

THE ANTIMAFIA MOVEMENT IN ITALY. HISTORY AND IDENTITY: A FOCUS ON THE GENDER DIMENSION

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Title: The Antimafia Movement in Italy. History and Identity: a Focus on the Gender Dimension
Gender and Generation.

Abstract

For many years now the Antimafia movement has been one of the most significant forms of collective movement in Italy. It is a coherent and lasting social movement, perhaps one of the largest in Europe, but it is struggling to find its place in academic studies. This article reviews its fundamental phases and protagonists, underlining the extraordinary role historically played by women and new generations and especially analysing the forms of female contribution.

Key words: Antimafia movement; history; identity; women; new generations

Da molti anni il movimento Antimafia rappresenta una tra le forme più significative di movimento collettivo in Italia. Si tratta di un movimento coerente e duraturo, forse tra i più grandi in Europa, che tuttavia fatica a trovare un suo spazio negli studi accademici. Il presente articolo ne ripercorre le fasi e i protagonisti fondamentali, sottolineando il ruolo straordinario storicamente rivestito dalle donne e dalle giovani generazioni e analizzando in particolare le forme del contributo femminile.

Parole chiave: movimento antimafia; storia; identità; donne; nuove generazioni

Introduction

Italy is home to a phenomenon known the world over: The Mafia. As scholars know, the name first appeared in a theatrical piece staged in Palermo in 1863 (*I mafiusi di la Vicaria*), and immediately became part of the official Italian language.¹ After a short time it also contributed to shaping Italy's image worldwide and increasingly conditioned and influenced Italian life: culturally, socially, politically, economically, and institutionally.²

All this is well known. What is much less known is that the Mafia has been fought not only by law enforcement or judiciary power, but it has also been challenged and continues to be challenged by several social and civil movements: from the so-called "Fasci Siciliani" of the late nineteenth century,³ the post Second World War peasant movement,⁴ the youth movements that developed in the 1980s⁵ and the *Libera* movement that was created at the end of the second millennium.⁶ This article wants to make this history more widely known to a non-militant readership. Struggling courageously against local or national powers, cultural complicity, widespread silence and all manner of violence, these wide-ranging and numerically substantial movements have served in fact as a fundamental substitute for the State. Many individuals have lost their lives in the fight. For many years now, the Antimafia movement has been one of the most important forms of collective mobility in Italy. It has certainly been the country's most consistent movement, perhaps even one of

¹ Leopoldo Franchetti, *Condizioni politiche e amministrative della Sicilia*, Barbera, Firenze, 1877; Salvatore F. Romano, *Storia della mafia*, Sugar, Milano, 1963.

² Commissione Parlamentare Antimafia, *Relazione di Minoranza*, VI legislatura, Camera dei Deputati, Senato della Repubblica, Roma (first signatory: on. Pio La Torre), 1976; Commissione Parlamentare Antimafia, *Relazione finale*, XI legislatura, Camera dei Deputati, Senato della Repubblica, Roma (president: on. Luciano Violante), 1994; Commissione Parlamentare Antimafia, *Relazione finale*, XV legislatura, Camera dei Deputati, Senato della Repubblica, Roma (president: on. Francesco Forgione), 2008; Commissione parlamentare di inchiesta sulle mafie e sulle altre associazioni criminali, anche straniere, *Relazione finale*, XVII legislatura, Camera dei Deputati, Senato della Repubblica, Roma (president: on. Rosy Bindi), 2018; Giovanni Falcone, *Cose di Cosa Nostra*, Milano, Rizzoli, 1991 (with Marcelle Padovani).

³ Francesco Renda, *I Fasci siciliani: 1892-1894*, Einaudi, Torino, 1977.

⁴ Francesco Renda, *Il movimento contadino in Sicilia e la fine del blocco agrario nel Mezzogiorno*, De Donato, Bari, 1976; Umberto Santino, *Storia del movimento antimafia. Dalla lotta di classe all'impegno civile*, Editori Riuniti, Roma, 2000.

⁵ Nando dalla Chiesa, *Gli studenti contro la mafia. Note di merito per un movimento*, in "Quaderni Piacentini", n.11, 1983, pp. 39-60; Umberto Santino, *Storia del movimento antimafia*, cit.

⁶ "Libera. Associazioni, nomi e numeri contro le mafie", founded in 1995. Nando dalla Chiesa, *La scelta Libera. Giovani nel movimento Antimafia*, Edizioni Gruppo Abele, Torino, 2014.

the biggest in Europe. Demonstrations of between 100 to 200 thousand people have been regular occurrences, starting with the first mass march in 1982 against Raffaele Cutolo's *Camorra* in Naples,⁷ the extraordinary human chain in Palermo after the Mafia massacre in Capaci in 1992⁸ and the demonstrations promoted recently by *Libera* in Milan, Genoa, Florence, Latina and Bologna⁹. Country-wide training and instruction and educational experiences have become increasingly frequent,¹⁰ and the legislative process has been influenced on numerous occasions: take, for example, the much welcomed measure requiring that confiscated assets be put to social use (1996), important rules governing the protection of witnesses, legal aid measures for victims, or the establishment of the annual Innocent Mafia Victims Day, requested by *Libera* and passed by parliament on March 21st 2017, symbolically the first day of spring. Despite great activity and immense achievements, the Antimafia movement's long and broad social history remains untold. Abundant literature exists on the Mafia today especially in Italy, although it is somewhat unequally rich in quality. However, there is almost nothing on the contemporary Antimafia, apart from the odd personal contribution in Italy,¹¹ and nothing in Europe apart from a couple of valuable contributions on the situation in Palermo.¹²

⁷ Gianni Campili, *In 100mila contro la camorra*, in "Il Mattino", 12th February 1982. Also Marcello Ravveduto, "Voi siete la schifezza di Napoli". *La nascita del movimento anticamorra in Campania*, in "Laboratoire Italien", online, n. 22, 2019.

⁸ Umberto Rosso, *A Palermo un mese dopo per non dimenticare*, in "La Repubblica", 23rd June 1993. On 27th June there was another trade union demonstration in Palermo, with 100.000 people.

⁹ Bologna, in *200mila per Libera e don Ciotti*, in "Bologna. Repubblica.it", 21st March 2015.

¹⁰ CROSS, Osservatorio sulla Criminalità Organizzata, *Storia dell'educazione alla legalità nella scuola italiana*, Final Report by Eleonora Cusin, Mattia Maestri, Sarah Mazzenzana, Martina Mazzeo, Samuele Motta, Roberto Nicolini (ed. by Nando dalla Chiesa), Università degli Studi di Milano, 2018.

¹¹ Nando dalla Chiesa, *Gli studenti contro la mafia. Note di merito per un movimento*, cit. and *The antimafia movement*, cit.; Nando dalla Chiesa, *Storie di boss, ministri, tribunali, giornali, intellettuali, cittadini*, Einaudi, Torino, 1990; Nando dalla Chiesa, *The Antimafia Movement in Milan*, in "Dissent", vol. 2, April 2014a; Nando dalla Chiesa, *L'educazione alla legalità nella scuola italiana. Note su una ricerca*, in "Rivista di Studi e Ricerche sulla Criminalità Organizzata", Vol. IV, n. 3, 2018, pp. 45-61; Umberto Santino, *Storia del movimento antimafia*, cit.

A wide bibliography about separate aspects of the new Antimafia movement in Italy is proposed by Martina Mazzeo, *Il movimento antimafia contemporaneo: una bibliografia ragionata*, in Nando dalla Chiesa, *La scelta libera*, cit., cap. VII.

¹² Alison Jamieson, *The Antimafia. Italy's Fight Against Organized Crime*, London, Macmillan, 2000; Jane C. Schneider, Peter T. Schneider, *Reversible Destiny. Mafia, Antimafia and the Struggle for Palermo*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2003. See also, more recently, Charlotte Moge, *La Mobilitazione antimafia de 1992*, in "Rivista di Ricerche sulla Criminalità Organizzata", vol. 2, n. 1, 2016, pp. 32-60; Christine Jerne, *From marching to change to producing the change: reconstructions of the Italian anti-mafia movement*, in "Interface: A Journal on Social Movements", 7 (1), 2015, pp. 185-213; Christine Jerne, *Movements of Rupture, Effectuating, assembling and desiring anti-mafia economies*,

This begs a rather important question: why is one of the most important movements in Italy – crucial to the defence of freedom and justice – systematically neglected by handbooks dedicated to social movements, even when they are edited by Italian scholars? Many explanations are hypothetically possible. Perhaps because students or the relatives of victims were unable to communicate their activities in Italy and abroad. The urgency of the conflict within Italian borders obliged leaders or militant intellectuals to think and write solely about the Mafia. There are domestic and foreign preconceptions regarding everything that concerns the Mafia. Or simply perhaps because the Antimafia movement does not really exist and is just an example of the wishful thinking of some activists. This is our starting point.

As far as intellectual, civil, and anthropological attitudes are concerned, the answer is complex. The first predicament derives from how the Mafia phenomenon is actually perceived in Italy and abroad. The word “mafia” is widely used and inevitably entails evil and bloodshed. However, the Italian political agenda only contemplates the word ‘Mafia’ when massacres occur, for example those that led to the passing of the main Antimafia laws (1982-1986, 1992-1996). The Mafia is bound up with power, so power generally refuses to fight the Mafia or talk about it in normal situations.¹³ Moreover European countries consider the Mafia an exclusively Italian issue or, in accordance with media reports, an item of criminal *folklore*. In conclusion: on an almost extreme level the Mafia does not really exist and, consequently, there is no Antimafia.

So the primary objective of this contribution is to introduce the Antimafia movement to non-Italian readers, thus affording: a) some historical background information on the movement; b) some selected information regarding its contemporary sociological characteristics (especially about gender and generation); and c) an in-depth ethnographical account of the female dimension of the movement, so as to

dissertation presented to the School of Communication and Culture, Aarhus University, 2017; Elisabetta Bucolo, *Antimafia: une histoire de solidarité. Les associations et les coopératives contre la criminalité*, Le bord de l'eau, Lormont, 2020.

¹³ Giovanni Falcone, *Cose di Cosa Nostra*, *op. cit.*

better understand the historical succession of social contexts (and aspects of gender) elsewhere.¹⁴

1. Between biographical and historical perspectives

For this purpose, I must make a methodological premise. Over the last forty years my first-hand experience of the Antimafia movement has been very intense, as specified in the footnote: at a civil, journalistic, political, institutional, academic, and even judicial level.¹⁵

My contribution is, therefore, not only the result of academic study but, more generally, the fruit of a very long and intensive “participant observation” – pacifically considered a valuable source of knowledge by anthropologists and social scientists: from Malinowski¹⁶ and the Chicago School,¹⁷ to Roy’s industrial sociology¹⁸ (1952, 1953, 1954, 1960), all the way up to Giddens and his principle of

¹⁴ Especially dalla Chiesa, 1983, 1990, 2014a, 2014b. Also: Nando dalla Chiesa, *Le ribelli*, Melampo, Milano, 2006; Nando dalla Chiesa, *S’opposer au terrorisme et à la mafia: les luttes citoyennes à Milan*, in “Laboratoire italien”, online, vol. 22, 2019).

¹⁵ More in particular, for most curious readers: I was a co-promoter of the new national civil Antimafia Movement that was set up in the early eighties (dalla Chiesa, 1983); the founder of associative or journalistic experiences (the most well-known is the ‘Società Civile’ circle and their monthly publication in Milan; see Nando dalla Chiesa e Gianni Barbacetto, *L’assalto al cielo. Storie di Società civile e di lotta alla corruzione*, Melampo, Milano, 2017); the co-founder of the Antimafia political movement, ‘La Rete’, elected to Parliament in 1992 (see Daniela Saresella, *Tra politica e antipolitica. La nuova “società civile” e il movimento della Rete (1985-1994)*, Le Monnier, Milano, 2016); an MP, senator, state secretary, city councillor and president of many institutional Antimafia or anti-corruption commissions; an honorary president of the Antimafia association *Libera* and president of the “Antonino Caponnetto” training school. I also experienced the matter first-hand and judicially: as a witness in the so-called historical “Maxiprocesso” of 1986-1992 (see Corrado Stajano, *Mafia. L’atto di accusa dei giudici di Palermo*, Editori Riuniti, Roma, 1986; Giovanni Falcone, *Cose di Cosa Nostra*, op. cit.), being the son of the prefect of Palermo, Carlo Alberto dalla Chiesa, killed by the Mafia in Palermo in 1982; and also as a defendant in over twenty trials for ‘crimes of opinion’ because of my complaints.

¹⁶ Bronislaw Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, G. Routledge & Sons London, 1922.

¹⁷ Nels Anderson, *The Hobo: The Sociology of the Homeless Man*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1923.

¹⁸ Donald Roy, *Quota restriction and goldbricking in a machine shop*, in “American Journal of Sociology”, 57, 1952, pp. 427-442; Donald Roy, *Work satisfaction and social reward in quota achievement. An analysis of piecework incentive*, in “American Sociological Review”, 18, 1953, pp. 505-514; Donald Roy, *Efficiency and the fix: Informal intergroup relations in a piecework machine shop*, in “American Journal of Sociology”, 60, 1954, pp. 255-266; Donald Roy, *Banana time: Job satisfaction and informal interaction*, in “Human Organizations”, 18, 1960, pp. 156-168.

“immersion”.¹⁹ Most of the time my primary source of knowledge and understanding of the facts has been my biographical experience: what I have seen, heard and recorded in the field (and there have been many fields...) and have continuously sought to re-elaborate upon. Indeed, in some cases I was the only witness, or perhaps the principal witness for Italian society, not because of any personal merit, but by virtue of objective facts.

It is on the basis of this experience that I am convinced that the first problem in Italy - among many others - is the reluctance to fully acknowledge the Antimafia. In fact, recognizing it means legitimizing new, influential players and their continual questions, which are often demanding and embarrassing for those in power. Therefore, the cultural clash in Italy precisely concerns the legitimacy of the Antimafia. This conflict came to light for the first time on a national level with a famous article written in 1987 by Leonardo Sciascia, a highly prestigious Italian intellectual and the author of the mafia novel *par excellence*, *Il giorno della civetta*.²⁰ In the article, published during the most important trial against the Mafia,²¹ Sciascia theorized about new social figures – the ‘Antimafia professionals’ – who took ‘unfair’ advantage (fame, careers, visibility) from their commitment to the cause. The main defendant was on that occasion the judge, Paolo Borsellino, who was blown up by a bomb five years later. Was the Antimafia movement a *new form of Mafia*? This became the radical question, but it was only really considered by the ‘Società Civile’ circle in Milan and the “Coordinamento Antimafia” in Palermo.²² Culturally speaking, this was in my memory the most difficult period for the budding movement, as it raised a debate which would return cyclically. The movement grew however and spawned many social entities in the future: first and foremost, *Libera*, a national «association of associations» from Turin in 1995, with about 15000 affiliates and 400 locally-based branches across the country; the *Falcone Foundation* in Palermo

¹⁹ Anthony Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method: A Positive Critique of Interpretative Sociologies*, Hutchinson, London, 1976.

²⁰ From this perspective the attack on the Antimafia judges, especially Giovanni Falcone, was a very significant trend in the same period (see Maria Falcone and Francesca Barra, *Giovanni Falcone, un eroe solo*, Rizzoli, Milano, 2012; Giovanni Bianconi, *L'assedio. Troppi nemici per Giovanni Falcone*, Einaudi, Torino, 2017).

²¹ Leonardo Sciascia, *I professionisti dell'antimafia*, in “Corriere della Sera”, 10th January 1987.

²² Nando dalla Chiesa, *Storie di boss, ministri, tribunali, giornali*, cit.

(1992); *Avviso Pubblico* (1996) in Piedmont, which brings together public administrations committed to the value of legality; *SOS impresa* (1997) from Rome, against extortion and usury; *Addiopizzo* in Palermo (2004) against extortion; the “*Coordinamento*” of Milanese Schools, promoting legality and active citizenship (2006); the so called *Red Agendas* (2007) made up of many local groups demanding truth and justice for Paolo Borsellino; the “Antonino Caponnetto” training school in Milan and Brindisi (2008); *Wikimafia* (2013) in Milan; and the reviews or sites *Narcomafie* (1993), *Antimafia Duemila* (2000), *Stampo Antimafioso* (2011), *I siciliani giovani* (2012), and the most recent theatrical experience of the Rome-based “Palcoscenico della legalità” movement (2012); not to mention numerous other local associations which have proved long lasting or short-lived.²³

2. The Six Historical Phases of the Antimafia Movement

The long history of this movement has been documented in impressive detail by journalists, filmmakers and photographers who have highlighted its main personal and aesthetic features. The question therefore remains: what are the fundamental characteristics of the movement? To answer this question, the movement’s history has to be divided up into several principal phases, linked to different economic, social and cultural contexts.

The opening phase began in 1861 after the unification of Italy under the Savoy monarchy. Single exponents of institutions, intellectuals, and politicians filed complaints about the situation in Sicily, providing an idea about the kind and degree of social violence and arbitrariness present on the island, especially in its western part. It would not be appropriate to call this a collective movement as such, because it was rather (to take a typical expression from Gramsci) a *molecular* movement.

In contrast, the second phase consisted of a widespread, combative collective movement. It was called ‘Fasci siciliani’ and was characterized by mass peasant (but

²³ It is possible to state that roots and very life of the movement are contained in this dense interplay of associations, reviews, sites, radios, and artistic companies.

not only) participation throughout the island.²⁴ The movement reached its height in 1893-1894 and shook Italy to its foundations. Its chief goal was that of land redistribution, an idea that was completely alien to the main landowners and the Mafia, so the movement was violently repressed by law enforcers and the Mafia together.

A third phase was again marked by fierce and widespread peasant participation. It flourished in a completely different context, following the arrival of the Anglo-American allies in Sicily. Re-distribution of land was still the main aim and the Mafia resisted ferociously. More than ever before, the struggle for land meant fighting the Mafia. It was the most imposing European peasant movement of the 20th century.²⁵ More than forty trade-unionists were killed, and no perpetrator was ever sentenced. This movement, albeit decreasing in intensity, continued until the mid-1950s.²⁶ It is understandable that the second and third phases are frequently classified simply as components of the peasant movement history, thus practically removing their strictly Antimafia value. The fact remains however that the Mafia was the most obvious enemy of those social claims and was also directly responsible for killing those that demonstrated and fought against it.

In the years that followed Sicily was to experience another kind of opposition to the Mafia. It was political opposition, bound up with parliamentary activity by the Communist Party, which had dedicated considerable energy to denouncing the Mafia through the newly formed Antimafia Commission (1963). Intellectuals, journalists (especially *L'Ora*, the evening newspaper²⁷) and trade-unionists worked alongside the party to form a more political than civil or social blockade until the period of so-called 'compromesso storico' (historic compromise) between the Communist Party and Christian Democracy (1973-1978).

Finally, after several periods spanning about a century a new model of Antimafia resistance was born. It came about as a reaction to the many sensational crimes

²⁴ Francesco Renda, *I Fasci siciliani: 1892-1894*, cit.; Umberto Santino, *Storia del movimento antimafia*, *op. cit.*

²⁵ Umberto Santino, *op. cit.*; with specific reference to the history of Corleone, Dino Paternostro, *L'antimafia sconosciuta. Corleone 1893-1993*, La Zisa, Palermo, 1994.

²⁶ Francesco Renda, *Il movimento contadino in Sicilia*, cit.

²⁷ Ciro Dovizio, *Scrivere di mafia. "L'Ora" di Palermo tra politica, cultura e istituzioni (1954-75)*, Università degli Studi di Milano, PhD thesis. 2020.

committed against several high-ranking members of the establishment during the years 1979-1983.²⁸ This period coincided with the Mafia war which saw the Corleone group emerge victorious,²⁹ a period in which the Mafia consolidated its power at the expense of the ruling political class. The killings of important and much-loved public figures like regional President, Piersanti Mattarella (1980), communist leader Pio La Torre (1982), the prefect of Palermo, Carlo Alberto dalla Chiesa (1982) and several other honest magistrates, provoked a moral rebellion that involved all social classes, but especially young people. It is here that we can find the roots, the real beginning of the new Antimafia movement, no longer constrained by demands for land, but fighting for law and civil rights, for cities “without gravestones”.³⁰

Antimafia militants and supporters had no material goals. Young Sicilian participants in schools from Palermo, Trapani, Catania and Siracusa demanded general rights. They abandoned the traditional paradigm of “amoral familism”,³¹ embracing collective freedom and fair administration of justice as their one and only flag, rather than the red flags of previous years. This was the real reason behind the birth of a very particular protest: a protest *for* rather than *against* law.

Young people instinctively understood the radical nature of what was happening in Sicily, in accordance with a less violent trend towards illegality developing at the national level: a process of separation between law and social order. Demanding law implied an immediate struggle against the social order of the Mafia. The large-scale entry of clans into the huge and highly profitable drug business and their increasing monopoly of the Mediterranean heroine market, had exalted their sense of omnipotence and the conviction that historical “peaceful coexistence” with the State could come to an end. On the one hand, the Mafia was becoming an even more

²⁸ Attilio Bolzoni, *Uomini soli*, Melampo, Milano, 2012; Antonio Calabrò, *I mille morti di Palermo*, Mondadori, Milano, 2016.

²⁹ The Corleone group is customarily referred to as the ‘new Mafia’, coming from the countryside, as opposed to the Palermo-bound ‘old Mafia’. In reality the Corleone group had a lengthy history, having been led by historic bosses like Luciano Leggio (Liggio), Totò Riina and Bernardo Provenzano. Its true novelty lay in its head-on and bloody opposition to the State.

³⁰ Nando dalla Chiesa, *Gli studenti contro la mafia.*, cit.

³¹ Edward C. Banfield, *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society* (with Laura Fasano), Free Press, Glencoe, 1958.

criminal player completely outside the law; on the other, it still wished to govern social order and was convinced it could do so.³²

At the turning point in 1992 the Antimafia movement operated in this conflictual situation between the Mafia and the State, between the different 'souls of the State' (that loyal to democracy and that loyal to the informal power system that we mentioned earlier) between old and young Sicily. There was no class-struggle as in the post-war era, but a struggle between civil and moral visions. In this context the work of the most courageous and innovative magistrates (Giovanni Falcone, Paolo Borsellino and a few of their colleagues) was supported more by the student movement – a key player in the protest – than by politicians or journalists.

In a simplified representation power and its traditional system were operating against the law, while the people (often very young) were demonstrating 'for the law'. In this atmosphere – which in several aspects was a *national* atmosphere – the aforementioned so-called "Maxi Trial" of 1986-1987³³ ended up sentencing hundreds of Mafia bosses, also at the highest judicial level, including the most powerful bosses of *Cosa Nostra* (1992). In this sense it is possible to state that the Maxi-trial was not only an exceptional judiciary event but also an exceptional cultural event on a national level.³⁴

Morally speaking, the demand for legality exploded in 1992, in correspondence with the dual massacre of magistrates Falcone and Borsellino in bomb attacks and coincided with the extensive and largely overwhelming investigations being carried out against corruption in the country.³⁵ In an apparently desperate context of bloodshed the Antimafia movement managed to react, giving rise to an expression of unthinkable popular strength. Fear was widespread among the public, but the response was equally widespread protest.³⁶ For the first time in the history of

³² Salvatore Lupo, *La mafia. Centosessant'anni di storia*, Donzelli, Roma, 2018.

³³ Corrado Stajano, *Mafia. L'atto di accusa dei giudici di Palermo*, *op. cit.*

³⁴ Suffice it to say that the litigation costs of the civil parties were covered thanks to a popular nationwide collection, launched by a well-known Milanese journalist, Camilla Cederna (Nando dalla Chiesa, *Storie di boss, ministri, tribunali, giornali*, *cit.*).

³⁵ The main reference is to the Milan-based 'Mani Pulite' investigations that targeted the upper echelons of business and politics (1992-1994).

³⁶ Alison Jamieson, *The Antimafia.*, *op. cit.*; Charlotte Moge, *op. cit.*

Palermo the deeply entrenched complicities within the justice administration became impossible.³⁷

The magistrate bombings certainly marked a new phase as far as public support for stricter Antimafia legislation was concerned. In particular a law was passed in parliament in 1996 that established the possibility of giving assets confiscated from the Mafia to social cooperatives. The aim of the law was to create new employment opportunities and was an extension of the former law of 1982, the so-called Rognoni-La Torre law,³⁸ that had simply provided for easier legal confiscation of property.

This development began a spontaneous yet gradual transformation of the Antimafia movement. Indeed, the first phase had favoured the *legal* dimension for about fifteen years, a necessary requirement given the Mafia's ruthless violence, its sense of impunity and omnipotence. For this reason, it is possible to state that the new Antimafia that emerged in the early eighties as an Antimafia for legality was, therefore, particularly keen to emphasize lawfulness education, knowledge and participation. However, from the late nineties the development of a new dimension in the movement emerged. It was a *social* dimension fuelled by a new focus on themes of work, marginalisation, youthful deviance, and social justice.³⁹ Attention to previous issues continued, but a new, important perspective developed alongside them: 'Antimafia for social justice' came into being. This terminological distinction serves to describe the characteristics 'of a movement within the movement' better but does not give credence to the idea of two 'souls' separated in time, or something akin to a dividing line between the two phases. The civil – not political – dimension, legality, memory and lawfulness education continued to be part and parcel of the movement's principal identification data.

³⁷ Jane C. Schneider, Peter T. Schneider, *Reversible destiny. Mafia, antimafia, op. cit.*

³⁸ Giuliano Turone, *Il reato di associazione mafiosa*, Giuffrè, Milano, 2015.

³⁹ Nando dalla Chiesa, *La scelta libera*, cit.

3. Main characteristics of the New Antimafia

What are the main characteristics of this movement that have emerged over the decades? We will try to point out some of them here.

a) *The non-ideological approach.* The birth of the Antimafia movement in the 1980s brought about a sudden and surprising end to ideological approaches to the Mafia question. Citizens of different political opinions reacted similarly to shocking murders, even if the majority of them were probably more progressive. The customary left-right political divide, or rather the traditional opposition between Christian Democrats and the Communist party, would have led to harmful divisions or, alternatively, to deceptive forms of unity. Beginning with facts and people: this was the imperative that imposed itself at the heart of a dramatic conflict, disrupting the traditional strategies employed in the fight against the Mafia. Demonstrations were increasingly organized abandoning political flags and slogans. Silent demonstrations replaced the ideologically driven demonstrations of just a few years earlier. *People* themselves were even more important: their names, surnames and lives instead of the parties or categories they belonged to. Had not the Mafia *itself* dramatically taught about the importance of people? It did not kill its victims because they belonged to a party, institution or profession, but precisely for what they did, symbolically – for their name, surname and life.⁴⁰ At the level of social conflict, it proved over the years to be a decisive revolution.⁴¹ It was a movement that wanted to support the believable representatives of the institutions (especially magistrates and mayors, but also police officers) against their mortal enemies. In the history of social movements it is difficult to find anything analogous. Generally speaking, young people protest head-on against the police, law enforcement and other established institutions. Street protests (sometimes violent), illegal actions and mass confrontations are the most frequent – and highly visible – forms of social mobilization.⁴² Here, on the contrary, the dominant principle was contained in the sentence, “There are still judges in Berlin”, uttered by the literary miller and

⁴⁰ AA. VV., *Dimenticati a Palermo*, Ila Palma, Palermo, 1983.

⁴¹ Nando dalla Chiesa, *Gli studenti contro la mafia*, cit., *La scelta libera*, cit.

⁴² Donatella della Porta e Mario Diani, *Social Movements*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing (2°), 2006; Katia Pilati, *Movimenti sociali e azioni di protesta*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2018.

attributed to Bertolt Brecht.⁴³ Thousands of young people were therefore marching symbolically from the courthouse to the carabinieri station out of solidarity with law enforcement and to stand up to Mafia intimidation and killings.

b) *The centrality of the school.* Schools were essential in helping to develop a feeling of identification in institutions: at all levels from elementary schools to high schools. The political world was absent, and schools proved decisive in ensuring even the weakest of institutions would have support. Young people without voting rights stood at the forefront ready to defend democracy. It should be added that this central role of the school (and *not* of the university) was largely due to the extraordinary commitment of a new generation of teachers⁴⁴ even if today Italian society itself seems to have forgotten it. We must remember that these teachers knew nothing about the Mafia: nobody had taught them the history or sociological profile of the phenomenon. They had to become self-taught in order to be able to provide their pupils with basic information and explain what was happening in Sicily,⁴⁵ Calabria, Campania, or throughout Italy. In northern regions they were often young teachers from the south, members of the '68 protest movement and highly motivated when it came to public commitment. Contradicting widespread regionally-based stereotypes ("the Mafia is the daughter of southern mentality"), they were proud to show their northern neighbours their own profound hostility to the Mafia. They undertook to explain the Mafia phenomenon to their colleagues and create a new local sensitivity on the issue.⁴⁶

c) *The prevalence of women.* The above dynamics took place in a context of the dominant presence of women in the movement. Women almost totally controlled the lower levels of education and formed a significant majority at higher levels. As

⁴³The expression is used quite often in Italy in political or judicial controversies. It is the story of a Potsdam miller who rebels against the injustice of a local nobleman and eventually gets justice from Frederick the Great. The story is told in Emilio Broglio's *Il regno di Federico di Prussia, detto il Grande*, Roma, 1880. The curious thing is that many people cite the story by referring it to a Brecht play, but always without specifying the title (Umberto Eco, in "L'Espresso", 12.8.2013).

⁴⁴ CROSS, *Storia dell'educazione alla legalità nella scuola italiana*, cit.

⁴⁵ AA. VV., *Didattica Antimafia* (Vito Mercadante, ed.), Coordinamento scuole e cultura antimafia per l'applicazione della legge 51/80 della Regione Siciliana, Tipolito Bellanca, Palermo, 1987; Pia Blandano, Giuseppe Casarrubea, *L'educazione mafiosa*, Sellerio, Palermo, 1991; Pia Blandano, Giuseppe Casarrubea, *Nella testa del serpente. Insegnanti e mafia*, La Meridiana, Molfetta, 1993.

⁴⁶ CROSS, *Storia dell'educazione alla legalità nella scuola italiana*, cit.

we will see in the next section, female teachers were only part of an interesting and original process: female students, professionals and, for the first twenty years in particular, relatives of victims played a fundamental role in building collective experiences and grass root forms of participation. This female component also influenced more specific cultural aspects of the movement: the centrality of the person, the political role of feelings and care for younger generations were, in particular, the expression of a female point of view in that turbulent context. Subsequent developments would confirm this specific characteristic of the Antimafia movement as it progressively showed its ‘mostly female soul’,⁴⁷ at least at basic cultural or organisational levels, and especially in what Dina Siegel calls “informal (or invisible) solidarity”.⁴⁸

Three further distinctive traits of the movement still need to be considered.

d) *The overlap with other movements.* Participation in the Antimafia movement was often not the only form of militant public commitment. Often it was rather one issue involving a larger panel of voices and this meant the Antimafia spirit spread to many social or cultural contexts, including trade-unions or religious associations. As a result the same Antimafia movement benefited from having a wealth of cultural perspectives: from work to the environment, faith and peace.⁴⁹

e) *Diversification.* The progressive diversification of the movement over the last twenty years with the importance of school and education should be noted.⁵⁰ Alongside other contexts developed during the course of the second millennium as well, such as journalism (including radio journalism and television news); universities; as well as the arts, including cinema, music and, especially, theatre.⁵¹

f) *The importance of the church.* The role of the church has been on the increase too, especially under the new papacy. A genuine turning point occurred in Rome on March 21st, 2014 when the pope personally co-celebrated the traditional *Libera*

⁴⁷ Nando dalla Chiesa, *Se l'Antimafia è donna*, in “Narcomafie”, XX, March, n. 3, 2021, pp. 54-57.

⁴⁸ Dina Siegel, *Dynamics of solidarity. Consequences of “refugee crisis” on Lesbos*, Eleven international publishing, The Hague, 2019.

⁴⁹ Nando dalla Chiesa, *La scelta libera*, cit.

⁵⁰ CROSS, *Storia dell'educazione alla legalità nella scuola italiana*, cit.

⁵¹ CROSS, Osservatorio sulla Criminalità Organizzata, *Monitoraggio del movimento antimafia in Lombardia*, Milano, Regione Lombardia, Final Report by Arianna Bianchi, Laura Calabria, Maria Teresa Marchetti, Cristina Paone (ed. Nando dalla Chiesa), 2020.

mass in memory of innocent Mafia victims. It was a special event, because several hundred relatives of victims came together in the church of San Gregorio VII. Francis I entered the church symbolically holding the hand of the Antimafia priest don Luigi Ciotti. From the altar he excommunicated the Mafia.

It is safe to say, ultimately, that new ideas and attitudes of the movement have seeped through into various cultural and social channels modifying some important aspects of Italian society. Social scientists should interpret these different trends as an overall expression of a process of change as the Antimafia Parliamentarian Commission (2018) also recently observed and emphasised.⁵²

4. The role of women: main social typologies

As it should be clear from what has been said so far since the beginning the Antimafia movement has been strongly characterised by two recognizable social features: gender and generation. Here we have chosen to focus mainly on gender for reasons that will become clearer in the following pages. Indeed, some female social identities emerged progressively throughout the history of the movement, and played different roles in a changing, turbulent context. The most important figures were the victims' relatives. We will consider this point more extensively later on by pointing out what many of these women did in different historical situations. Here we wish to emphasize their fundamental role in a general perspective: not only in the protest against Mafia violence, but also in the creation - through their struggle - of a new public interest and finally, in the birth of an Antimafia consciousness.

Mothers, widows, sisters, daughters, as we are going to see, were continuously and repeatedly protagonists of individual battles for truth and justice, a situation comparable to the paradigmatic Argentinian experience⁵³ or, later to that of

⁵² Commissione parlamentare di inchiesta sulle mafie e sulle altre associazioni criminali, anche straniere. *Relazione finale*, XVII legislatura, Camera dei Deputati, Senato della Repubblica, Roma, 2018 (president: on. Rosy Bindi).

⁵³ Viviana M. Abreu Hernandez, *The mothers of the Plaza de Mayo. A Peace Movement*, in "Peace & Change", 23, 2002, pp.385-411. We refer here to the movement of mothers and grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo at the time of Argentinian colonels.

Mexico.⁵⁴ They became rebels not for ideological reasons but ‘out of love’,⁵⁵ making personal choices that became progressively *collective* facts in the context of associations, small groups, the media and certain political parties. However, these women who came to the fore were predominantly members of victims’ families. It is understandable: with a very few exceptions, the Mafia was in the habit of killing men: male magistrates, police officers, male politicians, male journalists – given the most important social roles occupied by men until the end of the 20th century. The number of bereaved women were also decisive in helping to form and defend the memory of the victims, perhaps the most precious and strategic value of the movement, and its most important resource in enhancing its identity over the years. Indeed, for a long time the struggle between Mafia and Antimafia culture developed on the basis of memory alone. Forgetfulness (or distorting the truth) was the imperative of Mafia power; a good memory was the imperative of the Antimafia movement.

A different role (other paths, other reasons) was played by the women from Mafia families who decided to disavow their membership of the clans.⁵⁶ There are several individual cases, including the relatives of supergrasses (*pentiti*) as in the Sicilian *Cosa Nostra*.⁵⁷ Young women also who autonomously decided to save their sons as in the Calabrian *‘ndrangheta*. These cases had a highly symbolic value: both in terms of Mafia organisations and for Antimafia public opinion, especially when women who rebelled against the Mafia family were killed as a result of their protests.

We must not forget the immense educational role played by teachers, as mentioned earlier. Almost like care workers many of them dedicated their entire school careers beyond the call of duty to helping all children to understand and reject the Mafia.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Thomas Aureliani, *Tra narcos e Stato. Le forme della resistenza civile in Messico*, in “Rivista di Studi e Ricerche sulla Criminalità Organizzata”, vol. 2, n.1, 2016, pp.61-95.

⁵⁵ Gabriella Turnaturi, *Associati per amore: l’etica degli affetti e delle relazioni quotidiane*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 1991; Nando dalla Chiesa, *Le ribelli*, cit. Concerning a similar perspective, see also Norine Verberg, *Family-Based Social Activism: Rethinking the Social Roles of Families*, in “Socialist Studies Review”, 2 (1), 2006, pp. 23-46.

⁵⁶ Alessandra Dino, *Antimafia e movimenti delle donne. Protagoniste, culture e linguaggi*, in “Rivista di Studi e Ricerche sulla Criminalità Organizzata”, Vol. 2, n. 3, 2016, pp. 3-23.

⁵⁷ Giusy Vitale, Camilla Costanzo, *Ero cosa loro. L’amore di una madre può sconfiggere la mafia*, Mondadori, Milano, 2009; Carla Cerati, *Storia vera di Carmela Iuculano. La giovane donna che si è ribellata a un clan mafioso*, Marsilio, Venezia, 2009.

⁵⁸ Laura Balbo, *Stato di famiglia. Bisogni, privato, collettivo*, Etas Libri, Milano, 1976.

This was a moral choice, accomplished without the need for official instructions from above, and provided the life example for the creation of a female student Antimafia participation. This kind of commitment had a significant impact, taking the form of true *social* – and not simply scholastic – involvement: the Antimafia mission of young women often began at school, and has continued to this very day at university as well, with many participants going on to taking leading roles in the movement as a whole.⁵⁹

It is also interesting to observe the roles of many professional figures, those who have developed alongside an increased female presence in certain professional areas. For example, there have been several cases of female TV or newspaper journalists being forced to live under police protection, like Rosaria Capacchione (elected to parliament) in Naples or Federica Angeli in Rome. The same can be said of lawyers, albeit less renowned instances of armed protection. In these cases, women generally play a visible role defending relatives of victims or members of clan families wishing to leave them. The most well-known lawyer is Enza Rando, who has worked for the *Libera* association in many important trials.

In this context a specific, methodological question arises with regard to the inclusion of some women representing institutions in the movement. Firstly, there is the question of magistrates: within the Italian judiciary, female magistrates have outnumbered their male counterparts over recent decades, and many of them have gained a certain amount of notoriety and popularity because of the way they fought the Mafia.⁶⁰ The most important and famous example is probably that of the Antimafia Prosecutor in Milan, where two women in succession (Ilda Boccassini and Alessandra Dolci) achieved extraordinary results in combating the *'ndrangheta* clans.

Secondly, there is the case of female prefects. It is notable, indeed that many of those who are particularly committed to fighting the Mafia come from southern regions or more specifically from Sicily. Here the most famous example is that of the Sicilian prefect Antonella De Miro, who during the years 2009-2014 led the struggle against

⁵⁹ Nando dalla Chiesa, *La scelta libera*, cit.

⁶⁰ See for example the autobiography of the Palermo magistrate, Marzia Sabella, on Marzia Sabella, *Nostro onore. Magistrato contro la mafia*, Einaudi, Torino, 2014 (with Serena Uccello).

the *'ndrangheta* in Reggio Emilia, a symbolic 'red' town in the north, where politicians and entrepreneurs had consistently denied the presence of the Calabrian clans for many years.⁶¹

Why is this a methodological 'question'? Because theoretically 'institution' and 'movements' are separate analytical units in opposition or dialectical relationships. Is it possible to include magistrates or prefects within the dimension of the movement? To answer this, we must remember that in the Italian context the state has been historically divided into two separate parts: one part completely loyal to the Constitution and the other loyal to an informal power system that includes the Mafia.⁶² Therefore, any new positive attitudes regarding legality within the institutions becomes a *de facto* solid component of a wider movement against the Mafia and the power system it belongs to. This is why several magistrates or other institutional representatives became moral symbols of the Antimafia movement.⁶³ In this sense their inclusion in a wider concept of movement seems sometimes consistent with concrete situations.

Mayors local politicians, or leaders of associations are a different matter.⁶⁴ There are in fact many women who fought the Mafia not as professional representatives of the State, but because they wanted to represent their fellow citizens locally in the struggle against the Mafia. Here we can identify two generations of mayors with these characteristics: one in Sicily in the 1990s (among the best known are Maria Maniscalco in San Giuseppe Jato and Gigia Cannizzo in Partinico, both in the province of Palermo);⁶⁵ another in Calabria during the period 2000-2010 (Carolina Girasole in Isola Capo Rizzuto, in the province of Crotone, or Elisabetta Tripodi, in Rosarno, and Maria Carmela Lanzetta, in Monasterace, both in the province of Reggio Calabria). There have also been cases of female mayors committed to fighting the

⁶¹ Paolo Bonacini, *Le cento storie di Aemilia*, Editrice Socialmente, Bologna, 2019; Nando dalla Chiesa e Federica Cabras, *Rosso Mafia. La 'ndrangheta a Reggio Emilia*, Bompiani, Milano, 2019.

⁶² Giuliano Turone, *Italia occulta*, Chiarelettere, Milano, 2019.

⁶³ A special case is that of the combative former president of the Anti-mafia parliamentary commission Rosy Bindi, at the same time an expression of the institutional level and the political level.

⁶⁴ Ludovica Ioppolo, Martina Panzarasa, *Al nostro posto. Donne che resistono alle mafie*, Transeuropa, Massa, 2013.

⁶⁵ Luciano Mirone, *Le città della luna. Otto donne sindaco in Sicilia*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli, 1997.

Mafia in northern regions (Maria Ferrucci in Corsico near Milan). All these public figures were often subject to threats from the clans.

Last but not least there are the 'ordinary people', as aware citizens. The most symbolic example of female popular resistance was probably that of the so-called 'women of the white sheets' phenomenon in Palermo in 1992 following the massacres of the magistrates, Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino. The white sheets draped over balconies became symbols which openly testified opposition to the Mafia, and directly exposed apartment owners to risk, contributing towards the radical innovation of the forms of protest, through the introduction of the more private dimension within public action.⁶⁶ More recently there was an extraordinary mobilization of very young women in Milan for the "Lea Garofalo" trial,⁶⁷ which will be discussed later.

It is now possible to try and frame the different and frequently overlapping reasons that moved women to commit themselves to the fight against the Mafia: relatives of Mafia victims, journalists, teachers, students, magistrates, prefects, mayors and ordinary people. There were cultural, professional, and institutional reasons. Sentimental motivations however were also paramount in the development of the movement to the point of legitimising the hypothesis of *feeling* as a powerful, revolutionary agent. As cultural criminologists argue emotions play a central role when extreme conflict is neither institutionalized nor armed. As we said above, examples can be found in Italy, Argentina and Mexico in the struggle against, respectively, the Mafia, military dictatorship or drug cartels. These women (the relatives of the victims, I mean) were driven by emotions not by political ideology or class claims.⁶⁸ They often proved to be more demanding than politicians, unionists or intellectuals, while their wounded love became a symbolic moral nucleus and the emotional and intellectual strength of a wider movement. Clearly, several forms of motivation formed around this nucleus: cultural, civic as well as

⁶⁶ Alison Jamieson, *The Antimafia*, *op. cit.*

⁶⁷ Marika Demaria, *La scelta di Lea*, Melampo, Milano, 2013.

⁶⁸ See Renate Siebert, *Le donne, la mafia*, Il Saggiatore, Milano, 1994; Alessandra Dino, *Antimafia e movimenti delle donne*, *cit.*, p. 16.

professional, political or institutional forms which often overlapped and were impossible to separate.

5. Ethnographic Gallery of the Anti-Mafia women

To give more concrete examples of this wide collective history we will focus on some female relatives of the victims, those who were victims themselves or who risked their lives for their Antimafia choices within the family. We will take a closer look at the moral “nucleus” of the movement focusing on a few selected biographical case-studies. A dense gallery of cases will emerge, remembered in quick succession, to give the sense of both a civil journey and the ethnographic depth of this special collective history.

In this context we distinguish three periods: the eighties and the beginning of the nineties; the nineties and the first years of the new millennium; the following years until today. The first two periods concern especially the Sicilian Mafia while the third focuses mainly on the Calabrian *'ndrangheta*.⁶⁹

The First period: the turning point. The late seventies and early eighties were characterised by a cycle of ‘excellent murders’. Many high-ranking representatives of institutions were killed and this led to an unprecedented situation. Victims were important people in the public eye; they were members of the Establishment and their relatives were themselves well-connected and educated people, often with a public role to play and difficult to intimidate. An initial movement of relatives, at first small in size, started in these years: this was surprising and also embarrassing for some politicians and the media. Giovanna Giaconia Terranova and Rita Bartoli Costa, for instance, were the wives of two high court judges: Cesare Terranova, killed in 1979, and Gaetano Costa, killed in 1980. Giovanna founded the first Antimafia association of women and became president in 1982 working non-stop on its behalf

⁶⁹ Some instances of female rebellion also occurred in Campania against the Camorra, albeit with less impact on public life (see Raffaele Sardo, *La bestia. Camorra: storie di delitti, vittime e complici*, Melampo, Milano, 2008; Raffaele Sardo, *Al di là della notte. Storie di vittime innocenti della criminalità*, Pironti, fondazione Pol.i.s., Napoli, 2010).

until her death in 2012.⁷⁰ Rita Costa was the first relative elected to a political-institutional position as a member of the Sicilian Regional Parliament in 1981, where she completed two legislatures. Some years later Maria Simona dalla Chiesa, daughter of the prefect Carlo Alberto dalla Chiesa was elected to the Calabrian Regional Council (1987) and subsequently to the national parliament (1992). All three women fought with determination at a judiciary and political level.⁷¹ This was an epochal change as women were no longer silent, imprisoned inside their houses, resigned to Mafia violence or rebels isolated from society. As a result of this new development and with the support of a part of Sicilian society, further important figures from different social backgrounds emerged. This was the case of Saveria Antiochia, mother of a police officer who visited and spoke to students in hundreds of schools across Italy and was elected to the Palermo⁷² city council. She co-founded the *Libera* association and was affectionately nicknamed 'the grandmother of the Antimafia'. Other examples include Felicia Impastato⁷³, the legendary mother of Peppino a young left-wing militant and radio-journalist in Cinisi (to whom a well-known film was dedicated⁷⁴); or Michela Buscemi the sister of two small-time smugglers killed by the Mafia who decided to testify at the Maxi-trial and was consequently disowned by her family before her bar was destroyed by a bomb.

In different ways these women made an important contribution to the formation of a civil consciousness, giving courage to many other women. Traditional Antimafia history may be all male, but we can see quite clearly here that there was another side of the movement: namely women capable of responsibility and leadership.

The Second period: development. The nineties witnessed bombings and the murder of two Antimafia heroes: the magistrates Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino. Public opinion was profoundly affected by these two crimes. It was almost inevitable

⁷⁰ Associazione donne siciliane per la lotta contro la mafia. See Anna Puglisi, *Storie di donne: Antonietta Renda, Giovanna Terranova, Camilla Giaccon raccontano la loro vite*, Di Girolamo, Trapani, 2007; also Alessandra Dino, *Antimafia e movimenti delle donne*, cit.

⁷¹ In this regard, Renate Siebert's considerations on political commitment as a special form of reworking of mourning are interesting and particularly appropriate. Renate Siebert, *La mafia, la morte, il ricordo*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli, 1995, p. 7.

⁷² Jole Garuti, *In nome del figlio. Saveria Antiochia, una madre contro la mafia*, Melampo, Milano, 2017.

⁷³ Felicia Bartolotta Impastato, *La mafia in casa mia*, interview by Anna Puglisi and Umberto Santino, La Luna, Palermo, 1986.

⁷⁴ *I cento passi*, (2000): movie director Marco Tullio Giordana, film script by Claudio Fava and Monica Zapelli.

that the sisters of the victims Maria Falcone and Rita Borsellino would play a symbolic role for the Italian people in general and for Sicilians in particular. Maria Falcone created and became president of the Falcone Foundation.⁷⁵ Rita Borsellino became vice-president of the newly founded *Libera* association and was nominated for the presidency of Sicily's regional administration.⁷⁶ She was later elected to the European Parliament. Both women were an obligatory reference points for the movement.

In this context we must remember two minor stories affectionately mentioned in the history of the Antimafia movement. The unforgettable and emotional role played by the young wife of Vito Schifani a police officer killed with Giovanni Falcone. The words she tearfully repeated to the Mafia men from the altar on the day of the funeral ("*I forgive you, but you kneel!!*") moved the whole of Italy and played on television screens for weeks on end to become part of a large collective memory.⁷⁷ A second emotional story is that of a very young Rita Atria another female figure in Partanna (Trapani) who belonged to a Mafia family. When the Mafia killed her father and brother, she sought out judge Borsellino, then prosecutor in Marsala, to obtain justice. Borsellino became a second father to her, so when the judge was killed, she committed suicide out of despair by throwing herself from the seventh floor of the building she was living in under protection. Her mother refused to attend her funeral and destroyed her grave.⁷⁸

A similar role to that of Maria Falcone and Rita Borsellino was also played by Pina Grassi the wife of Palermo entrepreneur Libero Grassi who was killed after publicly refusing to pay his extortionist.⁷⁹ Pina Grassi was also elected to the national Parliament in the Senate and became a model for the youth movement against the racket.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ The Falcone Foundation can boast a wealth of famous names in the judiciary, and is active in public events, education projects and complaints.

⁷⁶ Rita Borsellino, *Nata il 19 luglio. Lo sguardo dolce dell'antimafia*, Melampo, Milano, 2006, ed. Livio Colombo.

⁷⁷ Rosaria Schifani, Felice Cavallaro, *Vi perdono ma inginocchiatevi*, Pironti, Napoli, 1992.

⁷⁸ Sandra Rizza, *Una ragazza contro la mafia*, La Luna, Palermo, 1993. A film has also been dedicated to Rita Atria: *La siciliana ribelle*, by Marco Amenta, 2012.

⁷⁹ Chiara Capri, C., Pina Maisano Grassi, *Libero, l'imprenditore che non si piegò al pizzo*, Castelvecchi, Roma, 2011.

⁸⁰ On the story of Pina Maisano Grassi see Renate Siebert, *Le donne la mafia*, cit., III part, pp. 253-406.

Sonia Alfano, daughter of the journalist Beppe Alfano killed in 1993 also participated in the Antimafia movement for years until she was elected – together with Rita Borsellino – to the European Parliament, becoming the president of the only Antimafia Committee established in the history of that Parliament (2009-2014).⁸¹ As these different facts suggest the female role in the movement was hardly a marginal one.

The Third period: internal defections. This period belongs to the new millennium: a very different historical context. In this phase the Mafia was forced to restrict its violent killings under new social and judicial conditions. The number of murders decreased considerably. The period also saw the rise of internal female defections, not only in Sicily, but also for the first time, in Calabria where women sought protection for themselves and their children. These are *rare cases* numerically, but they are meaningful and are in many ways symbolic. Interestingly, even the ‘*ndrangheta*, widely held to be the most granitic of organizations due to its strictly organic connections between family and clan,⁸² showed it was affected by this subversive process – a silent but dangerous form of rebellion.⁸³

Examples of defections in Sicily include two women Carmela Iuculano (2004) and Giusy Vitale (2005) who collaborated with law enforcement. Significantly, they did it at the behest of their children, who were troubled by the attitudes of their classmates to their imprisoned fathers.⁸⁴

In Calabria there were the cases of Giuseppina Pesce and Maria Concetta Cacciola, both born in Rosarno, the Calabrian city with the highest proportionate number of clan affiliates in the country.⁸⁵ Giuseppina Pesce managed to escape miraculously from family punishment for her decision to leave it and turn to the police; Maria

⁸¹ Many of these cases are dealt with in a special book of interviews: see Gabriella Ebano, *Felicia e le sue sorelle*, Ediesse, Roma, 2005. See also Anna Puglisi, *Sole contro la mafia*, La Luna, Palermo, 1990.

⁸² Nicola Gratteri e Aldo Nicaso, *Fratelli di sangue*, Mondadori, Milano, 2006; Enzo Ciconte, *‘Ndrangheta*, Rubettino, Soveria Mannelli, 2008; Giuseppe Pignatone e Michele Prestipino, *Il contagio. Come la ‘ndrangheta ha infettato l’Italia*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2012.

⁸³ Concerning this phenomenon, see the pioneering notes of Ombretta Ingrassì, *Le donne del clan Serraino-Di Giovine*, in “Omicron/19”, III, n.7, 1999.

⁸⁴ See Alessandra Dino *Narrazioni al femminile di Cosa Nostra*, in ‘Donne di mafia’, *Meridiana. Rivista di storia e scienze sociali*, 67 (2011). About Giusy Vitale see also Ombretta Ingrassì, *Donne d’onore*, Bruno Mondadori, Milano, 2007.

⁸⁵ Giuseppe Pignatone e Michele Prestipino, *Il contagio*, cit.

Concetta Cacciola however, was forced by her parents to poison herself with muriatic acid:⁸⁶ this was her punishment for dishonouring the family (2011).⁸⁷

The most famous case of this phenomenon is, however, that of Lea Garofalo whose story was made into a film (*Lea*, 2015) by the RAI.⁸⁸ Lea Garofalo, a young Calabrian woman from Petilia di Policastro living in Milan, decided to leave her family with her little daughter Denise, because she wanted to give her “another future”. After many misadventures, the woman was invited back to Milan by her partner and murdered (2009). Her body was torn to pieces and later burned in the countryside. Denise accused her father of the murder and the ensuing trial aroused interest nationwide. Employing the slogan “I care”, a multitude of girls from schools and universities in Milan – where the trial took place – expressed their solidarity with Denise. Girls attended every trial hearing for two years and, thanks to this participation (as she herself admitted in a public letter), Denise worked up the courage to testify, and the killers were sentenced to life imprisonment. It was a totally female trial: the victim, witness, Denise’s lawyers, magistrates, students and journalists who reported the trial.⁸⁹

Symbolically perhaps, Lea Garofalo – who should have had a quiet burial and been forgotten by everyone – had a public funeral in a central square of Milan with thousands of people, many of them young, and the coffin was carried on the shoulders of the mayor of Milan himself.⁹⁰

These stories are important because they synthetically suggest that the long, complex history of Mafia organizations, and especially of the ‘*ndrangheta*, has shown signs of concrete change. Over the last few years, for instance, the Juvenile court in

⁸⁶ Lirio Abbate, *Maria Concetta Cacciola uccisa per non farla parlare. Arrestati i genitori*, in “L’Espresso”, 8th February 2014. The parents have been definitively sentenced.

⁸⁷ Ombretta Ingrassi, *‘Ndrangheta Women in Contemporary Italy: Between Change and Continuity*, in *The ‘Ndrangheta and Sacra Corona Unita. The History, Organization, and Operations of Two unknown Mafia Groups*, Nicoletta Serenata (ed), Springer, New York, 2014. About this general issue, Luigi Ciotti, *La spada di Giuditta. La liberazione che viene dalle donne*, in “Rivista di Studi e Ricerche sulla Criminalità Organizzata”, v. 6 n. 2, 2020, pp. 5-17; Ombretta Ingrassi, *La forza della vulnerabilità. Nuovi orientamenti teorici sul processo di separazione delle donne dalla ‘ndrangheta*, in “Rivista di Studi e Ricerche sulla Criminalità Organizzata”, v. 6 n. 2, 2020, pp. 18-47.

⁸⁸ Anna Lisa Tota, *Storia di Lea Garofalo e di sua figlia Denise. Generazioni di donne contro le mafie*, in “Rivista di Studi e Ricerche sulla Criminalità Organizzata”, vol. 3, n. 3, 2017, pp. 19-31.

⁸⁹ Nando dalla Chiesa, *Due donne, molte donne*, 2013, Introduction to Marika Demaria, 2013.

⁹⁰ Nando dalla Chiesa, *La scelta libera*, cit.

Reggio Calabria adopted a 'revolutionary' judicial practice: the removal of parental authority from Mafia parents, with custody of the minors being handed over to other families to defend the constitutional rights of the children on the principle of: 'Free to choose'. This was a real blow to the family-mafia system. Despite their initial fears, several of the mothers involved refused to oppose the measures and on certain occasions even approved of it.⁹¹

The Table below tries to synthesize and rearrange the previous observations, clarifying the relationships between the historical and social context and the prevalent role of women in the movement.

Table 1 - Women against Mafia: a Path

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Changes</i>	<i>Main Causes</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Women's Role</i>
1. <i>Turning Point</i>	1979-1992	Public complaint of relative. Birth of moral/ civil Antimafia	New Mafia violence. Social profile of the relative women	Palermo Maxi-trial. The movement of schools (students and teachers)	Moral nucleus of movement. Education
2. <i>Development</i>	1992-2005	Antimafia mass movement. Enhancement of the symbolic dimension	National impact of massacres. Antimafia Legislation	Italian political system crisis. Decline of Cosa Nostra	Multiply energy of the movement (civil society, institutions)
3. <i>Mafia Internal Defections</i>	2005-2010	First cracks in the 'ndrangheta mechanism clan-family	Judicial blows to the 'ndrangheta. Achievements of lawfulness education	New institutional attitude towards 'ndrangheta. Awareness of Northern Italy	Internal delegitimization of the clans. Emerging Antimafia leadership

⁹¹ Roberto Di Bella, *Liberi di scegliere. La battaglia di un giudice minorile per liberare i ragazzi della 'ndrangheta*, (with Monica Zapelli), Rizzoli, Milano, 2019.

6. The youth movement (additional notes)

As we said above the Antimafia movement is socio-demographically characterized by gender and by age. Therefore, some fundamental additional notes on youth participation are necessary in order to complete our reference landscape.

Obviously, gender and generation overlap partially. The youth component of the movement in fact has a female prevalence within it. We have already noted the propulsive role of young people since the beginning of Antimafia mobilization in the early 1980s. We have already outlined the break with the ideological movements of the 1970s. What are the basic features of young people today? How have they evolved over the past forty years? Here we will give six distinctive features for reasons of synthesis and clarity: the first three are permanent, and the last three are more recent tendencies.

1. Growing up the youth movement has preserved its original character, namely a dominant moral dimension. As we explained above young people were mobilised by a moral rejection of Mafia culture and violence, and by the memory of innocent victims, giving their support to Antimafia organizations such as *Libera* for this reason over time. They take up positions autonomously without political interest or goals.

2. Young people generally come from schools rather than from universities.⁹² This fact underlines the importance of the continuous commitment of teachers as research has demonstrated.⁹³ It also indicates the positive role played by the supportive legislation progressively adopted by all Italian regions in terms of lawfulness education.⁹⁴

3. Young people are eager for knowledge about the Mafia. Therefore, they often participate in meetings, seminars, study days or weekends, read books, go to the cinema or the theatre in order to find out more. In this respect they are now far more knowledgeable than previous generations.

⁹² Even if it is correct to observe that the university component has increased considerably over the last ten years.

⁹³ Francesca della Ratta-Rinaldi, Ludovica Ioppolo, Giuseppe Ricotta, *Con i loro occhi. L'immaginario mafioso tra i giovani*, I quaderni di Libera con Narcomafie, Edizioni Gruppo Abele, Torino, 2012; CROSS, 2018; Nando dalla Chiesa, *L'educazione alla legalità nella scuola italiana*, cit.

⁹⁴ Martina Mazzeo, *La comunicazione dei valori civili. La didattica antimafia tra problemi e metodologie*, cit.

4. Young people love storytelling. From direct experience we can say that there are very few places in Italian society where storytelling is as eagerly sought and appreciated as the places where young people talk or listen to talk about the Mafia and the Antimafia. Surprisingly, perhaps, this occurs in university lectures too, for instance in Bologna or Milan. Students like to start from stories with a view to building up a scientific perspective. Narratives of bosses, trials, victims and heroes play an especially important role in such an education process. Logically therefore this attitude is correlated to the importance of memory. The result is that in a digital society it is oral narration that triumphs.⁹⁵

5. Young people are also moved by a deep desire to participate directly in Antimafia experiences. They do a lot of summer voluntary work in cooperatives set up in confiscated lands; they make demanding journeys connected to Antimafia history; they travel on the 'Falcone ship' for the anniversary of the judge's murder.⁹⁶ In this way their participation in seminars and storytelling takes on an original character because these experiences, by virtue of the fact they are emotional, increase their desire for knowledge even further.

6. Finally it is interesting to note how young people in the Antimafia movement are tending to internationalize their commitment and this is especially true of the last ten years. Indeed, many young people involved in the movement have set up small Antimafia groups abroad as Erasmus students, PhD students, researchers, or also in their new social roles (in associations or international organizations). They promote events, seminars or even courses at their universities, so that it is reasonable to suggest that Antimafia is gradually becoming part of a new brand of Italian youth, in contrast to the traditional Italian image worldwide for more than a century.

⁹⁵ In this sense the legend of the two most famous magistrates, Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino, became the biggest point of reference for the youth, also thanks to the tireless commitment of the magistrate Antonino Caponnetto, ex- chief of the two victims, in schools (see Antonino Caponnetto, *Una lezione sulla legalità*, Associazione culturale La Barriera, Vigevano, 2007, edd. P. Bellati, M. Marsilio; Antonino Caponnetto, *Io non tacerò. La lunga battaglia per la giustizia*, Melampo, Milano, 2010, ed. Maria Grimaldi).

⁹⁶ This is a ship that leaves every year from Civitavecchia for Palermo with about a thousand school students from all over Italy, for the anniversary of the murder of the Palermo magistrate. It is promoted by the Ministry of Education. Participation is a reward for student authors of the best projects on the Mafia and legality.

7. Concluding remarks

The main intent of this contribution was to give readers a first, synthetic introduction to the reality of the Antimafia movement in Italy: its historical development, its general identity and its particular component (the 'other side'). It is indeed quite astonishing that such a continuous, huge and original movement has been almost *totally absent* from the contemporary scientific debate, even that specialising in movements. We asked ourselves at the beginning who is to blame for this silence. The movement? Relatives of victims? Academic researchers? Cultural prejudices or mental short sightedness? It could be an interesting field of discussion, for sociology of information or knowledge.⁹⁷ However, what is important now is to fill this gap, as Mafia organizations spread across Europe.

For this reason, the available space has been used not to formulate a wide theoretical frame on the differences and analogies of this movement compared to other major movements studied by scientific literature.⁹⁸ Nor has it been used to analyse its problems, limits or contradictions.⁹⁹ Analytical efforts have instead been directed just towards a basic, but conceptually orderly, description of the identity of the movement. In summary:

1. It was essential to draw attention to the actual *existence* of a movement which had been ignored even by the best handbooks on social movements. That meant having to communicate a different image of the Mafia question in parallel. The Mafia, in fact, is not a marginal or even a folkloristic phenomenon. Indeed, it is one of the most pressing issues of the past, present and future of Italy and probably of Europe too.¹⁰⁰ The movement that opposes the Mafia is therefore of great importance and should also be studied for this reason. It has been developing for several decades and has

⁹⁷ Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Soziologie und Sozialpolitik*, Mohr, Tübingen, 1922; Peter L. Berger, Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, Garden City, New York, 1966; Luciano Gallino, *Dizionario di Sociologia*, Utet, Torino, 1978 (voice: "Sociologia della conoscenza").

⁹⁸ Especially Donatella della Porta, Mario Diani, Eds, *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements*, Oxford University Press, 2015.

⁹⁹ Nando dalla Chiesa, *La scelta libera*, cit.; Martina Mazzeo, *La comunicazione dei valori civili. La didattica antimafia tra problemi e metodologie*, Università degli Studi di Milano, doctoral thesis. 2015; Francesco Forgione, *I tragediatori, La fine dell'Antimafia e il crollo dei suoi miti*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli, 2016.

¹⁰⁰ Commissione parlamentare di inchiesta sulle mafie e sulle altre associazioni criminali, anche straniere. *Relazione finale*, XVII legislatura, Camera dei Deputati, Senato della Repubblica, Roma, 2018 (president: on. Rosy Bindi).

recently obtained visible results: cutting-edge laws, cultural changes, judicial success, organizational strength, new economic experiences and artistic representation.

2) It was necessary to clarify the essential phases of this movement by indicating its historical, social and institutional contexts. It was important, at the same time, to clarify the fundamental *nature* of the contemporary phase: the movement is no longer driven by material needs (like land in the past), but by a *moral* soul and a public spirit that can freely co-exist – and indeed increase – alongside the many political and cultural changes the country is going through. From a theoretical point of view, this specific trait is of special interest.

3) Finally, it was important to underline the main specificities of the *composition* of the movement. We have focused mainly on female and youth participation, dedicating much more space to the first component because of its historical and social meaning. The Mafia is in fact a male power *par excellence*.¹⁰¹ It is not difficult therefore to see an almost revolutionary change in what has been happening in opposition to the Mafia as well as *within* the Mafia.

At the same time, the extraordinary participation of young people in the Antimafia movement – a phenomenon that shows no sign of slowing – demonstrates that the youth of today is far from being passive or “without values” and provides food for thought.

One generation has seen the most powerful Sicilian and Campanian clans (respectively the *Corleonesi* and the *Casalesi*) defeated and the Calabrian clans in northern Italy are meeting stiff institutional resistance. Much has been accomplished but there are widely shared hopes that the long march of the Antimafia campaign will continue apace because there is still a lot that needs to be done.

¹⁰¹ Teresa Principato, Alessandra Dino, *Mafia donna. Le vestali del sacro e dell'onore*, Flaccovio, Palermo, 1997; Alessandra Dino, *Donne, mafia e processi di comunicazione*, in “Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia”, a. XXXIX, n.41, 1998, pp. 477-512; Ombretta Ingrassi, *Donne d'onore. Storie di mafia al femminile*, cit. *The Mafia is Male* is the provocative title of a research made by CROSS, State University of Milan, for the Italian government department for equal opportunities (Sabrina Garofalo and Arianna Zottarel researchers, 2021).

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