Chapter 2

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

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 They are in principle withdrawn but in actual fact present in that ambience, and the mafia is not unrelated to some of the social commitments of co-op members.

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

A History of Relations: Mafia, Silence and Violence

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Two Points on Violence and Change

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Cooperatives and Anthropology: Beyond Divisions and Enclaves

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Industrial Democracy 'Experienced': Anthropology and Co-ops

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

'Protection'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Beyond) Divisions of Labour

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Zooming in on the Anti-mafia

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Material Anti-mafia

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOTES

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