the land (as in Verdery's work) but through neighbourliness. The boundaries are not porous; they are just prone to permeating relations and senses of neighbourliness and are informed by histories of work relations and sharing of locality that make workers implicitly recognise their *mafiosi* neighbours as moral agents.

The laws of restitution, as well as the restituted lands, share a situated domain. The political side of land restitutions is an underlying feature of some of the post-socialist debate. However, it is typically framed in a meta-narrative following (and ditching) 'socialism' – an organisation of property that collapsed alongside its political upkeep. Restitutions 'attempted to create the status pro ante' – returning land to individuals claiming it on the basis of pre-socialist rights (Verdery 1996: 133–36). Unlike this situation, mafia is still a salient phenomenon in Sicily. The post-socialist 'perpetuated political interpretation of agriculture' (Creed 1998: 219) takes place, in Sicily, precisely because of the actual, grounded experience of mafia; the project is one of *anti-* (not post-)mafia.

'Anti-mafia' is less rigid a worldview than it looks because people who partake in it obtain different views and follow different practices vis-à-vis their neighbours than those ascribed to them from the project. While the proximity literature takes difference as largely already constructed, I show the dynamics of proximity/neighbourhood where the actual social boundaries and the very ways to draw them are under dispute. My analysis of the dynamics of neighbourliness turns from the spatial outcome of existing social divisions into the realm in which these divisions, and by implication the meaning and ascription of neighbourhood (and its moral and political and obligations), takes shape through interactions and social processes.

NOTES

1. John Davis's comment on land disputes in Italy ('You cannot sue an acre: a boundary dispute is not a dispute with land but with people', 1973: 157) therefore offers an insight unwittingly echoed by Enzo here.

Conclusion

The Private Life of Political Cooperativism

Co-op Morals: Inside and Outside

This ethnography has brought to the fore a somehow underdiscussed issue in the scholarly approach to cooperatives. Taking labour seriously to appreciate the non-lateral character of cooperatives, it stresses co-op labour's co-articulation with the 'private' lives of co-op members; for instance, with kinship and indeed 'new' kinship idioms, gendered household economies and ideologies of community and friendship. Throughout the book's narrative, I set out to analyse the contradictions, incongruities and inherent differences running through anti-mafia cooperatives' multiple divisions of labour. As member differentiations are framed in moral terms, the ethnography has stressed this moralisation in the social life of cooperatives. Differences and hierarchies among members are equally associated to obligations and social networks *outside* the cooperative's framework as they are with activities performed *within* the framework of cooperative work itself. This constitutes a dialectic between work in the co-ops and social life around the co-ops – both in relation to each other and in relation to bearing new social complexities. This general finding stands as a contribution to our understanding of cooperatives as well as to our views on the embeddedness of labour in the sociocultural domain at large. People's participation in cooperativism is invested in and at times in conflict with their surrounding social framework.

Co-ops are suspended between being totalising institutions and organisations tightly tied to the management of material resources, in this case labour and land associated with a state's value, legality. This suspension brings tensions: it is at once the driving force and a realm of contentious relations over what is moral and how everyday life outside the co-op framework is in line with the regulations within it. Systems and idioms of kinship, household organisation and social memory of landscape and work build into this tension and often bring forward uncomfortable contiguity. This book brings concerns over household economic organisation, kinship practices and gendered views of the self to the fore of the

anthropological concern with cooperatives, cooperativism and cooperational work.

The familial configuration of cooperatives is central to this understanding of stratification that accommodated families and new models of relatedness, inclusive of labour and politics (anti-mafia families). This dynamic role of kinship proved a fundamental aspect of the cooperatives' conflicting complementarity. Strict divisions of labour, on the one hand, determined each team's relatedness idioms, which in turn reinforced the division; on the other hand, these idioms merged kinship with work, thus also contributing to the development of cooperativism. Anti-mafia cooperativism developed *through* distinctive kinship idioms rather than against them. Kinship and gender are central, albeit hidden, facets in constituting experiences of a work collective, which gender solidarity renders a 'second family' for members (Ashwin 1999: 146).

This book's narrative follows a basic principle: the ethnography shows how differentiations within cooperatives move beyond divisions of labour, expressed in an array of moral evaluations. These moral divides include different opinions and practices concerning material resources available to the co-ops, including labour and land. They also comprise, however, diverse practices and ethical stances regarding relational patterns of sociality, including reputation and kinship. These relational settings condition the cooperatives with regard to agents fully external, even theoretically inimical to them, including *mafiosi*. Members' different ideas over community, activism and indeed landed property, brought contradictory and uncomfortable relationalities to the social lives of the co-ops.

In anti-mafia cooperatives, workers moving between the co-ops' employment and local 'community' codes and informal practices *outside* the co-ops alleviated tensions *within* them in ways that prevented class conflict between administrative and workforce teams. Even more so, legality-oriented formal labour in cooperatives *secured* new informal livelihood opportunities for workers, such as welfare benefits. Informalities in workers' livelihoods developed not only alongside legality but also, often, *because* of it. The realms of mutuality – pregnant with claims to community – and of employment existed in interdependence. Encompassing systems accommodate different subsystems, undermining them in a potentially globalised total system (Hann and Hart 2011a: 162). Such systems can include politicised pockets of protected wage labour and diversified 'community' claims in an area thoroughly introduced in global processes of economy.

Ideologies of Enclaving, Practices of Embedding

The main tensions co-ops are suspended between are the claims that they are enclaves of good that are sin-proof (to provide an ecclesiastical metaphor), and the contrast this claim has with reality, that is the sets of practices of co-op members' embeddedness in the social realm. The conflict between embedding and enclaving has been central to the anti-mafia experiment. This conflict has been solidified, by and large, in an almost binary opposition within the labour division's system. In the move from clans to co-ops, divisions developed in close connection with food, anti-mafia, wage labour and reputational networks. The administrators' food activism, virtuous circles of networking, moral bordering of landed property and reputational use of gossip are all part of their attempts at protective seclusion. But this monograph does not operate on a sociological typology of 'power from above'/'resistance from below'. The exegesis pursued here allows for nuances to power, understanding the inegalitarian effects of cooperativism as embedded in broader stratifications and antagonisms of Sicilian society.

The book thus has not adopted, à la James Scott (1998; 2011), a sense of structures that (un)see local nuances or ungoverned agents that resist them. In fact, it is my conviction that no agent actually sees like a state: certainly not the administrators of the anti-mafia cooperatives, who claim that confiscated land and anti-mafia represent the state. Their own agency is conditioned by class belonging and the specifics of members' social situatedness. The same stands for the livelihoods of manual worker-members of the co-ops: their relative subordination but also their deviation from the paper tigers of legality and anti-mafia strictness regarding, say, kinship or community ideologies is in turn influenced by their belongings in webs of local obligation. Members' positions in the co-ops relate not only to labour tasks and divisions but to their broader relationships in their community, including a range of loyalties such as kinship, which thus becomes a crucial feature of cooperativism.

The divisions developing in cooperatives are then going way beyond a two-tiered scheme, revealing a multileveled relationality of difference that plays out not only in labour but also in ideas and practices beyond it. This relationality is the deepest crack in the wall that ideology builds around cooperatives, sealing them off from their environments as enclave economies of good. This is an approach that moves beyond an analytical axis of divisions of labour. It also challenges the normative sociological stress on how co-ops are becoming coopitalists (Sacchetto

and Emenzin 2016, Erratxi et al 2016) or the anthropological critique as to how institutions such as state(s) or market(s) impose stratification from above or from outside (see for instance Oakeshott 1978; Kasmir 1996; Smith 1999; Narotzky 2007; Stephen 2008; Vargas-Cetina 2011). Social stratification in egalitarian institutions is a political project that has a micro-life of everyday contradictions. This position's main ethnographic point is that members of lateral work institutions are embedded in many a relation outside their work environment. This social life of members around the co-ops impacts on relations within them; these relations are absorbed and reified in vested stratifications.

For instance, cooperatives' community participation retains the value of labour for labour, guaranteeing industrial democracy within them (V. Smith 2006). Community participation is hailed as cooperatives' democratic essence, enhancing the assumed emancipatory potentials of the social economy (MacPherson 2008: 640). The anthropological sympathy towards them takes place on the ground of their serving the/a community, distinguishing co-ops from capitalist corporations due to the latter's limited-liability shareholding (Vargas-Cetina 2011: 133). The community orientation of cooperatives is then related to their material accountability to local communities. This structure is reflected in their investment policy, as profits are invested only locally, suggesting an idea of development that, unlike expansive growth, endorses an intensive and productive channeling of capital and labour into local arrangements (Sapelli 2006).

The idea of co-ops as enclaves is often implicitly enhanced by the anthropology of co-ops. This is so even when dynamisms are recognised and co-ops are seen as ephemeral associations, highly context-dependent and in constant flux (Vargas-Cetina 2005: 246–47). The fluidity and labour insecurity that neoliberalism introduces to local communities is taken to mean that the desired community participation makes reform-oriented grassroots cooperatives a cause of resilience for communities (Ferry 2005). The idea of workers' control is stimulating (Dow 2003; Restakis 2010; Azzellini 2015); it is also forcing us to rethink how this control is in its turn controlled, or at least dependent on, market structures and local moralities in and through which co-ops operate. This forms part of a community striving for more autonomy from markets, an idea that, unlike autarky, brings co-ops into some relation with market exchange. This is at times a relation of 'closed' circuits of food production that protect local interests (Luetchford and Pratt 2013: 14–16).

The idea of open and closed economies is useful as it allows for mutability of relations. It can be enriched, however, with an attention to

ideology and the claims to (and ideological uses of) community that can obfuscate stratifications they profess to transgress. Claims to community, in Sicily, reflect and tie in with those presumably constituting good kinship or good food. They are not only mobilised as a democratic counter to external influences but are also often at the centre of already existing conflicts between factions within cooperatives.

In chapter 4, debating the moralities over food production in the co-ops, we saw how constant claims to food-activism principles had the seemingly paradoxical effect of intensifying inequalities and solidifying a seemingly two-tiered division of labour in the co-ops. This division was premised on the accessibility that members had towards making such principles an aspect of their everyday lives: experiencing food activism, that is. Further solidification of labour stratification was introduced according to anti-mafia norms regarding kinship, as explored in chapter 5. These ideas further divided people in the co-ops according to what positive or negative kinship circuit they could tap into.

Abstract principles like food activism or anti-kinship transparency are normative settings that promote a certain framework of operation for co-ops. On paper, they are points of departure for industrial democracy and labour egalitarianism. In actual fact, they have the opposite effect: their application on the grounded life of co-op participants has divisive outcomes as they feed in the valuation and valorisation measurements of cooperative members. They exacerbate existing social inequalities by promoting an *all things being equal* line, according to which people's work and worth is valued and valorised on the grade to which they can adhere to principles of food activism, anti-mafia kinship or moral ascription to landed property.

Like community, and to an extent drawing from the concept's connotation, food activism, 'clean' kinship and the idea of being uncontaminated by mafia are, in effect, ideologies understood in the Marxian sense (as per *The German Ideology*). In that respect, they obscure existing differences and operate on a twofold level in what they do with these differences in actual effect. On a quantitative level, they create more differences out of existing ones. On a qualitative level, their application makes for a leap in kind: they create divisions out of these differences, as they pose as evaluating mechanisms of the work and worth of co-op participants. They inform the division of labour in co-ops and eventually deepen those differential properties that hinder industrial democracy. On the one hand, this concerns the recognition of skill on a hierarchical basis (where management is seen as amenable to the abstract principles of food and anti-mafia activism, and is thus valued more). On the other, it

concerns the actual remuneration of people on the basis of this valuation, both in terms of the stability of work offered to them and in terms of the actual valorisation of their work for the co-op.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the encompassing ideological realm of 'community' – an issue that is at once an attempt at enclaving and at embedding. This abstract notion is forged in an idealised fashion in the lab of Libertà and the Consortium. These institutions, detached from San Giovanni's everyday life – the site being so close geographically to Palermo yet so far away in terms of stratification mechanisms – promote a specific view of community that has normative ambitions. This normativity is reflected in attitudes to material (as per land), immaterial (as per reputation) or relational (as per kinship) attributes of social life in and around the cooperatives.

I would need to stress that this finding does not promote ideas of agrarian labour institutions as harmonious hybrids; rather, it means that cooperatives operate within and among tensions. This is because they are *at once* personal and impersonal institutions, incorporating claims to market and mutuality as well as to economy and community. Members' claims to 'community participation' or their policing of the moral borders of a co-op do not always ease such tensions, as is often assumed, and can instead exacerbate them.

The case of the anti-mafia cooperatives brings together the contrasting views of Marx and Mauss. The Maussian perspective is that cooperatives become vectors for people's lived practice, models of economic activity that offer alternatives to hierarchies of power in labour relations. Cooperativism arose historically to combat wage labour and the associated division of labour, with the aim of correcting the resultant social inequalities. But it was also a response, already since Rochdale, to markets for labour (in the case of Sicily, conditioned by mafia) that often left people without regular work. It developed, often on moral grounds, by drawing on ideas of 'community', regionalism, and communalism – and in some cases, like Mondragón, politicised nationalism. The fact that anti-mafia cooperatives do not defy the state but involve positive engagements with it also confirms the Marxian critique that stresses their contradictions. In that respect, co-op horizontalism is framed in dynamic configurations 'between' the market and state policy.

'Cooperatives' is then not a self-explanatory term but one claimed and contested by varied groups, associated with different political and ideological allegiances and formed as a response to different problems and needs. Cooperatives arise in relation to a broad range of ideals and actors, from state to social movements, from fascist to communist or anarchist

ideologies. They are often outcomes of top-down planning rather than grassroots initiatives or experiences – not divorced from the local context but not derived from it either. Market structures and political ideas imposed from 'outside' shape and are shaped by members' everyday work experience and social relations. It is this experience that we need to pay attention to – appreciating the enclaving ideologies but focusing on the embedding aspect of co-op life.

Cooperative Futures as an Anthropological Concern

Arguably the most cited phrase in modern European literature regarding fin-de-siècle capacity for historical change comes from Tomasi di Lampedusa's Sicilian masterpiece *The Leopard*: 'Everything must change so that everything can stay the same' (*'Se vogliamo che tutto rimanga com'è, bisogna che tutto cambi*', 2010: 23). A lot changed in Spicco Vallata, no doubt. This book's opening vignette, with a minor *mafioso* and Piero debating over labour, suggested that the pursuit of workers' rights in Spicco Vallata (through the co-ops) has had positive results. This may seem to be undermined by what the ethnography has shown about the fissures and contradictions of this endeavour, underlining the richness of local life (unfolding in bars, in confiscated land plots and in the cooperatives themselves), which proved impossible to contain in strict jural categories.

Nonetheless, the cooperatives *did* introduce significant positive changes to the lives of an increasing number of people in Sicily and, by now, southern Italy at large. The confiscation of assets owned by mafias and organised crime is debated in many fora outside Italy – including the European Parliament – to possibly be adopted as a micro-developmental project across the European Union. What is more, the values the cooperatives represent (albeit in dynamic relation – and conflict – with local ones) still count as the most tangible success of the anti-mafia movement in Italy. It is up to future developments to see whether this configuration of cooperativism within broader neoliberal developments, and indeed in a time of austerity for Italy, will further affect people's livelihoods in Spicco Vallata and elsewhere in Sicily, and it is also for them to decide how such effects can be beneficial.

It is also for this reason (studying livelihoods as an anthropological drive) that, to re-establish cooperativism as an anthropological concern, we need to return it to the subjective experience of participating in 'it'. The idea of cooperation as non-ideological and experienced is a start,

but tracing where this experience is deployed is a necessary next step. Members' practices outside politicised cooperative contexts deserve more attention in order to comprehend not only their livelihoods but also inequalities of cooperatives. As co-ops' aim and praxis generally cannot engulf members' lives altogether – in the holistic sense institutions like monasteries do – members' lives and livelihoods around and outside their co-op life matter as much as cooperativist ideologies – like 'anti-mafia'. In anti-mafia cooperatives, the political project of curbing mafia was defined in terms of disembedding cooperative economic activity from certain traditions.

Class position was informed by members' different negotiations of the local arrangements in which resources (land, labour) were embedded, especially regarding local obligations and networks (e.g., mutual aid work) that are not in line with the movement's political principles. The movement from clans to state to co-ops has some clan residues in it: inertia brings them along the stream of centralisation and 'standardisation' (the idea that opened this book, in Gianpiero's words). While consolidating cooperatives' internal division of labour, the tension between different values also indicated the dynamic nature of workers' kinship relations or the use of local codes (gossip) by administrators. In Spicco Vallata, the realm of standardised employment and jural codification of property in land was both contested and complemented, in members' experience, by local values, which unfolded in informal economic activity in a project seemingly 'protectionist' for labour.

The major breakthrough of anti-mafia cooperatives, recognised by the majority of informants, was the creation of jobs in an area of chronic informal economic activity and unemployment. Cooperative employment, however, converged with continuities on the ground and often intensified informal ideas about recruitment, work and land among cooperative participants, developing alongside informal economy practices (e.g., benefit fraud and *lavoro nero,* ie. informal and hidden labour). Locals' livelihoods integrated the stable income from cooperatives' waged employment, maintaining community schemes of 'mutual aid' through which households informally exchanged money for (unregistered) work. Moreover, the moral connotations of ownership constantly challenged the rigid framework that sought to contain confiscated land within new property boundaries.

This is not a matter of Lampedusa's fatalism vis-à-vis change. It is about admitting that cooperatives are, willy-nilly, embedded in a particular social context which, for historical, economic and political reasons, does not 'fit' their ideology – though the cooperatives' pragmatic support in

the form of jobs is appreciated. As 'cooperatives', like 'livelihoods', are entangled in broad social realities, the future development of cooperatives should be more appreciative of local context, attentive to local livelihood models, codes and kinship in order to contribute to deeper and more enduring social change.

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Note: names of *mafiosi* (apart from Riina) and toponyms (apart from Palermo) have been anonymized.