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Two kinds of mafia dependency: on making and unmaking mafia men

This article proposes a movement between two sorts of dependency in the secretive bonds of violent men. The first forges an interdependent set of relations between mafia men, independent of the state; the second arises as a dependency of these former *mafiosi* on the state in order to break the interdependencies that formerly made them as mafia men. In this ethnographic and oral history narrative, we first witness a dyadic, homosocial relation between two violent men that forges a masculinised interdependence binding the protagonists of this story together as they share a secret. We then encounter the break-up of this interdependency amid local moral outrage over betrayal and violence, and its substitution by a strong dependence on the state. Through a microsociology that delves into a history of relations, the article thus shows how the subjects of this story shift from one set of dependencies to another. The essay critically revisits discussions of dependency, especially on the state, underscoring the missing element of dependency in the making and breaking of bonds in a secretive male brotherhood.

Key words mafia, dependency, betrayal, masculinity, violence

Introduction

This article postulates that two kinds of dependency operate in the context of the making and breaking of homosocial relations between mafia men in Sicily, and the formation of new dependencies between them and the state after they collaborate with the authorities. This is highlighted in the context of an ethnographic and oral history narrative of the rise and fall of mafia men in San Giovanni, a Sicilian village,[1] which in the period I focus on was called the 'Kabul' of Italy. The village is located in the valley of Spicco Vallata, the heartland of Cosa Nostra at the organisation's peak of international drug trade and political power. The narrative thus centres on extremely violent mafia men who fluctuated between friendship and enmity, first formulating and then breaking bonds of interdependency between them.

Describing their fall from credibility due to betrayal and excessive violence, as well as their interactions with the state, I also suggest that their entering witness protection schemes formulates a new, different kind of relation on which their lives depend. The new condition following their mafia fallout, I show, does not imply independence of the person but an entering into a new realm of dependency, construed by the state. This novel dependency constructs them as a new kind of dependent person.

[1] Data come both from gathering oral narrations of the recent past (mainly the late 1990s) from people now in their 40s and 60s and from examining written confessions of repentant *mafiosi pentiti* (Rakopoulos 2018).

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Having fallen from the collective personhood of the mafia (Rakopoulos 2018), after they break the code of silence by collaborating with the authorities and becoming *pentiti* ('repentants'), these people are not becoming independent, as they enter a protection phase offered by the Italian state (Dino 2006). There are few phrases signalling dependence more than the 'witness protection scheme', as one's person is literally protected by the state. I am thus arguing that the *mafiosi* are exchanging a particular set of dependencies for another one.

This is a point departing from ideas of exchange theory applied to mafia confessions, where scholarship sees *mafiosi* establishing a tit-for-tat in their collaboration with the state, in order to live freely (see, for instance, Moss 2001). The implications in their dealing with the state go much deeper than an exchange relation, as they undo a previous history of reciprocal obligations that made them persons in a particular way. Therefore, dependency on the state more generally is here not contextualised in a political economic attention to welfare, as in much of the existing literature. The idea of associating dependency with state policies of welfare has been a matter of much debate, especially regarding the political moralisation of the term (Fraser and Gordon 1994). The negative connotations in the notion's genealogy can be traced to ideas of possessive individualism (see MacPherson 1962) and the associated dread over the morally ambiguous loss of individuality because of state dependence. Sociologist Michael Young, a central figure in the making of the UK welfare state (as policymaker) deplored the loss of communal ties among white working-class East Enders in London (Young 2006). However, importantly, Young's argument on the loss of kinship and neighbourhood dependencies rests on the historical experience of his own making: the replacement of such ties by welfare state 'dependency'. While not without problems, his observation suggests something I take on board in this essay: that the freedom from certain ('community') dependencies entails entanglements in others (statal).

Within social anthropology, the current scholarship of James Ferguson criticises moral and scholarly anxieties pertaining to dependencies in new regimes of welfare distribution. In Ferguson's recent work, dependency, usually a moral vice to be deplored as a condition of servitude, is held up to a different validation of dependence in contemporary South Africa (Ferguson 2013). This is a validation that the author traces as having long-standing historical roots in centuries-old traditions of patronage (2013: 236). The author puts the moral panic cash welfare provokes in the western liberal mind to critical scrutiny (Ferguson 2015: esp. 38–47), as patronage dependency seems to bring a moral alarm to the liberal mind (2013: 232).

In Mediterranean anthropology, the idea of patronage was generally abandoned alongside the gendered notions of honour and shame (see, for instance, Herzfeld 1980; Pitt-Rivers 2012), not least because the discipline moved away from 'Mediterranean' regional interests (Ben-Yehoyada 2016: 1). This move implied dropping a potential to think social relations through dependency too: patronage relations among 'Mediterranean men' had 'dependence' at their heart (e.g. Davis 1977: 81).

A case of a homosocial set of dependencies in mid-1990s Sicily offers an excellent vantage point towards revisiting the relatively undeveloped idea of dependency. Both scholarly critique of state dependency and the anthropological critique of the conventional western moral evaluations of dependency rest on the assumption that in 'Western' states the person establishes an individual relation with the state, negatively valued or otherwise. Yet, in Sicily, we encounter people set – to an extent – 'outside the state' due to criminal activity, refashioning their social being once, after being arrested, they enter

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into collaboration with the authorities. I argue that their condition is a transition from a state of dependency on each other to one of a dependency of each one on the state. Meanwhile, as I show in the story of Cannetti, the 'independent' person seems to be the post-mafia man who is apparently *not* dependent on either the state or the mafia. The *mafiosi* put into witness protection schemes (Brusca and Di Maggio) are seen as dependent on the Italian state and, due to betrayal and excessive violence, as discredited male subjects not least due to the moral connotations of masculinity (Almeida 1996).

The paper thus works with ideas of gender with attention to their male status (Pine 2012) in order to provide a backdrop to how mafia men's dependencies are made in pseudo-lineage formations called 'clans' that ally with each other in Cosa Nostra (Santino 2015).[2] The importance of gender in the formation of siblinghoods has been stressed before, in terms of 'brotherhoods' both obfuscating and stressing gender solidarity within their organisations (see Mahmud 2012). To remain within Italy and the Mediterranean, forms of male brotherhood can indeed stretch even across national lines, along ideas of a gendered shared identity (Ben-Yehoyada 2017).

Inside the mafia

During the period I focus on, Cosa Nostra controlled much of the social life locally and had spread its criminal entrepreneurial activities across the world via traffic in heroin. A compact organisation based on male interdependency, the mafia faced challenges due to its *men of honour* breaking *omertà* – their oath of silence.[3] The paper follows this through the heuristic device of betrayal, that moment when one part breaks the dependent formation between interdependent men to seek what appears like atomised independence but is in fact an institutional dependence (protection from the state).

This is a highly gendered phenomenon and I am therefore focusing on the relations and perceptions of relations between men. Mafia is, after all, a monosexual organisation in which women cannot hold membership,[4] as agnatic symbolic lineage forbids the transferral of what people in San Giovanni called mafiosity (*mafiosità*); but much

[2] Descendant, gendered kinship in this framework is bilateral and cognatic – but interestingly, it retains strongly male-gendered agnatic connotations. People in the village, opinionists in Italian newspapers and even agents in state institutional language, use the term 'clans' (Rakopoulos 2017a, 2017c) to make sense of connections, dependencies and feuds within the mafia, as well as transmissions of capital indicating how kinship metaphors are central in so many aspects of socialite (Yanagisako 2015). Another emic term is *cosca*: a kinship idiom that suggests closeness and impenetrability of each mafia group, which here is unsettled, due to the betrayals in and across such groups.

[3] The mafia, still active today, is a highly stratified phenomenon encompassing a wide variety of social backgrounds, an 'interclassist social bloc' (Santino 2007, 2015). It formulates a system attached to the perpetual mutations of neoliberalism on a global scale that develops in 'consociation' and symbiosis with state and market institutions (Schneider and Schneider 2003; Sciarrone 2009).

[4] This is almost universally accepted in the literature, as scholars agree that mafia women are exceptional cases (Longrigg 1998; Dino 2006), although not entirely correct. Importantly, in the town of Alcamo, about 50 km from San Giovanni, informants suggested that there had historically been different mafia configurations. There is evidence of women being active in the local mafia, fulfilling roles traditionally adopted by men (see Rakopoulos 2017a: 153). 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'.

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of the 'honour', among 'men of honour' (Falcone 1993), is related to women (Blok 2000). While being aware that this is integrally tied into relations with women from which ultimately these relations cannot be disentangled, the *mafiosi* themselves construct such relations as largely separate. It is the implication of this separation into a largely homosocial sphere that I am exploring in relation to shifting ascriptions of dependence.

In the early to mid-1990s, San Giovanni's two primary mafia clans, led by Balduccio Di Maggio and Giovanni Brusca, formed a diarchy bonded in co-dependence. Their activities within Cosa Nostra included backing by all means possible – including assassinations – the main entrepreneurial current of the organisation, i.e. the global traffic in heroin. Excessive violence, often administered by these two men, was a prerequisite to solidify Corleone's power hold over the Sicilian mafia, supported by San Giovanni *mafiosi*. Brusca admitted in court to more than 150 murders, including that of Giovanni Falcone, a magistrate who had made advances on the judiciary struggle against Cosa Nostra, deemed a national emergency in the early 1990s.

The impressive internationally reaching economic apparatus of drug refining and dealing was the organisation's main source of revenue. The conspiracy of silence bonding mafia men in the male brotherhood of Cosa Nostra, known as *omertà*, was (and still is) the main means of keeping the organisation safe and intact. Such bonding silence, which extends far beyond the organisation (see Di Bella 2011), forged interdependencies across members of the organisation, known as men of honour (*uomini d'onore*). In the case of San Giovanni, the main protagonists were the aforementioned two young men. The village, with a population c.5000, was a mafia stronghold, at some point called 'the place of 800 Bruscas' (Rakopoulos 2017a: 19–20). It is difficult to estimate how many *mafiosi* lived in San Giovanni, but as seen below, many eventually were arrested and became state witnesses.

What follows aims to situate the masculinity and dependency trajectories of our two main characters in a broader setting. Paying attention to the life trajectories of our two main protagonists will help trace their interconnections into mutual dependency. In order to analyse the dependency men of honour had on each other, I shall briefly unpack the story of Giovanni Brusca, as it is both idiosyncratic and indicative of broader trends. Highlighting the gendered, as well as classed, aspects of the life choices and aspirations of an ambitious unmarried young man will help show how he bonded with Balduccio, as well as merged into the broadly homosocial environment of the local mafia.

The Brusca family came from animal husbandry, a typical milieu for many *mafiosi* in the area, but not the whole of Sicily (see Lupo 2009: 9). Cosa Nostra's leader, Totò Riina, who hailed from neighbouring Corleone and who had been on the run since 1950, was already 45 years old when he made his first investment in vineyard land. He knew little about viticulture, the area's distinct crop, as Corleone was a dry-farming village, and as he was raised as a shepherd. In San Giovanni, all the descendants of the legendary Bernardo Brusca (1929–2000), a key mafia figure, were sons; all got involved in sheep herding and, parallel to that, in mafia. Giovanni, however, hated working with animals (Lodato 1999) and decided to follow a different path – within mafia, but outside the limitations of ordinary employment. Coupling this life choice with the decision not to marry, something relatively rare for *mafiosi*, he established a reputation as a masculine maverick locally.

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Naturally, the Brusca clan did maintain relations outside a strict mafia scope. Some of these relations were symbolic kinship links to boost their class ascendancy: for instance, the successful construction entrepreneur Angelo Siino was Giovanni Brusca's *compare* (godfather). Siino represented what Brusca seemingly aspired to: an overtly masculinised leisure lifestyle. In San Giovanni, Siino was called Bronson, for his allegedly 'brute' but charming face and, bizarre for his co-villagers *mafiosi*, Hollywood-style conspicuous consumption. An unmarried and, class-wise, looked down on young *mafioso* like Brusca, admired Siino, according to the memories locals shared with me.

Balduccio Di Maggio hailed from a family of unsuccessful shop owners. He entered the mafia at 26 and was officially unemployed until his arrest on January 1993. Balduccio was a low-ranking player in Cosa Nostra, who reached the organisation's higher echelons forming a new clan, while Giovanni Brusca rose to class ascendancy through a thoroughbred mafia trajectory, but moved beyond animal herding, while retaining a perceived animalistic flair about his masculine person. Around the early to mid-1990s, people affiliated with both the Brusca and the newly founded Di Maggio clans joined each other every evening at the bar of a main interlocutor of mine, Marco Virilia. It was due to Virilia's personal popularity that his venue became a meeting place for the village's mafia people, and he entertained a sense of pride around this.

As Virilia once told me, he had managed to shape the place as a 'male hangout', where 'boys would come to chat away from spouses'. As he added, 'those two were made totally dependent on each other, in my hangout'. Locals such as Nino, the personal physician of both those young men, told me that they drunk their way through the evening with loud music there – a tendency uncommon to the usually quiet and reserved *uomo d'onore* of the Sicilian mafia. It was through this conspicuous consumption and drinking at this bar that the ties of mutual dependence that made them interdependent mafia men were consolidated.

Both Di Maggio and Brusca, then in their early 40s, were unmarried, heterosexual men, who were keen for some male company and bonding over being single, rather than organising escapades from domestic restriction. Allegedly, according to some of my interviewees, their historical clan alliance was sealed through Balduccio Di Maggio and Giovanni Brusca's meetings at the café. Virilia's bar became known throughout the valley of Spicco Vallata as a meeting point for San Giovanni *mafiosi*. There, Virilia argues, they got drunk and swore each other to silence. The place was conveniently located at the heart of the newest part of the village, an area that had been built through local *mafiosi*'s investment in construction during their 1980s money-laundering schemes. It was refurbished in a lavish way, with expensive decoration, funded by Brusca and Di Maggio, as they wanted their meeting place to 'scale up', in Virilia's phrase.

Betrayal, 'discrediting' and unmaking bonds: moving into the arms of the state

Giovanni and Balduccio's place in mafia clanship and generally as mafia masculine points of reference locally were destroyed when they started sharing secrets with the authorities and shifted their centre of dependency – from each other towards the state. After their alliance, Brusca and Di Maggio became rivals due to the betrayal of Di

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Maggio, who broke the oath of silence first in 1996. Balduccio Di Maggio became probably the most famous mafia justice collaborator (*pentito*), in the 1990s (Lodato and Travaglio 2005: 132–3). His most celebrated (yet still disputed) confession to the authorities was that seven-times Prime Minister of Italy Giulio Andreotti had met him and Cosa Nostra leader, Toto Riina, in 1987 to arrange a non-conflict pact between the state and the mafia (Lodato 2012).

Balduccio became a *pentito* as soon as he was arrested. His 'cowardice' was renowned. As a farmer from San Giovanni told me, 'for other *mafiosi*, they had to beat them up to make them talk. For him, they had to beat him up to make him stop talking'. The information he confessed to the authorities led to the capture of his peer Giovanni Brusca, as well as that of Riina. While he was put under a witness protection programme, he returned to San Giovanni to punish the allies of Brusca, by then his archenemy and still at large. The rivalry between them became legendary. Brusca himself turned *pentito* after his arrest. Both are alleged to live in unknown circumstances today, under state witness protection schemes.

Local people would often tell me of the San Giovanni *pentiti* that they 'bought away their freedom'. The idea of exchanging with the state ('buy freedom', but not necessarily independence) was rampant in the village. 'The state applauds … it would never be able to reach them otherwise … they ended themselves, the state just stood and stared, well, stood and listened[5] I should say', an aged minor *mafioso* told me. The decision to become a collaborator implies often lavish assistance from the state, as well as the deportation of the *pentito* and his whole family elsewhere in witness protection programmes, the *mafioso* eventually becoming dependent on the state for his livelihood and protection.

San Giovanni's collaborationism (*pentitismo*) has been phenomenal and indeed central to the blows Cosa Nostra suffered from the authorities. *Mafiosi* from San Giovanni contributed, with their collaboration, to the decapitation of the peak period of the organisation's might locally and globally.[6] In a certain respect, as a local young man told me, 'our village was more important in dissolving the mafia than in contributing to it'. The instrumentalisation of the mafia from the state and vice versa, through 'destroying bonds via *pentitismo*' as an ex-*mafioso* told me, demonstrates the ambiguous relationship of state and mafia. With the mafia and interpersonal male dependencies destroyed, the new Brusca and Di Maggio (now under new names) arise as seemingly individualised, post-mafia men. Rather than autonomous, however, they are totally dependent on the state for their new lives.

The move from *mafiosi* to *pentiti* is framed by the destruction and construction of different kinds of (in)visible dependencies that add nuances to my main argument on the two kinds of dependencies (on each other and on the state) that mafia men experience. 'The state', in the form of agents extracting information on the ground, moves towards ambiguous *mafiosi* as new dependencies are formulated. The process of unmaking bonds that *mafiosi* go through involves betraying each other and exercising excessive violence towards each other and – importantly – towards innocent victims. Finally, in order to further support the idea of people being discredited by betrayal,

[5] He implies the magistrates sitting to listen to *pentiti* confessions.

[6] Monopsony of the Asian opium and heroin refineries spread from Alcamo to Corleone alongside a construction boom in the area had brought much capital to the region.

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violence and state dependency, I present the example of a mafia man who did nothing of the sort and is seen as 'independent'.

The face of the state

The flow of information 'from the mafia to the state' is one of the occasions in which the state is deliberately constructed as an abstraction, appearing to form an ideal type of the state–citizen relationship by destroying past relations. When the state as a peopled institution rather than as an abstraction enters the discussion, it is in ideologically charged terms, such as 'servants of the State', that Giovanni Falcone used for his own impressive anti-mafia magistrate work (Falcone 1993; Ben-Yehoyada 2018). In fact, the people working for the state to extract information from *mafiosi*, *pentiti* or otherwise are often building relations with such *mafiosi* on the ground in order to obtain such data. The state's own security is thus dependent on such social flow of information from the mafia.

With actually spending time around *mafiosi*, the law enforcers (most often, *carabinieri*) achieve better integration within the community, as well as self-respect and respect by the *mafiosi* themselves. This grounded work can only be done through participation in the 'grey zone', on a borderline position where liminal convergences challenge both categories (Pine 2012; Rakopoulos 2018). When I went to interview Carlo, the *carabinieri* Marshal of San Giovanni, who took half a day off work to see me, he described to me the ritual through which he obtained information on *mafiosi* from *mafiosi*, outside a *pentito* framework. While being interrupted by his mobile phone, with the ringtone the theme song of *The Godfather*, the 40-year-old man told me:

> I like my job. You and I speak to the same people, Theo. I call them informators, you call them informants. […] Old *mafiosi* types. So I stand in the middle. I go to the old guy down the hill at his country home, y'know he left school age 8, and we break bread and eat cheese. We speak for two hours and as I am ready to depart, at the last ten minutes, he'd tell me what I have been waiting to hear. And I speak to him in second plural (*vossía*). And at the last 10 minutes he'd tell me the thing he and I wanted to talk about, the important stuff, the thing comes after we are beating around the bush.

Carlo is not here 'infiltrating' the mafia as such. But his empirical insight into the organisation suggests how crevices of information are allowed and how the arms of the state work alongside those of the mafia in dealing with information. The authorities (the 'State' of Giovanni Falcone), represented and enacted on the ground by people like Carlo, tap into these crevices and establish, through a degree of sociality, that area of interaction and interchange that allows for new dependencies for *mafiosi* that share information with the state. Such interaction between 'state' and 'mafia' is weaved in with degrees of humour, as suggested in the choice of Carlo's mobile phone ringtone; but it solidifies, in many cases, new dependents on the state. This interaction suggests degrees of mutual respect, which ironically were not shared across the mafia as an organisation and among all *mafiosi*. This is not least because of precisely such existing flows of information state-wards, whose existence cast one village as 'manly' and another as 'cowardly'. The reliance on the state's protection unmade mafia men, not only as *mafiosi*, but also *as men*, while it took a toll on the village's reputation too.

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Discredited betrayal

Specifically, the hated *pentitismo*, discredited by most San Giovanni locals, was often juxtaposed against the 'self-image' or the 'local identity' of the village itself in private discourses that I had with locals and visitors alike. Hence, people would speak of the fact that local *mafiosi* from San Giovanni had been tied-up with Corleone, literally dependent on it. San Giovanni never became the deciding force in mafia workings, remaining the armed hand (*braccio armato*) of Totò Riina's Corleone-based Cosa Nostra. The 'cowardly' and 'non-manlike' form of betrayal of the organisation that San Giovanni *mafiosi* engaged in was a reason for *sangiovannari*'s low self-esteem *vis-à-vis* nearby Corleone.

Corleone is a village considered larger, prouder, prettier and more 'self-respectful'. Importantly, it was also the 'capital' of the mafia in the period I am focusing on and, as a matter of fact, the official title of its municipality is '*città di Corleone*' ('town of Corleone'). In my fieldwork visits to Corleone, I was regularly looked on with contempt when I told people (even people with no mafia connections) that my research was based mainly in San Giovanni, a place they thought was 'cowardly'. In fact, many *corleonesi* mock *sangiovannari*, precisely because Corleone had produced very few *pentiti*. What is more, the dramatic confessions of San Giovanni *mafiosi* earned the village a poor reputation. The *sangiovannari* were considered mischievous and untrustworthy, their mafia being 'bubbly' (*chiaccherona*). 'Ours was not a real mafia, like the Corleone kind: our *mafiosi* behaved like girls', I was told by Rosaria, a person unsympathetic to mafia in San Giovanni.

This sense was particularly salient among people who lived outside the village, like Gianni, a 50-year-old man who migrated to Parma, who pointed out that 'our mafia was not like Corleone's, which was the real thing – ours were *vigliacchi* [cowards]'. Nino, the personal doctor of both Di Maggio and Brusca, stressed to me that 'there must have been some 10 to 12 *pentiti* from here, a really high number. A village that cannot keep its word is a village with low self-esteem'. Antonio, a smallholder farmer and friend of Nino, noted that 'this is the absence of a sense for themselves that the inhabitants of this place have', while Maurizio, the wine entrepreneur, told me 'it is not by chance that *pentitismo* was so successful in a village with no identity'. Such ideas were not only common across social class but also across genders: as young Rosaria told me: 'Ours were not real *mafiosi*, the true ones were from Corleone, keeping their word, keeping to each other, acting like men … What holds a village together is *to be depending on each other and on each other's words*' (my emphasis).

The specific people who contributed to *pentitismo*, moreover, are thought to have endangered the integrity of San Giovanni itself, by betraying 'their values' and by being 'unmanly'. This sense of discredit touches on gendered perceptions of both what it means to be a man and what it means to be a son. A *mafioso* is meant to honour his father: Giovanni Brusca was thinking of what his father could possibly think of him becoming repentant: 'Even in prison I kept on thinking of what my father would say. I would have never wanted he'd come to know about me collaborating with justice, with the instruments of information' (Lodato and Brusca 1999: 192–3). Here, being a man means being brave enough to be (inter)dependent – as opposed to the usual assumption that it involves a rugged independence (such as, for instance, in the American cowboy myth). The *mafioso*, cut out from the mafia male descendance as well as the male

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interdependence within mafia, recognises he is being dependent on the state and that that was an unmanly decision on his part.

Dishonoured violence

Besides the discrediting that takes place with *pentitismo vis-à-vis* one's manhood and sense of descendant male continuity, there is moreover a sense of discrediting following immoral masculine violence (Ghannam 2013) that is tied up with mafia collaborationism. A relative lack in the scholarly discussion of the mafia as a violent male space must be acknowledged here, as opposed to the literature on organised crime in violent gangs where the gender aspect seems ubiquitous (see Vigil 2003). Moreover, while the idea of the gendered self is present in discussions on organised crime (Paoli 2002) as well as on crime and criminalisation (Schneider and Schneider 2008), there is still more to assess about mafia violence *vis-à-vis* moral connotations of masculinity. In the case of San Giovanni, the break-up of male dependencies was partly an outcome of the fact that local society saw *mafiosi* as dishonoured men (rather than 'men of honour') due to excessive, 'blind' violence.

Clan feuds over *pentitismo* were met with extreme violence from rival parties in San Giovanni, named Italy's 'Kabul'. Such is the case of the feud between Santino Di Matteo (from nearby Altofonte) and Brusca, over the collaboration of Di Matteo with the authorities and the revelations of Brusca's responsibility over a series of crimes. Brusca, alongside Altofonte *mafioso* Domenico 'The Vet' Raccuglia, abducted 11-year-old Giuseppe di Matteo and held him hostage for two years to negotiate the amount of information his father would reveal to the authorities. When the plan did not work, the boy was strangled and his body disposed of in acid.

This was the 'total disgrace for the village' ('*Il disfamo totale per il paese*') in the words of Virilia, an event often pondered on with feelings of horror by locals, men and women alike. The event made it to national news as a top story and San Giovanni is to some extent, in the national imaginary, still associated with it. Across Italy, it was seen as a peak of the mafia violence, while locally it had one more layer of significance, according to many of my interlocutors. It was the moment when, as Nino put it, 'they were allegedly men of honour who would not harm children and women; and after this event we all realised that the whole myth of the *mafioso* being a man that is morally consistent was a fiction'. Memories of the 'unmanly' assassination of a child who had 'seen too much' by the Corleone major *mafioso* Michele Navarra in the late 1940s – a story I heard several times while in the field – were unearthed: Navarra had also killed an 11-year-old boy (same age as Giuseppe di Matteo). Navarra used his position as a doctor to kill the child; this kind of bureaucratic accuracy that the mafia is capable of has been pondered anthropologically as mafia's biopolitical violence (Palumbo 2009).

The horror of Giovanni Brusca's excessive violence reflected the ambiguity locals felt about belonging to San Giovanni. As local man, Giorgio, 45, told me: 'What these people did with that kid is unthinkable, I don't find words for it'. Giorgio, who commuted from San Giovanni to the Sicilian FIAT automobile factory every day for 40 km, found trouble negotiating his village of origin around his other Sicilian colleagues, who thought of San Giovanni as a horrid place because of the Giuseppe di Matteo event.

Seeing such violence as immoral, dishonoured and unmanly was a co-articulation of its magnitude and the fact that *pentiti* orchestrated it. There is also an important

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connection here between *omertà* that breaks dependency bonds between mafia men and the indiscriminate revenge violence that breaks their connections to broader society, jeopardising their reputation as *men* of honour. The webs of interdependence that make men and that 'real men' maintain are threatened by the lack of masculine restraint involved in betrayal and excessive violence. The Di Matteo event shattered an emic sense of ascribing male honour to *mafiosi*; some locals saw that kind of immoral violence in tandem with other blind eruptions of local *mafiosi*. These untrustworthy tendencies that *mafiosi* now engaged in questioned dependencies in the village, as locals now saw them as unpredictable persons with no relational commitments (towards each other) or moral restrictions (towards innocent village people), capable of indiscriminate harm.

For instance, *mafioso* Giovanni Monticiolo's memory is still alive within the discourses of locals for his *pentitismo* as well as for his amoral violence for passion issues, against an innocent young man. As Maria, a 40-year-old woman who was brought up a neighbour to *mafiosi* but as an adult became involved in local anti-mafia cooperatives (see Rakopoulos 2017b), told me, 'These were non-persons anymore, they ended up killing for jealousy. That incident took place literally outside my window. Fabio, this guy I knew, who started seeing that girl that Monticiolo liked, was shot in the face'. Boundaries between mafia and non-mafia social worlds collided and overlapped in events such as this.

Informants would speak of *pentiti* with contempt concomitant to their disdain for their excessive, amoral violence. Regarding the case of Monticiolo, Virilia commented:

> there is this assumption that the *mafioso* is a man made of one solid essence (*il mafioso è un uomo tutto di un pezzo*). But these *mafiosi* were not of the Premiership (*serie A*); they played in the County League (*di serie interregionale*). So you know what they say that a real *mafioso*, one you could depend on speaks only when they torture him? Well Monticiolo started speaking already when they put him in the police car. They had to beat him up to shut him up.

The very specifics of the idea of a *mafioso* being 'a man made of one solid essence', that 'would not harm children and women', in other words the idea of *mafiosi* being 'men of honour' was now discredited, in post-betrayal San Giovanni. This shared sense of discrediting elucidates my argument on the moral collapse due to the combination of betrayal and immoral violence. Close informants would reflect on such events of dishonoured male violence in the same breath as they did on betrayal.

The excessive violence and unreliability of local *mafiosi* shattered their dependencies – on each other and towards village society. Some informants thought that the changes *pentitismo* brought about in the last 15 years, as well as some people's presumed wounded self-image were amended by the fact that many *mafiosi* left the village. Nino complained that *pentitismo*

> made these people anew, dependable as they were on the state, the state took them away. And it evacuated the village, it really changed it; you had a range of families and their intimates that would escape the place in the timespan of one night; you walk in the *centro storico* and you see all them buildings were you always knew their kin would live – all empty, everyone brought to far away places, who knows where; this process changed the village forever.

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He refers to a specific aspect of betrayal's melting of the solidity of local dependencies: the transferral of *pentiti* elsewhere, through witness protection schemes, including the families of Brusca and Di Maggio. These men were relocated away from the village, under a false name, under a novel dependency on the state's protection. However, not all *mafiosi* had this fate.

An 'independent' man

One case of an, only seemingly, 'independent' ex-*mafioso* might help illuminate further the two sorts of dependency among *mafiosi*, the first on each other, the second towards the state, that I have described. Conetti had already been arrested and released (in 2007) when I did fieldwork (in 2009) and was the leading figure of the 'Gentlemen's Circle' (*circolo dei galantuomini*, or *circolo Italia*), located in the adjacent municipality of San Turiddu. Despite the *carabinieri* Marshal telling me that Conetti is 'a *mafioso* from hair to toes', to many he was a very much honoured, gentlemanly figure. He enjoyed the respect of many people, not least 'the state', in the form for example of his village's mayor, who told me 'he is a free man, and a very important entrepreneur of our community'.

I met Conetti in person. I realised because he 'did serve his time and paid for his choices', the state's local agents (the mayor, the marshal, the local police head) as well as others in the local community thought of him as one who had washed off his *mafiosità* without betraying others, one who could walk *in piede* – a 'free man'. Some of the different ways state representatives thought of his non-dependence on either the mafia or the state now were the following: 'once out, a man is free' (the mayor), 'if a man has gone *in piede*, it means he's cleared now' (the marshal), 'once one has served his time, he's done with justice' (the police head).

Conetti, suspicious of my willingness to meet him, pointed out in our chat that he never used excessive violence. He reminded me that 'he had turned himself in', and that he was 'an independent man now'. The fact he hails from a family of noble farmers as well as the fact that he was never a *pentito*, but a *dichiarato*, hence a person who gave himself in to the police, contributed to the abbreviation of his sentence and the respect he still enjoys.

Unlike the *pentiti* who gained personal independence from mafia dependencies in witness protection, Conetti still goes around the village in pride. Locals saw him as a genuinely free man, who had escaped dependencies on either the mafia or the state, his relation to the state being that of an ordinary citizen. By comparison, the *pentiti* are still, to an extent, tainted by mafia, as they have to be over-dependent on the state, unable as they were to wash away their crimes by doing their time in prison. Conetti's example belongs in neither form of emic dependency, nor to the world of interdependent mafia relations, nor to that of a *pentito*'s dependency on the state.

Conclusion: Two kinds of dependency

In this article, I have argued that two kinds of dependency exist in a context of male sociality, between honoured and dishonoured mafia men. On the one hand, we have the collective interdependency that formulates dyadic homosocial bonds, such as

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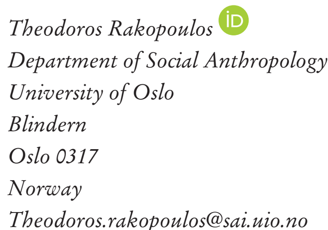
those between Giovanni and Balduccio. On the other, we witness the *pentito*'s lifelong dependency on the state's protection schemes. Analysing how dependency works in such settings, I argued that some mafia men are shaped as gendered persons dependent on each other's trust, forged in the idiom of a shared conspiracy of silence (*omertà*). The unmaking of the mafia and the mafia person(s) takes place when that collective, shared silence is broken. In this process, dependency does not wither; it shifts.

As mafia dependencies fiercely shifted, alliances with state power offered stability to certain people, in a recalcitrant state of affairs. Di Maggio's arrest and the confession that followed it brought down his interdependence with Brusca. The state offered the safety of the witness protection scheme, which ascribes a different kind of dependence to a new kind of person. The post-mafia *pentito* lives dependent on state provision, with a new name and address, re-contextualised fully outside the mafia past, with its local hierarchies and dependencies. This model stands in opposition to a post-mafia free man (Conetti), who 'paid his time', betrayed no one and lives respected in the middle of village life in a new way.

The confessions of *mafiosi* to the police compromised their promises to the organisation but also to each other, their mutual sense of dependence. Becoming a *pentito,* collaborating with the authorities, became a practice through which *mafiosi* exited such interdependencies and were remade as new persons, after being discredited by many inhabitants of the village for 'unmanly cowardice' as well as for indiscriminate, excessive violence.

Mafiosi's rootedness in a sense of collective personhood, which has roots in ideologies of masculinity, has been unsettled by their collaboration with the state. The stories of *pentitismo* among San Giovanni *mafiosi* show the antagonisms inherent in the breakdown of *omertà*. Betrayal disturbs the male brotherhood subject predicated on collective silence (see Mahmud 2014) and a web of relations with male affiliates. Dependency here is a matter of a distinct homosociality, one not ascribed to desire's drives (see Sedgwick 1985) but to the relations between heads of alliances set in the patrilineal language of clanship.

My ethnographic entry point into the discussion on dependency (Martin and Yanagisako, this volume) has been the co-dependent diarchy in San Giovanni. Balduccio Di Maggio's confession destroyed his rapports with people inside and outside the mafia, especially with Giovanni Brusca. However, speaking out does not rid one of the condition of dependency: it changes the social fabric of his actual dependencies. Scrutinising this condition offers us an ethnographic lens with which to understand better the theoretical discussion on dependency, as a situation conditioning persons socialised both without and within the state.



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Deux types de dépendance mafieuse: de la fabrication et de la défection des hommes de la mafia

Cet article propose un mouvement entre deux sortes de dépendance dans les liens secrets des hommes violents. La première forge un ensemble de relations interdépendantes entre les hommes de la mafia, indépendantes de l'État; la seconde se présente comme une dépendance de ces anciens mafieux à l'égard de l'État afin de rompre les interdépendances qui en faisaient autrefois des hommes de la mafia. Dans ce récit ethnographique et d'histoire orale, nous assistons d'abord à une relation dyadique et homosociale entre deux hommes violents qui forge une interdépendance masculinisée liant les protagonistes de cette histoire car ils partagent un secret. Nous rencontrons ensuite la rupture de cette interdépendance au milieu de l'indignation morale locale face à la trahison et à la violence, et sa substitution par une forte dépendance de l'État. À travers une microsociologie qui plonge dans une histoire des relations, l'article montre ainsi comment les sujets de cette histoire passent d'un ensemble de dépendances à un autre. L'essai revisite de manière critique les discussions sur la dépendance, en particulier vis-à-vis l'État, en soulignant l'élément manquant de la dépendance dans la création et la rupture des liens dans une fraternité masculine secrète.

Mots-clés mafia, dépendance, trahison, masculinité, violence

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