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**Performance matters more than masculinity: Violence, gender dynamics and mafia women**

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**1. Introduction**

The role of women in the mafia<sup>1</sup> has been the subject of investigation since their mostly passive but supportive role was evidenced with the emergence of the first mafia group in Italy during the mid-19th century (Catanzaro, 1992; Gambetta, 1993; Maiorino, 1997; Hess, 1998; Seindal, 1998; Dick, 2007; Romano, 2007; Lupo, 2009). Research on women in the mafia has been intensified more recently, starting with the 1980s when the increasing number of women identified as belonging to the criminal networks of mafia groups awakened the interests of the public (Fiume, 1989). Their stories were narrated in the conventional media during this period (La Repubblica, 1985, 1988; Corriere della Sera, 1997) and the sum of these narrations created a puzzling social and cultural atmosphere because of the profound roles that these women played. The traditional expectations of a woman in the private and public life of a patriarchal society was in tension with their crimes, engaging public curiosity. The role of women in this context is significant because they ensure stability, and in some cases flexibility, for mafia activities. Accordingly, women's active participation in mafia business has gradually increased in line with the logistic, strategic and existential needs of mafia syndicates (Cascio and Puglisi, 1986; Pino, 1988; Fiume, 1989; Puglisi, 1990, 2005; Madeo, 1992; Rizza, 1993; Principato and Dino, 1997; Pizzini-Gambetta, 1999; Fiandaca (ed.), 2007; Ingrasci, 2007; dalla Chiesa, 2007). There are both commonalities and distinctions among the profiles of women who were born, or married, into mafia families.<sup>2</sup>

Studies have addressed the role of women in different mafia groups and the women of Cosa Nostra (Dino 2000), 'Ndrangheta (Capponi, 2009; Ingrasci 2010), Camorra (Gribaudo,

2010) and Sacra Corona Unita (Massari and Motta, 2007) have been widely explored. These explorations have unveiled the diverse dynamics of women's roles in different mafia groups. However, many puzzles remain as there is no systematic analysis of the role of performance and masculinity and the involvement of these women in criminal activities or the reasons they might resist their own mafia families. Uncovering the stories of mafia women, this study will examine the profiles of different mafia women, offering new perspectives in understanding the influence of performance and masculinity on the gender dynamics of the mafia.

Presenting and narrating the sometimes conflicting stories of different women, this study aims to shed light on the role of masculinity in criminal organizations, particularly in the Italian mafia groups. This article then seeks to clarify how different mafia women acted, or performed, to manage mafia business and control family relations. It will also discuss those women who defied the mafia either through collaborating with the state or standing against the mafia publicly. I raise three main arguments in this paper to contribute to our theoretical knowledge of gender and criminal activity. First, there are more similarities between the performances of men and women because pragmatism and rationality determine the decisions of mafia groups more than conformity and consistency. Second, the inclusion of women in the mafia stems from this pragmatism; particularly when male members are imprisoned or have to flee. The increasing number of mafia women is primarily based on structural change at organizational level rather than the capacity of women to act in a similar way to their male counterparts. This second argument leads logically to the final assertion that the roles of women develop through a performance-focused approach rather than on their feminine or masculine identities. This study proposes three different performance types in order to identify the roles of mafia women; functional, theatrical and cultural while accepting that both men and women perform these roles. After exploring performance through a

narrative of thirty-five mafia women, this study mainly concludes that it is the performance of mafiosi masculinity that plays a determinative role in the future of the mafia.

As it is clear in mafia-type organizations, masculinity, or rather the performance of this, is one of the constitutive powers of their domination and the accumulation of power. A pragmatic rationale is an important asset for mafia groups when acting as an 'extension of state' (Catanzaro, 1992, p. 77). Gambetta (1993) expressed this pragmatic dimension through a rational-choice theory and Varese (1994) showed that this pragmatism is not limited to the Sicilian mafia, but it encompasses Russian organized crime groups. The benefits and costs of an initiative, whether a violent massacre or a symbolic threat, are the determinants of the success of illicit enterprises for organized crime groups. As a result, this pragmatic vision is encoded as a regulative force in the decisions of mafia groups to wield their power. The same pragmatic vision has also shaped gender dynamics and the role of masculinity. My arguments do not aim either to naturalize masculinity or to reject the nature of the use of power exercised by men over women. My principal aim is to show that masculinity is not the sole determinant of the success of organized crime groups but that pragmatism and performance influence both the gender dynamics and efficiency of the mafia.

## **2. Rethinking Mafia women through masculinity, performance and a criminalized life**

Lewis (2007, p. 6) points out that masculinity, as a cultural pattern, '...has as much to do with seeking the approval of men, as it is to do with obtaining the approval of women'. That approval, however, displays a hegemonic character through constituting acts and fosters the articulation of power within the orbit of dominant masculinities. Such a power articulation is more vital in closed and violent social environments such as the mafia. As a result, these articulations function 'not only as constituting the identity of the actor, but as constituting that identity as a compelling illusion, an object of belief' (Butler 1988, p. 520). The

constituting act and its illusions in a masculine ideology limit the awareness of performance. In this context, the performance and its narration gain more importance because ‘we will know one another better by entering one another’s performances and learning their grammars and vocabularies’ (Schechner and Appel, 1990, p. 1). Turner (1987, p. 13) expresses the relationship between performance and role by stating that ‘self is presented through the performance of roles, through performance that breaks roles, and through declaring to a given public that one has undergone a transformation of state and status, been saved or damned, elevated or released.’

Moving from the performance paradigm of Turner, it is crucial to question the relationship of masculinity, crime and identity among women involved in organized crime. Lowell Lewis (2013, p. 23) shared many of the views of Victor Turner regarding performance, however, he underlined the rational dimension of human behavior, which distinguishes our performative ‘plays’ from the ritualistic performance practiced by animals. In this respect, we need to question how rational and pragmatic behaviors regulate social interactions and the resultant performances of mafia men and women. Our response to this question may incorporate gender identity and its intersection with the criminal world, which has authority and pragmatism as its driving forces. Butler (1988, p. 520) states that ‘what is called gender identity is a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction and taboo. In its very character as performative resides the possibility of contesting its reified status’ (Butler, 1988, p. 520). It is clear that criminal groups have their own social sanctions and taboos which influence both their organization and gender dynamics. However, the performance of each woman needs to be explored in a more nuanced way through micro-sociological lenses. Brickell highlighted the reflexively constructed social performance as Butler (1988) had, but called for a more complex analysis of the relationship between performance and subversive masculinity (Brickell, 2005, p. 39) using Goffman’s symbolic

resources (1959). Delving into the stories of mafia women and analyzing their roles in each criminal context can help us to grasp the importance of performance and masculinity as separate. As Goffman (1959, p. 19) stated: ‘The word person, in its first meaning, is a mask...everyone is always and everywhere, more or less consciously, playing a role...It is in these roles that we know each other; it is in these roles that we know ourselves’. Yet every performance has its own social, cultural and even psychological dynamic and for this reason ‘performance magnitudes...are also about extensions across various cultural and personal boundaries’ (Schechner, 1988, p. 324).

Naffine (1987) noted in her ground-breaking work that the exclusion of women as victims, and the lack of positive construction of female identity, are the essential factors that marginalize women while concurrently making them into a powerless class. The diverse case-studies here point to women being as violent as male mafiosi members and in doing so sustaining mafiosi masculinity in the absence of men. On the other hand, the profiles of women who reject mafiosi masculinity evidence the possibility of resistance. The gender dichotomy loses its significance because all (regardless of gender) are able to play similar roles; whether they perform mafiosi masculinity or reject it. Previous studies on the relationship of women with crime also highlighted the similarities of criminal behavior between men and women. For instance, comparing the liberation of women with the increases of female offending, Adler (1975) found that women, similar to men, were inclined to commit crime when the circumstances provided the appropriate social atmosphere. Similarly, Simon (1975) claimed that the involvement of women in white-collar crime increased with the participation of women in labor force in the 1960s and the 1970s.

The similarities in the motives of both men and women in their commitment to crime, or in resisting their own families, are much greater than their differences. This is another reason that the nature of performance has more influence than notions of masculinity in

determining the mafia's future. Nevertheless, the role of masculinity in violent social environments cannot be denied and crime has a solid and durable capacity to produce violence. This masculinity-crime nexus has long been explored through the internalization of masculine forms during adolescence (Sutherland and Cressey 1924). The pull of crime in some contexts, as Turner indicates, is determined by the 'Social dramas [that] occur within groups of persons who share values and interests and who have a real or alleged common history' (1980, p. 149). The studies about the role of women in criminal gangs suggest that young women are exposed to a victimization process and to higher risks when they participate in organized crime (Miller, 1998, p. 447). Identifying mafia women and their performances as a set of acts, which occur in the spectrum of social dramas and reverberate either through commitment to crime, or resistance against it, is key to understanding this.

### **3. Method**

The data for this research is based on secondary sources; both literature reviews of, and interviews with, 35 mafia women in magazines and newspapers. Only mafia women with a link to it through either marriage or kinship are investigated here. I do however refer to one transgender mafia boss to further explore the limits of traditional masculinity. Mafia syndicates are one of the most hidden groups. Their particular codes, which revolve around secrecy and network, create challenging situations for the mafia researchers. Indeed, this challenge is one of the limitations of present study. I used the secondary sources so I was not able to interview with the mafia women presented in this paper. However, to protect the reliability of research, I tried to be consistent in the narrating process so I only introduced how and why women committed crime or resisted against their own families. This particular selection while reading the entire reportage, interview or literature review fostered me to focus on the relationship of women with crime. Following this methodological selection, I

endeavored to remain consistent throughout the paper while presenting the stories of thirty-five women.

The study of the data took two principal directions. First, I used the narrative method to explore women's roles in the mafia and particularly their relationship with crime, their involvement in the business of the mafia family and their efforts to transfer the cultural codes of the mafia to the next generation. Second, in contrast to these supportive mafia women profiles, I narrate the women who defy and resist this despite their familial immersion in organized crime. Three performance models emerge from this analysis; functional, theatrical, and cultural. After coding the factors of these performance types, I redesigned the organization of the paper and presented each woman's story according to the performance shown and her supportive or defiant role in the mafia family.

The influence of performance over the profiles of women will be explicated through narrating their stories. This choice is more related to the complex and changing identities and perceptions of the women through their interactions with, and experiences of, the mafia family. A narrative offers us the connection between the stories of different women because 'the significance of each event can be understood in its relation to that whole. In this way, a narrative conveys the meaning of events' (Elliott 2005, p. 3). This narrative inquiry, according to Webster and Mertova (2007, p. 13) has 'valuable potential for research' while capturing and analyzing life stories. This approach is related to the power of the narrative form to construe gendered differences and their lived realities (Gergen, 2001, p. 73).

The determining factors of the performances led me to name the three different performance models according to their distinctive particularities within the spectrum of gender dynamics as women served, or opposed, their own family's criminal activity. The first performance model, functional performance, influences organizational power, decision-making and the governing process of a mafia family. The second performance model,

theatrical performance, is structured by the ultimate value of action; the use of violence and instruments of deterrence to support mafia work or, collaborating with the state to resist the mafia. As distinct from functional performance, the value of action in theatrical performance has a greater influence on, and critical significance for, the future of a mafia family. Finally, cultural performance is constructed through socio-cultural codes, which are enacted either through transferring the mafia's traditions to the next generation, or resisting the mafia in public spaces (See table 1).

There are four different mafia women groups whose behaviors are categorized here under these three different performance clusters. The first group was involved in criminal activity and supported the mafia through both functional and theatrical performance. The second group supported the mafia through cultural performance without being actively involved in crime. The third group had been actively involved in crime but subsequently defied the mafia by collaborating with the state through theatrical performance. The fourth group resisted the mafia without committing any crime demonstrating a cultural performance. The categorization of different performance types does not prevent women from transitioning from one performance type to another (see table 2).

#### **4. Supporting the mafia through functional and theatrical performance**

In part due to the traditions of family structure, mafia women have played passive and supportive roles in mafia activity. They have also been involved directly in crime and even managed the family business. Functional performance is articulated when these women influence the structural and organizational power of organized crime. Additionally, they articulate theatrical performance because the ultimate value of action, either as a leader of the organization or as a messenger between mafia families, can be significant in determining the destiny of a mafia family.

The first mafia women to play significant active roles in organized crime date back to at least the 1920s (Puglisi 2005). Three mafia women - Angela Russo, Sorella di Diego and Maria Grazia Genova - born in Sicily in the first decade of the twentieth century and each marrying a mafioso - used violence both to regulate their relations and to control the family business. They also played roles in the management of *pizzo*, extortion money, and through the control of drug trafficking (Puglisi, 2005; Ingrasci, 2007; La Sorte, 2007). An increasing number of women also actively participated in mafia activity when their husbands, brothers and fathers were incarcerated; typically acting as the head of the family or facilitating the flow of information between the jailed mafiosi and the rest of the organization. For example, Addolorata Carangelo and her daughter Luciana Scarliano played significant roles in the Sacra Corona Unita (SCU) in Apulia after Giuseppe Scarlino, the husband of Addolorata Carangelo and father of Luciana Scarliano, was imprisoned (Massari and Motto, 2007, p. 65). Additionally, Domenica Biondi, the wife of mafia boss Giuseppe Rogoli, one of the founders of the SCU, actively participated in crime and was convicted along with her husband (Pasculli, 2009). Liliana Campana of the SCU became the head of a family after her two brothers, Sandro and Francesco Campana, were arrested in 2002, continuing her role for two years until her arrest in 2004. She is reported to have brutally attacked those who disobeyed through the use of explosives (La Sorte, 2004).

Francesca Citarda, the wife of the mafia boss Giovanni Bontate of the Sicilian mafia, and Maria Filippa Messina, the wife of mafia boss Antonino Cinturina, committed violent crimes and were actively involved in the mafia as much as their husbands (Dino, 2007; Pasculli, 2009). Not only the wives and daughters of mafia bosses participate in crime but also their sisters. For example, Maria Rosaria Buccarella, the sister of Salvatore Buccarella (the boss of the Brindisi family) took messages from her incarcerated brother to other criminals. In addition, she was responsible for strategic planning in the SCU and for

overseeing various criminal activities (Massari and Motto, 2007, p. 62). Erminia Giuliano, the sister of mafia boss Luigi Giuliano from Camorra became the leader of the Giuliano mafia family and undertook illegal activities until her arrest in 2000. She was considered one of the thirty most dangerous criminals in Italy; infamous for her violent actions against rival mafia families (Lichfield, 2000). Concetta Scalisi from Cosa Nostra, Gemma Donnaruma and Teresa De Luca Bossa from Camorra governed the business of their mafia families when male members died or were incarcerated. Ultimately, these three women shared the same destiny; arrested in 1999, 2008 and 2010 respectively and sentenced to life imprisonment (Di Fiore, 2005; Williams, Head and Prooth, 2007).

The opportunities for woman eager to rise to the highest rank in the family have traditionally been limited, particularly in the 'Ndrangheta. However, the case of Maria Serraino deviates from this model. Serraino migrated to Milan in the 1960s and became *de facto* ruler of her family's business in drug trafficking earning the names 'La Signora' (Lady) and 'Mamma eroina' (Mama Heroin) (Ingarasci, 2007, p. 48-49). Serraino was not the only woman involved in crime in her family; her daughter-in-law, Livia De Martino had a superior position in the mafia engaging in autonomous drug trafficking. To hide her criminal activities, Martino played the role of housewife purporting to know little of her husband's business (Ingarasci, 2007, p. 49).

Rosetta Cutolo, sister of Camorra mafia boss Raffaele Cutolo, not only communicated his instructions to the network but is also argued to have acted as an arbiter to end a war among different mafia families. She also regularly participated in meetings with Cosa Nostra and managed the family business when her brother was in jail. When she was arrested in 1993, her brother insisted that she was innocent, but the prosecutor Antonio Laudati, claimed that she was the real force behind the Nuova Camorra Organizzata (NCO) (Longrigg, 1997,

p. 12-16). In addition to heading up her family, she appears to have been an inspiration for other mafia women, for example, Maria Licciardi who became the leader of Licciardi family in Naples from 1993 until her arrest in 2001 (Behan 2002). Her statements to the police reveal that she was as ruthless as her male counterparts - declaring Cutolo's image as an inspiration to her (Haycraft, 1985; Iadeluca, 2008).

Assunta Maresca of Camorra is an important example of how the revenge culture is operative among the women of Camorra who lost their lovers or family members to mafia wars. Maresca, also called Pupetta, was brought up in a criminal family. Her father, Vincenzo Maresca, was the head of their hometown Castellamare di Stabia, which is located in the south of Naples. She had a relationship with Pasquale Simonetti who was shot by a rival mafioso, Antonio Esposito. Assunta was pregnant at that time and murdered Esposito in 1955 (Allum, 2007, p. 12).

### **5. Supporting the mafia through cultural performance**

Women, who practice cultural performance in order to support the mafia, are different from those narrated above in terms of their involvement in crime since the performance of these women is primarily shaped by social and cultural codes. Moreover, the cultural transmission of mafiosi values to the next generation is of the utmost importance in showing their commitment to the mafia. Their performance should not be understated when discussing them in the context of those women who actively committed crime and filled strategic posts since the provision of a solid, loyal and sustainable family system is integral to the longevity of organized criminal families.

Not all mafia women take their own revenge on enemies; many have encouraged their sons and daughters to do so in the name of family. For example, Anna Mazza fostered her sons to avenge the murder of her husband, Afragola Gennaro Moccia, by a rival mafia family

(Allum, 2007, p. 13). When Rita Atria of Partanna, Sicily condemned her family's involvement in crime and co-operated with the state in 1991 her mother, Giovanna Cannova, asked her to leave the home. Atria moved to Rome, committing suicide one year later.<sup>3</sup> Her mother visited the grave to break her daughter's headstone with a hammer (Stille, 1995, p. 325-26; Longrigg 1997; Pickering-Iazi 2007). These stories illustrate the indispensable role of women have played in transmitting the codes of obedience to their sons and daughters.

Mafia women, also play high-profile roles in supporting their husbands when the latter are convicted and imprisoned. Antonina (Ninetta) Bagarella, wife of Salvatore "Totò" Riina of the Corleone family who was responsible for many murders in addition to assassinations of two famous anti-mafia magistrates (Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino), told the reporters of an Italian news magazine: 'He was the best father possible and a victim of the prejudice of a hostile society' (Popham, 2007). She furthered:

Don't I have the right to love a man and follow the law of nature? I know, you will ask me why my choice of the man in the life had to be Toto Riina, who is said to be so many things. I chose him first of all because I love him and love disregards so many things, and then I have respect for him and trust. I love Riina.

(Siebert, 1996, p. 164)

Ninetta's statement rationalises and absolve herself of responsibility through the discourses and innocence of 'love' (Siebert, 1996, p. 164). Similarly, Ann Hathaway (married to Antonio Rinzivillo, a Sicilian Mafioso) well illustrates wives' fidelity to their mafiosi husbands. On her release from Agrigento Prison, Italian reporters asked if, with the knowledge she now had, she would do the same to which she replied: 'Certainly I'd do it again. I adore my husband. He's the father of my two girls'. (Popham, 2007)

The significance of honor in the minds of mafia women, also plays a role in their performance. Rosalia Basile, the wife of mafioso Vincenzo Scarantino, who confessed his crimes and cooperated with the state, claimed initially that the confession had been made

under duress but then declared in court that he was gay (Dino, 2007, p. 76) in an attempt to discredit him (Principato and Dino 1997). The honor of Basile's family and the culture of *omertà*, (the code of silence) took precedence over prior loyalty to her husband. This embracement of mafiosi culture and its codes is another form that supportive performance can take. Anna Bevilacqua, the mother of the SCU's Cosimo Cirfeta, hid mafia fugitives in her home and communicated her incarcerated son's orders to other mafiosi after visiting him. This logistic support in the communication systems of the mafia (Massari and Motta, 2007, p. 58) illustrates further the forms that cultural performance takes.

## 6. Defying the mafia through theatrical performance

Similar to their male counterparts, Italian mafia women do not only support the mafia. They do defy their families as well; usually at significant cost. *Pentitismo*, the repentance of criminals who collaborate with the police, is a theatrical performance involving both the committing of crime and subsequent collaboration with the state (often as state witness against their own families). Rita Di Giovine from 'Ndrangheta was born into a mafia family as the daughter of Maria Serraino. Unlike her mother, Di Giovine did not condone the mafiosi culture; she states that she was raped by her father from the age of nine until she was nineteen and witnessed her father's physical violence against her mother, when her mother was nine months pregnant (Ingrasci, 2007, p. 51). Rita decided to be a *pentito* – a collaborator with the judicial system - when she was thirty-six years old.

Marisa Merico, daughter of mafia boss Emilio Di Giovine from 'Ndrangheta, niece of Rita Di Giovine and granddaughter of Maria Serraino whose stories are outlined above, was arrested for money laundering. She stated: 'I didn't set out to clean money, you know. My father asked me to do something and I would. He'd say, "well, here's an apartment, I want this, I want you to have this in your name", and I'd go and sign with the lawyer' (Longrigg,

1998). She added that her grandmother, Maria Serraino gathered her twelve children around a table to manage the distribution of the drugs coming from Turkey (Ferrari, 2011). Marisa's regret for her prior crimes is suggested through her later statements: 'I buried my head in the sand and didn't think too deeply about what I was doing. Yes, there were Cartier watches and Chanel handbags but, mostly, I just wanted my family's love and loyalty. These are big words in the mafia' (Longrigg 1988). After her arrest and collaboration with the state, she served four years in British and Italian prisons. Her father's collaborations with the state (Merico, 2010) make their return to 'Ndrangheta unlikely (Ciconte, 2008).

Giuseppina Vitale from Cosa Nostra cooperated with the state after she was arrested as the head of her mafia family. A romance with another mafiosi while in jail appears to have prompted her cooperation with the state since it provided the opportunity of a reduced sentence (Johnston, 2005; Ingarasci, 2007; Vitale and Costanzo, 2009). Maria Rosaria Mingiano, wife of mafia boss Maurizio Cagnazzo from Sacra Corona Unita actively participated in committing crime and was essential to the flow of information and money but is currently a state witness (Massari and Motta, 2007, p. 58).

The cases of Rita Di Giovine, Teresa Concetta, Giuseppina Vitale and Maria Rosaria Mingiano illustrate the particular feature of their performance to be their confessions, which hamper the illicit business, and violate the codes, of mafia families. Their experiences during their careers in the mafia and the desire to put an end to their links with it through cooperation with the state are key to undermining the mafia's closed social structure and cultural hegemony. The process of becoming a state witness elides the distinction between men and women.

## **7. Defying the mafia through cultural performance**

There are many women, born into a mafia family or who become a member through marriage, who commit no criminal acts and who demonstrate their dissent publicly. This form of cultural performance directly and explicitly attacks the cultural codes of the mafia. Rita Atria was eleven years old when her father was killed by a hit-man from a rival mafia family in 1985. Rita's brother Nicola, a mafioso, had planned to avenge the death of his father but was shot in the restaurant owned by his wife, Piera Aiello, in 1991 who began her collaboration with the justice system just one week after the murder of her husband. Her actions appear to have been a model for her sister-in-law's attempts at rebellion against the mafiosi culture. Rita Atria subsequently gave information to anti-mafia magistrate Paolo Borsellino, naming the men who killed her father and testifying against local mafiosi in Partanna, Sicily. Their testimonies brought about the destruction of many mafia activities, the arrest of prominent mafiosi figures (Longrigg, 1992; Rizza, 1993) and further investigations into corruption in political life in Partanna (Pickering-Iazzi, 2007, p. 166). However magistrates Gioavanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino were subsequently assassinated and the death of the latter appears to have led to the suicide of Atria who had supplied information to him. Her diary documents her early dissent:

We must never give up, and justice and truth will live on in spite of everything and everyone. The only way to eliminate this plague is to make young people who live amidst the mafia aware that there is another world beyond it...Perhaps an honest world will never exist, but who prevents us from dreaming? Perhaps, if each one of us tries to change, perhaps we will succeed (Pickering-Iazzi, 2007, p. 162).

Petralia Margaret, who married mafioso Gaspare Sugamiele from Sicily at a very young age, also kept a diary which she gave to the police and which resulted in the conviction of numerous criminals. Her diary was read aloud at the court of Trapani in 1989 (Dino, 2003).

Peppino Impastato who had criticised the mafia publicly through a radio programme (AUT) was murdered by Don Gaetano Badalamenti, *capofamiglia* of the mafia family of Cinisi, located in the eastern part of Palermo. Cinisi was the home-town of Impastato's mother, Felicia Bartolotta Impastato who subsequently involved herself in public criticism of mafia activities (Impastato, 1986; Vitale, 1995; Puglisi and Santino, 2005).

Lea Garofalo collaborated with the justice system to give information about a turf war between her partner's family and a rival family in Milan that resulted in the death of around forty people. Ex-partner, Carlo Cosco, with five other Mafiosi, placed her body in an acid bath. Daughter, Denise Garofalo gave evidence against her father and uncles in court leading to several convictions (Kington, 2012).

## 8. Concluding remarks

Masculinity in the mafia is characterized by violence, intrusive modes of governance, and the particular role that is assigned to its members, either male or female. The hegemonic character of the mafia stems primarily from the quality of performance, which includes masculinity and a range of other variables that both constitute and consolidate its power. The mafia cannot be a trajectory of a 'man's world' simply because the performances are practiced mostly by men. Mafia women play a role in supporting the mafia through the three types of performance described, and also defy it. The amalgamation of women's instrumental and strategic role in the mafia is an outcome of rational and pragmatic perspectives of their brothers, husbands, fathers and sons. This perspective supposes for women, a critical importance not only in nurturing, sustaining and practicing the codes of the mafia but also as principal actors in perilous public spheres where the mafia is still a prevalent force.

The cultural performance practiced by mafia women when they resist their own families is a palpable stance not only against the masculinity of mafiosi culture but also a

challenge to its hegemony. The journey between the two poles, from supporting the mafia to resisting it, requires extreme disruptions to prior behaviors, which break not only the link with criminal organizations but, at the same time, with the family. Masculinity, or the performance of it, is operational in the business of mafia groups. This performance gains more importance in times during which the organization is challenged through either internal or external factors. Many men have first supported and later confronted the mafia through collaborating with the state and there are parallel patterns seen in women of the mafia.

It is still true that the mafia is governed mostly by men but the role of women (either overt or complicit) should not be understated. The performance of the mafia women discussed here reveals the false dichotomy between men and women within its structure. Beyond this dichotomy, the existence of a transgender boss, Ugo Gabriele, also known as Ketty, from Naples-based Camorra group, may underline here the significance of performance rather than traditional gender roles in the mafia. After the arrest of Ketty in 2009, an investigation exposed Ketty's role as a gang boss who stashed firearms, organized extortion rackets and controlled the supply of drugs (Corriera della Serra, 2009).

The popular assertion defining the mafia as a 'man's world' is correct in as far as the mafia is a *world of performance*, but the gender of the performer is not the most significant aspect of this. Performance and patriarchy conflate under the umbrella of power as a determinative force leading to many mafia women embracing mafiosi masculinity and producing more violence. The performances described in this study have a definitive influence over mafia women and the future of the mafia and the risks of performance against it are reminders of the mafia's enduring power. The performance of defiance against the mafia may be employed by both men and women. In doing so, this performance erodes a formidable mafiosi culture, but this is at significant cost to these early dissenters.

## Notes

1- The mafia refers to the Sicilian Cosa Nostra historically, but here it is used as a term to refer to Italian organized crime groups. There are four main mafia groups in the country. These prominent mafia syndicates are Cosa Nostra from Sicily, Camorra from Campania, 'Ndrangheta from Calabria and Sacra Corona Unita from Apuglia. These four mafia-type organizations have profound differences both functionally and historically. Camorra and 'Ndrangheta operated mostly as a gang structure in cities in the 19<sup>th</sup> century while Cosa Nostra formed in the later part of the nineteenth century with more rural influence. However, all three organizations have evolved and renewed themselves as the country embarked on the deeper political transformations and social changes of the twentieth century. Different from these three historical organized crime groups, the Sacra Corona Unita is a younger organized crime establishment, founded in the 1970s with distinctive hierarchical structures. Camorra and the Sacra Corona Unita have looser structures than Cosa Nostra and 'Ndrangheta. The reader should pay attention to these important differences among various organized crime groups in Italy. After giving this information, it deems important to explain why I used the mafia as a common term in this article. The principal reason is that the identity of women has been shaped by certain parallel dynamics regardless of the diversification among the organized crime groups with which they are affiliated. These parallel dynamics include a life of violence, secrecy, patriarchy, and obedience to certain rules and obligations to the family. The categorization of mafia woman profiles engaged the shift in the role of women in these organizations.

2- A Mafia family signifies a clan, *cosca* in Sicilian, in which the members of the group closely link to each other and every single member is part of that *cosca* or mafia family. However, having a blood-tie among the members of the clan is not an obligation to join to the mafia family. Furthermore, a kinship tie may not be the most necessary quality for

cooperation since the application of violence may be a more determinative force than kinship among the members of Camorra (Campana and Varese, 2013).

3- For more information about Rita Atria, please visit the website of *l'Associazione Rita Atria*: <http://www.ritaatria.it>

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Table 1: Performance-focused analysis of the mafia members who share common codes while supporting and defying the mafia.

<b>Determinative factors and common codes that regulate the social and structural mechanism of the Mafia</b>			
<b>Types of Performance</b>	<b>Determinative factor of performance</b>	<b>Common codes to support the mafia</b>	<b>Common codes to defy the mafia</b>
<b>Functional performance</b>	Influence on the organisational power of the mafia	Decision making and governing the mafia	Breaking organisational structure of the mafia
<b>Theatrical performance</b>	The ultimate value of the action	Applying violence and modes of deterrence	Collaborating with the state/acting as a state witness
<b>Cultural performance</b>	Socio-cultural codes	Cultural transmission of the mafiosi's values	Resisting the mafia publicly and explicitly

Table 2 – The list of Italian Mafia women according to affiliation, kinship, commitment to crime and resistance and type of performance that they conducted.

<b>Names of women</b>	<b>Organized Crime affiliation</b>	<b>Kinship status in family</b>	<b>Commitment to apply common codes to support the mafia</b>	<b>Commitment to apply common codes to defy the mafia</b>	<b>Type of primary performance</b>
Addolorata Carangelo	Sacra Corona Unita	Wife of Mafia boss Giuseppe Scarlino	Active commitment	No	Functional and theatrical performance
Luciana Scarlino	Sacra Corona Unita	Daughter of Mafia boss Giuseppe Scarlino	Active commitment	No	Functional and theatrical performance
Domenica Biondi	Sacra Corona Unita	Wife of mafia boss Giuseppe Rogoli	Active commitment	No	Functional and theatrical performance
Liliana Campana	Sacra Corona Unita	Sister of mafiosi Sandro and Francesco Campana	Active commitment	No	Functional and theatrical performance
Maria Rosaria Buccarella	Sacra Corona Unita	Sister of mafioso Salvatore Buccarella	Active commitment	No	Functional and theatrical performance
Erminia Giuliano	Camorra	Sister of mafia boss Luigi Giuliano	Active commitment	No	Functional and theatrical performance
Concetta Scalisi	Cosa Nostra	Daughter of mafioso Antonio Scalisi	Active commitment	No	Functional and theatrical performance
Gemma Donnaruma	Camorra	Wife of mafioso Valentino Gionta	Active commitment	No	Functional and theatrical performance
Teresa De Luca Bossa	Camorra	Wife of mafia boss Umberto De Luca Bossa	Active commitment	No	Functional and theatrical performance
Maria Serraino	'Ndrangheta	Cousin of mafia boss Paolo Serraino	Active commitment	No	Functional and theatrical performance

Livia De Martino	'Ndrangheta	Wife of mafioso Antonio Di Giovine	Active commitment	No	Functional and theatrical performance
Rosetta Cutolo	Camorra	Sister of the mafia boss Raffaele Cutolo	Active commitment	No	Functional and theatrical performance
Maria Licciardi	Camorra	Sister of mafiosi Vincenzo and Gennaro Licciardi	Active commitment	No	Functional and theatrical performance
Assunta Maresca	Camorra	Daughter of mafia boss Vincenzo Maresca	Active commitment	No	Functional and theatrical performance
Angela Russo	Cosa Nostra	Mother of mafioso Salvatore Russo	Active commitment	No	Functional and theatrical performance
Maria Catena Cammarata	Cosa Nostra	Sister of mafia boss Pino	Active commitment	No	Functional and theatrical performance
Maria Grazia Genova	Cosa Nostra	Sister of mafia boss Diego	Active commitment	No	Functional and theatrical performance
Maria Filippa Messina	Cosa Nostra	Wife of mafia boss Antonino Cinturrino	Active commitment	No	Functional and theatrical performance
Francesca Citarda	Cosa Nostra	Wife of mafia boss Giovanni Bontate	Active commitment	No	Functional and theatrical performance
Giovanna Cannova	Cosa Nostra	Wife of mafia boss don Vito Atria	Passive commitment	No	Cultural performance
Antonina (Ninetta) Bagarella	Cosa Nostra	Wife of mafia boss Salvatore Riina	Passive commitment	No	Cultural performance
Rosalia Basile	Cosa Nostra	Wife of mafia boss Vincenzo Scarantino	Passive commitment	No	Cultural performance

Ada Bevilaqua	Sacra Corona Unita	Mother of mafia boss Cosimo Cirfeta	Passive commitment	No	Cultural performance
Anna Mazza	Camorra	Wife of mafia boss Gennaro Moccia	Passive commitment	No	Cultural performance
Rita Di Giovine	'Ndrangheta	Sister of mafioso Emilio Di Giovine	Active commitment	Active commitment	Theatrical performance
Marisa Merico	'Ndrangheta	Daughter of mafia boss Don Emilio DiGiovine	Active commitment	Active commitment	Theatrical performance
Giuseppina Vitale	Cosa Nostra	Sister of mafia bosses Leonardo, Michele and Vito Vitale	Active commitment	Active commitment	Theatrical performance
Maria Rosaria Mingiano	Sacra Corona Unita	Wife of mafioso Maurizio Cagnazzo	Active commitment	Active commitment	Theatrical performance
Antonella Madonna	Camorra	Wife of mafia boss Natale Dantese	Active Commitment	Active commitment	Theatrical performance
Rita Atria	Cosa Nostra	Daughter of mafia boss don Vito Atria	No	Active commitment	Cultural performance
Piera Aiello	Cosa Nostra	Wife of mafioso Nicolò Atria	No	Active commitment	Cultural performance
Petralia Margaret	Cosa Nostra	Wife of mafioso Gaspare Sugamiele	No	Active commitment	Cultural performance
Felicia Bartolotta Impastato	Cosa Nostra	Wife of mafioso Luigi Impastato	No	Active commitment	Cultural performance
Lea Garofalo	'Ndrangheta	Ex-partner of mafioso Carlo Cosco	No	Active commitment	Cultural performance

Denise Garofalo	'Ndrangheta	Daughter of mafioso Carlo Cosco	No	Active commitment	Cultural performance
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**HIGHLIGHTS**

- **The stories of thirty-five mafia women are explored through crime-resistance nexus.**
- **The importance of performance in mafia family is highlighted.**
- **Functional, theatrical and cultural performances are introduced.**
- **Performance is a more determinative factor than masculinity.**
- **Both men and women embrace similar behaviors in a mafia family.**

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