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Nonviolent Resistance Against the Mafia: Italy

Nonviolent resistance to the Mafia in Italy is not a new phenomenon. Many readers are familiar with the campaigns of Danilo Dolci, the activist, educator, social reformer, writer, and poet. Over the course of the second part of the twentieth century, Dolci strove “to break the closed circle of poverty” in Sicily.¹ Known as the Italian Gandhi, he targeted the Mafia and corrupt, conniving government and clerical power-holders, linking their malfeasance to the grinding destitution, hunger, and violence he witnessed on the island. His nonviolent tactics included fasts, demonstrations, manifestos, alternative social institutions, sit-ins, radio broadcasts disrupting the government’s monopoly of the airwaves, strikes, and a reverse strike or “work-in” that garnered international attention.² Dolci and his followers—from illiterate villagers to trade unionists and intellectuals—challenged acquiescence to the exploitative system, pressured the state to support local development (including the construction of a long-awaited dam and access to clean water), and fostered community empowerment and cooperation. In spite of these collective efforts, the Mafia’s grip on Sicily remained tight. But in the first decade of the new century, a group of young people resumed the unfinished struggle.

Context

Corruption and the Mafia

For Edoardo Zaffuto, one of the founders of the youth anti-Mafia movement Addiopizzo (Good-bye, protection money), corruption and orga-

nized crime are two illicit sides of the same coin.³ In his hometown of Palermo, “[Corruption] is managed by the Mafia; they are the monopoly of the corrupt system.”⁴ The link between the two is not exclusive to Sicily; corruption and organized crime essentially go hand in hand.⁵ The most common forms of collusion are between crime syndicates and corrupt officials at all levels of government.⁶ As well, ties can exist between organized crime and political parties, members of Parliament, and various parts of the private sector, media, and organized religion.

Corruption can be a catalyst, facilitator, or by-product of organized crime. First, endemic corruption impedes growth, development, and legitimate economic and political activities. This situation creates an environment ripe for organized crime to emerge, as wealth can most easily be generated through illicit means, and a ready pool of disadvantaged and disaffected people, often youth, is available to be recruited.⁷ Second, corruption can facilitate organized crime because criminal organizations need state complicity in order to avoid punishment and prosecution; engage in trafficking, smuggling, and money laundering; gain protection; and infiltrate the legitimate economy. Consequently, “Corruption provides criminal groups the opportunity to operate under relatively safe circumstances.”⁸ Finally, where organized crime flourishes, corruption also increases as such groups step up their efforts of collusion in order to facilitate their operations.

By the early 1990s, the long-established Cosa Nostra Mafia operated throughout Sicily, killing at will—including Libero Grassi in 1991, a Palermitan businessman who publicly refused to pay extortion money, and in 1992, two judges, Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino. Popular outrage over these assassinations sparked protests. Residents hung sheets with anti-Mafia slogans from balconies. But in these instances, people reacted to an external event, explained Zaffuto. “The problem was that when the shock went down, the movement disappeared.”

As a result, the Mafia changed tactics. In what is described as the Corleone II phase, it kept a low profile and refrained from such brazen acts of violence in order to minimize public anger. Nevertheless, according to Zaffuto, the Mafia actively infiltrated the economy and sought new allies within the political class locally and nationally. An estimated 58 percent of Sicilian businesses overall, and 80 percent of those in Palermo, had in the previous decade paid protection money—known in the local slang as *pizzo*, referring to a bird’s beak pecking here and there.⁹ A 2007 study by Antonio La Spina, a University of Palermo professor who examined confiscated *pizzo* ledgers, calculated that in Sicily alone, the Mafia took in US\$260 million. However, public resent-

ment lingered below the surface, and more importantly, a new generation was beginning to question the status quo.¹⁰

Obstacles and Challenges

The biggest obstacle for grassroots resistance to the Mafia was people's mind-set. In Sicily there was a pervasive climate of fear coupled with apathy. The public generally felt powerless that things could be different or that they themselves could be drivers of such change. Traditionally, an anti-Mafia stance was seen as a legal battle, delegated to experts. Additionally, the Mafia had a system of control, enrichment, and power to which people were accustomed. Paying pizzo was not only the norm, it was a habit. As those who singularly rebelled were inevitably punished, they were considered foolhardy by the populace.

As time went by, Addiopizzo discerned other challenges, what they came to call "hidden opponents." These included the commercial and professional organizations, which in the past discouraged their members from speaking up or going to the police, in part because so many had ties to the Mafia or were paying pizzo. When Grassi defied the Mafia, he was abandoned and even criticized by the Sicilian branch of Confindustria, the Italian employers' confederation.¹¹ Finally, the political establishment was viewed as an obstacle. Traditionally, politicians were quite hesitant to speak out against organized crime. Some have been found to have ties to the Cosa Nostra; more recently, some politicians bluster anti-Mafia rhetoric in order to gain popularity but do not follow through with actions, stated Zaffuto.

From Sticker to Social Movement

Origins

"In the beginning there was a sticker."¹² Resembling a traditional Sicilian obituary notice affixed to neighborhood lampposts, it read, "An entire people who pays pizzo is a people without dignity." On the morning of June 29, 2004, when the residents of Palermo, Italy, ventured out of their homes, they found their town plastered with these stickers. A spontaneous act by seven friends set in motion a chain of events that gave birth to a powerful anti-Mafia movement that is inspiring others. The youth had come together to talk about opening a pub when one said that they should not forget about having to pay pizzo. That distasteful realization prompted their defiance. The response from the townsfolk, however, took them by surprise. Rather than the usual silence, people began

to react. According to Zaffuto, “It was a shock. It forced people to think about what was taboo.” In the coming days, the group brought more friends together and decided to create a website, which garnered more support from others who wanted to become involved.

During the first year, the youth remained anonymous, but they concluded that they had to come forward if they expected fellow citizens to do the same. Several went public together, to show that the group had no leader and also to protect themselves, as the Mafia’s proclivity is to attack lone dissenters. During 2005 they launched several daring nonviolent actions. Taking inspiration from the 1992 sheet protests, they hung their own with anti-Mafia slogans on the railings and bridges of the city’s ring road. At a soccer match they unfurled a sheet that said, “United Against the Pizzo,” along with their website address, which garnered more support, including from Giorgio Scimeca, the owner of a village pub who had refused to pay extortion money and subsequently lost his customers. Upon learning about his plight, Addiopizzo rallied around him. In February and March of that year, every Saturday night a group of youth traveled to the countryside to patronize the establishment, showing the locals that people in Palermo supported the owner. Consequently, the villagers surmounted their fear and came back. The bar was saved, and the Mafia has since left it alone. Scimeca became the first business owner to formally take the anti-pizzo pledge.

Vision, Mission, and Early Strategies

While engaging in these nonviolent tactics, the group began strategizing and planning about how to harness this outpouring of attention and energy. Their vision is to wrest Sicily from Mafia control and, above all, to gain freedom. “For us living in Palermo, the Cosa Nostra is a power more similar to a dictatorship,” said Zaffuto. “They control the economy, politics, even the way people think. They influence our everyday life even when we don’t realize it.” As an example, he cited poor neighborhoods under Mafia control, which he said are deliberately kept depressed so that people remain dependent on the mob. Even public funds—taxpayers’ money—go to the Mafia; through a combination of corruption and intimidation, organized crime influences public tenders. “This fight, for these things, is to free ourselves,” he said.

To this end, Addiopizzo’s mission is to “push people to stand up to Mafia domination.”¹³ The young strategists astutely reasoned that it was impossible to confront the Mafia in its entirety, which is a vast, layered, mostly covert network. Nor could Addiopizzo focus on every type of illicit activity. Thus, they decided to stick to their initial target of pizzo for a number of reasons:

- It serves as a symbol of an economy twisted and controlled by organized crime.
- Pizzo is the most visible aspect of the oppressive system, and is real rather than abstract.
- Pizzo affects the entire community, either directly or indirectly.
- Pizzo is easily understood by regular citizens.
- The injustice runs counter to people's sense of fairness.
- It stunts Palermo's economic development.¹⁴
- Pizzo is the principal method through which the Mafia exerts domination over citizens and territory.¹⁵
- Extortion is an important source of income and is used to support the Mafia structure. They use pizzo to pay the "wages" of extortionists and other lower-level operatives, cover the fees of lawyers defending accused mafiosi, and provide financial support to families of jailed mafiosi.

An initial insight was that Addiopizzo had touched a nerve that had not been disturbed in the past: collective shame. However, this feeling needed to be fused with a sense of collective responsibility in order to mobilize citizens. To this end, the movement's founding propositions were as follows:

- If you live in a town that pays protection money, you are part of the system and helping the Mafia.
- The time has come to get over the idea that the anti-Mafia fight is delegated to others, that people themselves cannot do anything about the Mafia.
- Everyone has a responsibility to do something.
- Every single person in Palermo who agrees can be part of this movement.

Inspired by fair-trade products, ethical purchases, and consumer boycott campaigns, the youth came up with the idea of "ethical consumerism"—bringing together two major sectors in Palermo: businesses that refuse to pay pizzo and consumers who support them. To launch this initiative required cumulative steps, as shop owners were frightened and locals felt disempowered.

Not to be daunted, Addiopizzo came up with an interim strategy: identify people who would pledge to patronize future pizzo-free businesses. Addiopizzo painstakingly collected and published the names of 3,500 Palermitans. Zaffuto reported that, for the city, "It was a big deal!" The tactic was not only bold and unusual, it constituted the

movement's first collective act of anti-Mafia resistance involving regular citizens. Through the list, Addiopizzo demonstrated power in numbers, which they understood was essential in order to defy organized crime. The list also became a potent tool for the second step of their strategy: convincing businesses to publicly refuse to pay pizzo. "We showed [the owners] all these people won't leave you alone," recalled Zaffuto. The movement argued that, in the past, those who rebelled—such as Libero Grassi—were on their own and were actually deserted by their fellow entrepreneurs. Thus, it was easy for the Mafia to silence them, just as an individual worker can be suppressed with more ease than a collection of workers in a union. But now, Addiopizzo and thousands of Palermitans would stand by those who refused to obey the crime syndicate, and not only provide visible solidarity but also economic support as consumers. In one year, through great effort, Addiopizzo succeeded in getting one hundred businesses on board.

According to Aldo Penna, the owner of *Il Mirto e la Rosa* restaurant, there are three types of owners who join the movement: those who open a business and don't want to pay from the outset (often young entrepreneurs), those who are paying and want to stop, and those caught by the police because their name was in a confiscated pizzo ledger. Once involved, a chain reaction is activated as each business not only becomes an example to others but the owner actively recruits new members. For Penna, associating with Addiopizzo "provided the way to keep the Mafia away."¹⁶ Ultimately, his vision is for "a normal city without violence and fear."

Consumo Critico (Ethical Consumerism)

On June 29, 2006, at a major press conference, Addiopizzo officially launched the *Consumo Critico* campaign, the keystone defining method of the movement. The first objective of the campaign was to shift public awareness about collective responsibility and power. The movement drove home the following message: "In Palermo, 80 percent of the shops pay pizzo. When I buy something, I indirectly finance the Mafia. I am part of the 'entire people without dignity.' What can I do, what is my power? I am a consumer. I can choose." That citizens can play a role in the struggle through simple daily acts such as shopping was a revolutionary notion, said Zaffuto. The campaign created catchy slogans encompassing these messages: *Contro Il Pizzo*, *Cambi I Consumi* (Against pizzo, change your shopping habits) and *Pago Chi Non Paga* (I pay those who don't pay). The campaign was based upon two complementary tactics—businesses refusing to pay pizzo and a reverse boycott,

whereby consumers support those establishments that are Mafia-free. These civic actions undermined the crime group through civil disobedience (disobeying the Cosa Nostra), power of numbers (active moral and economic solidarity with those who disobeyed, thereby encouraging defiance and making repression more difficult), and disruption (of the crime group's system of control and enrichment).

A set of supplementary tactics was developed in the ensuing years to bolster the initiative, including

- Special stickers on windows of pizzo-free shops, which can be seen on the streets of Palermo today.
- Pizzo-free yellow pages.
- Product labeling.
- Website and e-newsletters.
- Maps with locations of the businesses.
- Annual three-day “Pizzo-Free Festival” in May, including stalls, food, performances, music, workshops, and above all, the opportunity for the anti-Mafia businesses and citizens to meet one another en masse.
- Music and theatre skits.
- Pizzo-free emporium opened by a movement member.
- Sports—following the suggestion of an athlete, Mafia-free shopkeepers sponsored a semiprofessional basketball team, Addiopizzo Basket, which garnered media attention from local television and sports newspapers. The objective was to demonstrate how sports can also incorporate ethical practices, as there have been cases of fake athletic sponsorships for tax evasion.
- Pressuring public institutions and the municipality to adopt the practices of ethical consumerism in their procurement and contracting activities. The movement only had occasional success with this tactic, with a few schools and some public events that needed goods and services, such as catering.
- Joint rallies and demonstrations with other civic groups—for example, to demand the resignation of Salvatore Cuffaro, then governor of Sicily. He stepped down in January 2008, after being convicted of passing state secrets to a Mafia godfather while in office. He was finally jailed in January 2011 after losing a final appeal.¹⁷

In order to prevent Mafia infiltration and check the veracity of business owners who sought to join Addiopizzo, the youth set up a volunteer subgroup to conduct inquiries. Through this effort, Zaffuto remarked

that they have cultivated good contacts with some of the police and have developed “a variety of expertise.”

Retaliation and Backfire

At first, according to Zaffuto, the Mafia didn't take Addiopizzo seriously. But by 2006, as the movement was eroding the mob's reign of fear over Palermo and the number of businesses openly defying extortion grew to 230, the Cosa Nostra retaliated.¹⁸ On July 31, 2007, it set fire to the warehouse of a painting and hardware distribution company owned by Addiopizzo member Rodolfo Guajana. The movement faced an existential test. The youth knew that they had to rally support and help Guajana get back into business. “If he failed, we would all fail because it would have shown that we cannot protect people who reject the Mafia,” explained Zaffuto. Rather than cower, the movement made the Mafia's violence backfire. It rallied support from citizens, who collected money for the unemployed staff. The youth worked behind the scenes and demonstrated on the street to secure a new and bigger warehouse from the Sicilian government through anti-Mafia compensation laws. A few months later, Guajana was back in business, and two men were convicted for the arson, Mafia boss Salvatore Lo Piccolo and one of his thugs.¹⁹

Addiopizzo youth are also in the field to protect honest officials and rebellious shopkeepers. They conduct sit-ins and send letters to local and national newspapers in solidarity with judges, and supporting businesspeople who denounce the Cosa Nostra. In a case that sent shock waves through Palermo, Vincenzo Conticello, the owner of the oldest restaurant in Palermo, Antica Focacceria San Francesco, publicly identified his extortionist in court in October 2007. He said later, “The moment I arrived at the court, I saw a huge crowd. Many young people with the ‘Goodbye Pizzo’ T-shirt. The presence of all these people really gave me strength. I realized that it wasn't just my personal battle; it was the battle of an entire city.”²⁰

Tactical Diversity

Addiopizzo conducts a host of actions that are strategically derived to further short-term or longer-term objectives. It has an on-the-ground presence in Palermo in order to directly engage citizens, communicate messages, build support, and keep the anti-Mafia rebellion visible. The youth commemorate the loss of “anti-Mafia martyrs” by cooperating with other civic groups such as Fondazione Falcone on events or holding their own actions. In 2008 and 2009 they organized a bike march

from the location where Libero Grassi was murdered to symbolic landmarks where victories have been won against the Cosa Nostra. More recently, a special effort is being made to reach out to young people in general, who, Zaffuto says, “are eager to be involved, but they want someone to push them.” As a result, Addiopizzo is organizing socially oriented events in pizzo-free spaces such as bookstores and restaurants.

Systemic Approach

The movement grew to realize that focusing only on organized crime wasn’t enough. A system of linkages exists between it and other parts of society, consisting of interdependent relationships, common interests, and mutual gain. For Zaffuto, “That is why it’s been so hard to beat the Mafia.” The movement now sees the struggle as having three components—first and foremost the economic realm, but also the social/cultural and the political realms—all of which require ongoing tactics designed to disrupt the entire system.

Unity

To this end, the movement began to strategize over how to build a broad social consensus and undermine the ties between organized crime and various parts of society. “Year by year we try to ally with new sectors,” said Zaffuto. For example, a committee has been established to reach out to the influential Catholic Church establishment, which traditionally has been quiet about the Mafia. In addition to engaging university students and professors, Addiopizzo established contact with higher education administrations. For instance, since 2005, in the administrative letter sent to each student at the beginning of the academic year, the University of Palermo includes a statement of support for the movement and a form that students can complete and mail back to become “Addiopizzo consumers.” As well, the movement has developed good relations with the anti-Mafia branches of the police and judiciary. Ignazio De Francisci, a senior investigative magistrate in Palermo, sees them as the most inspiring symbol of the new fearlessness of the population.²¹

Ethics and Accountability

“The history of the Mafia is connected to official power,” observed Zaffuto. To weaken these ties, Addiopizzo devised a twofold strategy. First, the movement works—often in cooperation with other civic groups—to expose political collaboration (regardless of party affiliation) with the Cosa Nostra and to pressure public institutions and politicians to adopt

policies and bills that undermine these links and increase accountability. Tactics include joint street demonstrations with other civic groups and support for honest politicians and officials. Second, the movement seeks to build public awareness that even voting can help maintain the Mafia's hegemony, and citizens can thus wield power through their votes to demand integrity and withdraw support from those who collaborate with organized crime. Prior to local, regional, and even national elections, the movement conducts "name-and-shame communication campaigns." They release information about candidate backgrounds and Mafia ties while building awareness about the consequences of vote buying and Mafia corruption.

However, the impact has not been invariably successful. For example, during the 2007 mayoral elections in Palermo, Addiopizzo attempted to get all five candidates to promise in writing to take specific measures against the Mafia if elected. The incumbent and eventual winner, Diego Cammarata, refused. This was a lesson, according to Zaffuto, that "Addiopizzo needs to be louder and stronger on the political side without losing its nonpartisan reputation."

Education

Quite early on, the civic initiative recognized that to transform Palermitan society, it was necessary to begin with children, so that the next generation would have a different mind-set about the Mafia and corruption. As early as 2004, the youth began conducting informal meetings and talks at schools. They soon were approached by elementary, middle, and high school teachers, university student groups, and even professors. They developed a multifaceted program to engage and educate young people.²² The objectives, explained Francesca Vannini, who runs the projects, are to re-create the dynamics of Addiopizzo in the schools, motivate children to think about the problems caused by the Mafia, set goals for activities and develop strategies to reach their goals, and encourage students to work together in a "creative and grassroots way."

The program has evolved over the years and is adapted for different grade levels. Addiopizzo volunteers facilitate all the activities in cooperation with teachers. In 2007 the movement launched Addiopizzo Junior, which are clubs starting at the elementary level. Children organize events, such as sending out notices to the movement's e-list of ethical consumers, and getting together at a Mafia-free *gelateria* (ice cream café), where they can meet the owner and ask questions. One group even composed an anti-Mafia rap song and performed it for Giorgio Napolitano, the president of Italy. That same year, the national Ministry

of Education learned about the program, which led to financial support for educational activities. Also in 2009, children in twenty-three schools conducted surveys about attitudes toward the Mafia in their localities, including in economically deprived neighborhoods associated with organized crime. Accompanied by a teacher and a movement volunteer, children asked fifteen questions of locals, from their own parents to neighbors and shopkeepers. A video and book were released out of the collective experience. By 2010, seventy-three schools were involved in the educational program, of which twenty-five had allocated a special room for meetings called Fortino de la Legalità (legality fort).

Strength Through Expansion and Diversification

While the movement's focus is on the Cosa Nostra in Palermo, the youth believe that their struggle has no boundaries. As word of their actions grew, inquiries and requests for talks began to come in from across Italy. Other people in the country wanted to take part in the struggle, and the youth could gain valuable allies and support as well as increase participation in the movement, generate funds, bring in new business for pizzo-free enterprises, and inform the public. As a result, two new initiatives were born in 2009. The first is Addiopizzo Community. Its strategic objective is to build a "social network that can be a tool for supporters of the civic initiative to meet and discuss," reports Zaffuto. Members pay a modest EUR 10 fee to join and can also purchase T-shirts, both of which contribute funds for the movement. By 2011, there were approximately 1,000 members, including non-Italians. The second is Addiopizzo Travel; this commercial arm organizes educational and recreational pizzo-free tours of Sicily in Italian, English, and German. For tourists, Addiopizzo Travel conducts a range of organized tours as well as Mafia-free tourism options for independent travelers. "We want people to discover the real Sicily and show them that not all Sicilians are mafiosi, but also educate them about the anti-Mafia struggle," said Zaffuto. School trips are designed for different age groups, providing "cultural awareness through firsthand experience of a living revolution."²³ They combine sightseeing with on-the-ground learning about the anti-Mafia struggle, including meetings with activists and veterans, such as those who struggled in earlier decades alongside Danilo Dolci.

In June 2011 another dimension was added to the educational tours: cooperation with universities. As part of an ongoing relationship between Addiopizzo and the Terrorism, Organised Crime, and Global Security MA degree program at Coventry University, twenty-four students took part in a study trip to Sicily.²⁴

Movement Attributes

Image

The movement cultivated three strategic attributes concerning its image:

- *Youth*, not only in terms of age, but also in spirit. According to Enrico Colajanni, president of *Liberio Futuro*, an antiracketeering association, for those in the older generation this attribute has been particularly important to revitalize the anti-Mafia struggle.²⁵ He said that for too long it had negative associations, such as sadness, murder, and dry legal strategies. The movement brought new life and a sense of hope to the struggle. Zaffuto echoed these impressions. He said, “With us there is joy. People see that anti-Mafia is no longer something sad.”
- *Rebellion*, channeled into action against what Addiopizzo views as “the most authoritarian power in Sicily, the Mafia.”
- *Freedom* from the Mafia, for Palermo and its citizens.

Organization, Leadership, and Finances

The movement’s structure evolved over time. Under Italian laws, in order to operate, it needed to have a legal identity. Consequently, on May 18, 2005, the group officially created a nonprofit association called the *Comitato Addiopizzo*. The movement has a core of about sixty young volunteers, many in their twenties, mostly university and high school students. Some of the original founders have now reached their thirties. From the outset, they decided to be open and transparent. The leadership is shared, both because of the collective nature of the movement and to avoid giving the Mafia targets. Addiopizzo has two decisionmaking bodies: the *Direttivo*, a core group of six elected members who have the authority to make quick decisions; and the *General Assembly*, composed of all members, in which decisions are taken by democratic vote.

Within the movement are working teams, each with its own focus—for example, business owners, the wider Addiopizzo community, the legal group staffed by young lawyers, educational programming, and institutional matters. Membership is fluid, both joining and leaving, said Zaffuto. Addiopizzo developed a procedure for involvement, whereby new recruits are quickly integrated through placement into the working teams. They are considered “rookies” and do not immediately have the right to vote. In 2011 Addiopizzo had ten staff persons through the

Servizio Civile Nazionale (National Civil Service), a state program that offers young adults (ages eighteen to twenty-eight) a twelve-month work opportunity in the civic realm.

As the movement has grown, so has it developed creative approaches to funding, such as the aforementioned Addiopizzo Travel. Yet it began and remains a voluntary organization, made possible through the time, skills, and efforts of its members, who initially pooled their own resources to cover outlays. It also accepts donations through its website. In 2007 the youth secured an apartment through the anti-Mafia compensation laws, which they converted into an office. In 2009 they received EUR 70,000 from the Ministry of Education, for the youth education initiatives involving cooperation with local schools. That year they applied for support in the amount of EUR 1,168,264 from the Ministry of the Interior for several activities, including the introduction of a “pizzo-free discount card” for consumers. The application was approved, and the funds were released in 2011.

Communications

The movement uses traditional and unconventional methods to channel its messages. It taps the ideas and energy from its own activists and the larger Addiopizzo community. Messages are delivered through stickers, sheets and banners, T-shirts, websites, web banners, social networking (Facebook, YouTube, blogging, Internet mailing lists, e-newsletters), leaflets, advertising (billboards), children’s rap songs, poster contests in partnership with Solidaria (a civil society organization supporting Mafia victims), theatre skits, and media coverage and interviews. The overriding message has not changed since an impetuous group of friends plastered Palermo with stickers: “An entire people who pays pizzo is a people without dignity.” But now, that sentiment has been balanced by a new, positive slogan: “An entire people that doesn’t pay pizzo is a free people.” Over the years, the movement has had two main targets:

- *Consumers*: Messages are designed to cultivate a sense of shared responsibility and participation in the struggle, through the notion that change can only happen through the cooperation of all in society.
- *Business owners*: Messaging seeks to make them feel comfortable with the idea that the time has come for change. Moreover, refusing to pay pizzo is not only ethical but financially beneficial, and now it is possible to be protected from the Mafia.

The communications strategy is undergoing an evaluation. Zaffuto acknowledged that they have not had a long-term strategy, and efforts have been largely event-driven. The youth are in the process of developing a “wider framework for communication.”

Outcomes

By the end of 2012, there were 1,000 businesses in the network that publicly refuse to pay pizzo, mostly in Palermo and Catania.²⁶ “The Mafia doesn’t ask for money from these businesses because they are a *camurria*” [Sicilian slang for a pain in the derriere], reported Zaffuto. When a detained mafioso used this term to slight the movement, activists took it as a compliment and a confirmation that their strategies and actions were working.²⁷ In fact, when Palermo’s Deputy prosecutor of the Anti-Mafia Directorate, Calogero Ferrara, listened to police wiretaps, he heard mafiosi ordering their henchmen not to target an Addiopizzo store because they won’t be paid and they fear getting arrested.²⁸ By 2008 the list of consumers grew to 10,000. At that point, they decided it was no longer necessary to maintain the list because public consciousness had shifted and “people didn’t need to sign anything anymore,” said Zaffuto.

Another outcome was Libero Futuro. The name has a double meaning—a “future with freedom” and a “future in the name of Libero [Grassi].” Established by “oldies” in 2007, this apolitical, voluntary civic group is a “strategic instrument,” founded to complement Addiopizzo, said Colajanni.²⁹ It added a heretofore missing element to the struggle and the people power dynamic of disruption—encouraging business owners to testify to the police and the courts against extortionists. While the youth movement emboldens businesses to refuse to pay pizzo and mobilizes citizens around them, Libero Futuro increases the risk for the Mafia to demand extortion money.³⁰ It accomplishes this objective by working individually with businesspeople to go through the denunciation (*denuncia*) process, which Colajanni states is the only way to cut ties with the Mafia once extortion has begun. Libero Futuro provides legal, economic, and psychological support and services every step of the way. Once the judicial track is over, it encourages the entrepreneurs to join the civic initiative and take the anti-pizzo pledge. Libero Futuro has forty members and, since its founding, has helped over 150 shopkeepers and entrepreneurs. As with Addiopizzo, Libero Futuro sees its power coming from the grass roots. Colajanni explained, “We need to start from the bottom so we can push.

We have to organize a community of people against the Mafia, so when someone denounces a mafioso, they are not alone.”³¹ For Zaffuto, *Libero Futuro* and *Addiopizzo* are “two faces of the same strategy.” “We complete each other,” he reflected.

A third outcome was denunciation cases. In 2007 *Addiopizzo* had a breakthrough when it was approached by a businessperson already paying *pizzo* who wanted to stop and break free from the Mafia’s clutches. It was an affirmation that the movement could offer protection—through people power—that did not exist in the past. In 2008 the movement and *Libero Futuro* convinced several owners, whose names were found in a confiscated *pizzo* ledger, to testify against the Mafia. Between 2007 and 2010 Zaffuto reported that fifty shopkeepers denounced, or in his words, “rebelled” against the Mafia.

The youth movement also inspired new civic initiatives beyond Palermo. When the *Addiopizzo* stickers were launched in 2010, it posted a free download on its website to encourage others to resist the Mafia. The stickers soon started appearing in other parts of Sicily. Thanks to the antiracket association FAI (*Federazione Nazionale Antiracket*), an ethical consumerism campaign was launched in Naples.³² The campaign spread to the towns of Catania and Messina.³³ The impact can be felt all the way in Germany. In 2007, after the *Ndrangheta* Mafia went on a murder spree, killing six Italians one night in Duisberg, Laura Garavini, an Italian German, took direct inspiration from *Addiopizzo*. Together with some Italian restaurant owners, she founded *Mafia Nein Danke* (*Mafia no thanks*) in Berlin. Many more soon joined, and all were required to take a written pledge “not to employ any person maintaining contact with Mafia groups and to report every attempt of blackmailing to the police.”³⁴ In December of that year, after dozens of Italian restaurant owners had been threatened and one establishment set on fire, forty-four businesspeople reported the extortion to the Berlin police.³⁵

Finally, a breakthrough outcome concerned shifting complacent or complicit sectors. *Addiopizzo* and *Libero Futuro*’s efforts to change policies and practices among the commercial and professional associations continue. On August 29, 2010, the groups achieved an important victory. Ivan Lo Bello, president of the Sicilian branch of *Confindustria*, the Italian employers’ association, asserted that it had expelled all members who had contacts with the Mafia, including those who payed extortion money. He also extended an apology to Grassi’s widow for their “abandonment of her husband,” declaring, “the moral responsibility of the assassination is ours.”³⁶ In addition, the Sicilian regional branch of *Confcommercio*, the main entrepreneurs’ association in the fields of

trade/sales, tourism, and services, began cooperating with Addiopizzo in 2010, resulting in 140 of its member businesses joining the movement.

Case Analysis

Expanding and Reframing the Struggle

“Addiopizzo added a new actor to the anti-Mafia struggle—the citizen,” reflected Colajanni. Any Palermitan can be a part of the community that wants to reclaim its dignity and gain freedom from organized crime. Even children are viewed as players and are engaged through educational programs and creative tactics, such as neighborhood surveys. While the geographical focus is Palermo, the struggle arena has no boundaries. Regular people, inside the country and internationally, can participate through the Addiopizzo Community and Addiopizzo Travel. The movement deliberately set out to reframe the struggle from a legalistic, law enforcement approach removed from people’s daily lives. The youth cultivated a sense of rebellion that combined a feeling of shared responsibility with individual acts of resistance, from refusing to pay pizzo to patronizing Mafia-free shops. They invigorated the struggle by balancing the negative—oppression and suffering—with the positive—collective empowerment, hope, and change through incremental victories.

Deconstructing the Racketeering System

In order to effectively fight the Mafia, Addiopizzo, later with Libero Futuro, needed to understand how it functioned on the ground. While they, of course, did not have intimate knowledge, it was nevertheless possible to examine what made the mob strong and devise actions to change this. Three key, complementary strategies evolved that cumulatively increased disobedience to the Cosa Nostra:

1. *Disruption of the extortion system on the ground.* However complex the entire system of racketeering is, one crucial pillar upon which it rests is business owners complying with extortion threats. Hence, once a sizeable number of them begin refusing to pay, the system is disrupted and starts to weaken.

2. *Increasing risk.* Encouraging and supporting people willing to say no to the Mafia through testimonies against extortionists heightens the overall risk for the mob. As importantly, it increases risk for its foot soldiers, whom the criminal “godfathers” rely upon to intimidate businesses and collect pizzo.

3. *Replicating Mafia functions.* However dreadful it is, the Cosa Nostra carries out various functions. Addiopizzo and Libero Futuro understood that in order to impact the crime group, in some respects they have to beat it at its own game. The mob provides protection—from itself—through pizzo. Thus, this anti-Mafia front offers its own form of protection through people power. For some in Palermo, the Mafia engenders a sense of authority and collective identity; the movement cultivates an alternative collective community based on nonviolent resistance and dignity. The mob sponsors athletics—albeit as a front for money laundering. Addiopizzo supported a team, but through transparent contributions of clean money from extortion-free businesses. The Cosa Nostra has its network of legal enablers—such as lawyers, accountants, and unfortunately, even politicians—who are a source of know-how and resources. Libero Futuro provides business owners with legal, financial, and even psychological counsel, while Addiopizzo mobilizes citizens through reverse boycotts, which leads to sales—that is, resources and economic benefits—for those who refuse to pay protection money.

Provide a Way Out

A fundamental tenet of civil resistance is that not everyone associated with the oppressor is equally loyal. Through people power, switching loyalties and producing defections are possible, which also applies to the organized crime context. Whether they like it or not, those who pay pizzo are linked to the Cosa Nostra. However, many owners are complicit in the system because they fear the consequences of disobeying and cannot get out alone. Addiopizzo, Libero Futuro, and the collective actions of Palermitans present a safe way out of this venal, exploitative, and violent system. Offering a path for those within the illicit system to escape initiates a chain reaction. Each time someone is free of the mob, the movement gains an incremental victory that emboldens others to defect. Consequently, the anti-Mafia front doesn't need to motivate everyone at once in order to make progress.

Engagement

Where it fit with the movement's strategies and yielded benefits, youth engaged with the state. It cleverly made use of the legal system and anti-Mafia mechanisms by taking part in court cases and lawsuits against the Mafia and to gain reparations for businesses. As mentioned, it also secured confiscated Mafia properties for its office and replaced the torched warehouse of an Addiopizzo member. Finally, it identified and cultivated allies from within the school and university systems, Ministry of Education, law enforcement, and the judiciary.

Lessons Learned

Benefits of Grassroots Participation

Citizens have multiple talents and resources that civic initiatives can discover and nurture. They can be a source of creative strategies and tactics; their vigor, ideas, and skills can be encouraged and tapped, whether they are activists or regular people in the larger community. Colajanni observed, “Citizens bring a missing element and resources to the struggle. . . . If you organize people, you discover wonderful people, but when wonderful people are alone, their qualities don’t come out.”

In order to maximize people power, movements and campaigns need to develop multiple paths and an array of actions through which the public can participate. In the case of Addiopizzo, that included tapping existing civic organizations and fostering new initiatives. It launched diverse, innovative tactics, many of which were low-risk mass actions, such as patronizing Mafia-free businesses and fairs and attending basketball games. It systematically seeks to find new ways to appeal to and engage citizens, including youth.

Youth are often catalysts for change, not only because of their energy and creativity, but because they impact others around them, particularly the older generation. As an illustration, Zaffuto cited an outcome from their elementary school activities. A girl asked her father, a shopkeeper, whether he paid protection money. He was so ashamed to answer her that he contacted Addiopizzo. “His decision to rebel [against the Mafia] began with that question,” recalled Zaffuto.

Strategic Considerations

Three strategic lessons can be gleaned from Addiopizzo. First, winning people over from within the corrupt system not only weakens the illicit status quo and removes support for oppressors; it can yield practical and even tangible benefits for the movement or campaign. Civic initiatives often overlook the latter point in their strategic deliberations. In this case, Addiopizzo cultivates contacts and cooperative relations with state institutions, law enforcement authorities, and professional organizations, in spite of the Mafia’s links throughout the local society. The movement reaps benefits, such as the acquisition of information needed for its background checks on business owners who want to become part of the Mafia-free business community.

Second, Addiopizzo and Libero Futuro carefully studied the strengths, weaknesses, allies, enablers, attributes, and practices of the

Cosa Nostra, to the extent possible given its covert nature. Through this knowledge they were able to develop innovative tactics, compelling messages and symbols, and effective strategies, such as replicating particular Mafia functions and providing an escape from the illicit system.

Third, without realizing it, Addiopizzo put into practice a key insight of Mohandas Gandhi: “Even the most powerful cannot rule without the cooperation of the ruled.”³⁷ They applied the concept not to a dictator or occupier but to a crime syndicate and its system of oppression, extortion, and corruption over the townspeople of Palermo.

Intangibles

Synergy—whereby various aspects of the movement (including strategy, tactics, targets, objectives, messages, and alliances) are complementary or mutually reinforcing—helps build unity, maximize resources, generate people power, and improve prospects for longevity.

As well, dynamism—encompassing ongoing review, assessment, and adaptation—is an integral attribute of effective civil resistance. It fosters sharp strategic deliberations, tactical diversity, and compelling messaging that contribute to a civic initiative’s innovation, resilience, and ascendancy in the struggle.

Finally, as the efforts of a small group of activists evolve into an ongoing campaign or social movement involving hundreds if not thousands of people, leadership and organizational challenges can emerge. Finding a balance between dynamism and fluidity on the one hand, and a functional yet unencumbered structure and decisionmaking system on the other, can be critical to the civic initiative’s sustainability.

Notes

1. Joseph Amato, “Danilo Dolci, A Poetic Modernizer,” *Worldview*, December 1973, 32.

2. The latter was a form of civil disobedience whereby 200 jobless men repaired a road without compensation in defiance of police orders to desist. Seven were arrested. The action dramatized Sicily’s pervasive unemployment, and the ensuing court case was used to test the right to work enshrined in the Italian constitution; Joseph Amato, “Danilo Dolci: A Nonviolent Reformer in Sicily,” *Italian Americana* 4, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 1978): 215–235; “Danilo Dolci Leads Fast and Reverse Strike for Employment, 1956,” Global Nonviolent Action Database, Swarthmore University, <http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu>.

3. There are many definitions of organized crime. A holistic definition is as follows: criminal activities for material benefit by groups that engage in extreme violence; corruption of public officials, including law enforcement and judicial officers; penetration of the legitimate economy (e.g., through racketeering and money laundering); and interference in the political process (Marie

Chêne, “U4 Expert Answer: Organised Crime and Corruption,” U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Center, May 28, 2008).

4. This chapter is based on interviews with Edoardo Zaffuto, one of the founders of the Addiopizzo anti-Mafia movement in Palermo during June 2010, plus subsequent written communications, and a video presentation and Power-Point presentation (Clinton School of Public Service Speaker Series, University of Arkansas, April 27, 2009), www.clintonschoolspeakers.com.

5. Chêne, “U4 Expert Answer.”

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*, 6.

9. Zaffuto, presentation.

10. *Italy: Taking on the Mafia*, PBS *Frontline* World Documentary (Boston: WGBH, 2009), www.pbs.org.

11. “Libero Grassi, Confindustria chiede scusa Ivan Lo Bello: ‘Nostre responsabilità morali,’” *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, August 29, 2010, www.ilfattoquotidiano.it.

12. Zaffuto, presentation.

13. *Ibid.*

14. As an illustration of the scale of the economic distortion, a 2003 study by Indagine Censis-Fondazione estimated that if southern Italian businesses had not paid protection money from 1981 to 2001, the region’s per capita GDP (gross domestic product) would have reached that of northern Italy.

15. Pizzo is the entry point through which the Mafia begins to take control of a business or sector. First come threats, which can escalate to overt intimidation, vandalism, and physical violence. Once pizzo is established, more demands are often made—for example, one-off pizzo; payment-in-kind; imposed staff, suppliers, subcontractors, sources of credit, or business practices; restrictions on the business; and partnerships, which finally can lead to expropriation.

16. Aldo Penna, pizzo-free restaurateur, Palermo, Italy, June 2010, interview with author.

17. Associated Press, “Governor of Sicily Quits After Conviction,” *Seattle Times*, January 27, 2008, <http://seattletimes.nwsource.com>; “Sicily Senator Salvatore Cuffaro Jailed in Mafia Case,” BBC News, January 23, 2011, www.bbc.co.uk.

18. Associated Press, “Sicilian Businessmen Openly Defying Mafia in Rebellion Shaking Cosa Nostra to Its Core,” *Katu.com*, January 14, 2008, <http://www.katu.com>.

19. Katrina Onstad, “A New Way to See Sicily,” *New York Times*, May 6, 2011, <http://travel.nytimes.com>.

20. *Italy: Taking on the Mafia*.

21. Joshua Hammer, “In Sicily, Defying the Mafia,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, October 2010, www.smithsonianmag.com.

22. Francesca Vannini, Palermo, Italy, June 2010, interview with author.

23. Addiopizzo Travel, <http://www.addiopizzotravel.it>.

24. *Ibid.*

25. Enrico Colajanni, president, Libero Futuro, Associazione Antiracket Libero Grassi, Palermo, Italy, June 2010, interview with author.

26. Adrian Humphreys, "Beating the Mafia at Their Own Game: After Years of Paying a 'Protection Tax,' Palermo Businesses Came Together to Fight Back," *National Post*, January 23, 2013, www.addiopizzo.org.
27. Associated Press, "Governor of Sicily Quits After Conviction."
28. Humphreys, "Beating the Mafia."
29. Colajanni, interview with author.
30. Penna, interview with author.
31. Colajanni, interview with author.
32. Comitato Addiopizzo, www.pagochinonpaga.org/.
33. Rosaria Brancato, "'Pizzo Free,' a Messina inizia la campagna per il consumo critico 'pago chi non paga,'" *Tempostretto*, October 31, 2013, www.tempostretto.it.
34. Laura Garavini, "The Story of Mafia Nein Danke," <http://www.garavini.eu>.
35. Ibid.
36. "Libero Grassi."
37. Quote from Mohandas Gandhi, in Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall, *A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 62.

