

**Violent Organizations in Contemporary Europe:
A Comparison of Mafia and Paramilitary Organizations in
Northern Ireland and Sicily**

By

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Abstract

This thesis compares paramilitary organizations in Northern Ireland and mafia organizations in Sicily as violent organizations. It demonstrates the numerous similarities between these types of organizations in terms of their organizational structures and dynamics, and their role as economic, social and political actors. As such, it challenges conventional arguments about the nature of contemporary terrorist and criminal organizations in Europe, and offers an explanation for these similarities rooted in both the violent character of the organizations themselves and their location within territories characterized by the existence of functional, widely legitimate contemporary states.

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Introduction

i. Basis and Rationale for a Comparative Analysis

Despite the increased interest in both terrorism and organized crime since the end of the Cold War, as well the links and similarities between the two phenomena, few in-depth comparative cases studies of terrorist and criminal organizations exist. The concepts of terrorism and organized crime, moreover, because of the assumptions on which they are constructed, are not particularly helpful for providing a conceptual basis for such comparative analyses. The most unfortunate consequence of this lacuna in the debate has been that discussions of the links or similarities between terrorist and criminal organizations have remained speculative and theoretical. And while there is nothing inherently wrong with either theory or speculation (idle or otherwise), unless applied to empirical cases, it is easy for theoretical debates to become circular and, unfortunately, somewhat stale.

As such, this thesis aims to undertake a comparative case study of two groups of organizations, specifically, paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland and mafia organizations in Sicily, which have typically been presented as emblematic instances of terrorist and criminal organizations, respectively. By conducting such a comparative analysis, some of the problems inherent in studies that remain primarily theoretical can be avoided, and new avenues of inquiry (hopefully) opened. The prominence of the specific organizations being studied in the literature on organized crime and terrorism, moreover, will hopefully lend greater weight to the criticism of current comparative approaches and the assumptions on which they are based. Finally, in entering into a detailed analysis of these organizations, the value of limited but detailed attention to specific organizations

and their structures and dynamics, rather than broader but less in-depth surveys, will be emphasized as an important condition for moving the debate on the similarities between ‘criminal’ and ‘terrorist’ organizations forward.

ii. Structure of the Thesis

The structure of this thesis consists of three primary parts. The first chapter outlines and problematizes the concepts of ‘organized crime’ and ‘terrorism’ as analytical concepts and categories, and through a review of the comparative literature on terrorism and organized crime shows the inherent limits of employing these concepts to facilitate comparative analysis. Given these limitations, a more comprehensive and empirically verifiable concept, that of violent organizations, is then outlined and its value as a starting point for comparative analysis explained.

In the second chapter, paramilitary and mafia organizations are systematically compared. First, the applicability of the concept of violent organizations to these specific organizations is demonstrated, following which the organizations themselves are compared along a number of trajectories. These include the formal structures of the organizations, their organizational dynamics, and the role of both types of organizations as economic, social, and political actors. While the focus of this chapter is on the similarities between the organizations, where prominent their differences are also discussed, and possible explanations for these differences offered.

In the final chapter the focus turns to explaining the similarities between mafia and paramilitary organizations across the trajectories of comparison outlined in the second chapter. In order to facilitate this explanation, the concept of the modern state is introduced as an important variable, along with particular instances of the breakdown of

state authority in Sicily and Northern Ireland and their consequences. After offering explanations for the similarities discussed in the second chapter, the final chapter addresses the important question of why such organizations have emerged in Northern Ireland and Sicily specifically.

iii. Methodology and Limitations of Available Sources and Data

Studying illegal and secretive groups, as noted by the many academics who have attempted to do so, presents a number of particular challenges that are not typically encountered in social scientific research on other institutions and organizations (see for example Cressey 1967; Knox 2001). A number of traditional research tools – participant observation, in-depth interviews, survey instruments and statistical analysis – are generally not practical in this type of research due to difficulty of locating research subjects and obtaining their consent. This is compounded when the organizations being studied remain engaged in illegal activity, as are many of those which are the subject of this thesis. Additionally, there are the resource implications of attempting to conduct primary research: it has not been feasible to visit Northern Ireland and Sicily – the regions in which the organizations that are the subjects of this paper – for the purposes of this paper.

Given these limitations, this thesis makes use of, and hopefully builds upon, the primary research conducted by other scholars, as well as the growing body of both academic and journalistic literature dealing with mafia and paramilitary organizations in Sicily and Northern Ireland. Additionally, where available, use has been made of primary sources, including trial records and legal depositions of mafia members, parliamentary

proceedings from both Italy and the United Kingdom, and the reports of other state institutions in both countries.

With regard to these latter, however, it is important to note that access to such documents has not always been readily available, especially with regard to trial records and legal depositions. In the case of Northern Ireland this is due in part to the way these records have been classified. Dealing as many of them do with incidents defined as terrorist, public access to these records is extremely limited. Likewise, reports and internal documents of various government bodies – the British Army, Royal Ulster Constabulary, and Northern Ireland Office – are classified as secret documents and hence remain unavailable until thirty years after their creation. While trial records and depositions of members of mafia organizations from Italian courts are much more widely available and exist in the public domain, there are still access problems due to the fact that many of these have not been digitized, and are held in hard copy in various court archives throughout Italy. Accessing these documents thus generally requires in person visits to the relevant archives. Because these transcripts often contain not only the records of judicial proceedings against large numbers of defendants, but disclosure evidence such as surveillance photographs, banking records, and transcripts of telephone conversations as well, they are extremely voluminous. For example, the records of the *maxiprocesso* of 1986, in which over 400 individuals were tried for mafia-related crimes, run to more than 8,000 pages (Paoli 2003:13).

In addition to these limitations, there is also the difficulty of finding detailed and comprehensive information on some specific organizations. While many accounts deal only with the most prominent of mafia and paramilitary organizations in Sicily and

Northern Ireland, specifically the Provisional IRA, Ulster Defence Association, and Ulster Volunteer Force in Northern Ireland, and Cosa Nostra in Sicily, there are, in fact, many more organizations of varying size in each region. The following table provides a relatively comprehensive list.

Mafia and Paramilitary Organizations	
Sicily	Northern Ireland
Cosa Nostra	Provisional Irish Republican Army
Stidda	Official Irish Republican Army
Cursoti	Irish National Liberation Army
Pillera	Irish People's Liberation Organization
Cappello	Ulster Defence Association/Ulster Freedom Fighters
Mazzei	Ulster Volunteer Force
Pulvirenti	Red Hand Command
Savasta	Loyalist Volunteer Force
Sciuto – Tigna	Saor Eire
Sciuto – Coscia	Ulster Defence Association Southeast Antrim Brigade
Ceusi	Real Irish Republican Army
Laudani	Continuity Irish Republican Army

As can be seen, the number of different organizations under the categories of mafia and paramilitary organization, respectively, is quite large. Some of these groups, moreover, are quite small and limited in their geographic scope, despite sharing enough similarities with the larger organizations to be considered instances of the same organizational phenomena.

Comprehensive and reliable data on many of these organizations, however, is extremely difficult to find. In the case of Sicilian mafia organizations, the only organization to have been rigorously examined in the academic literature in either English or Italian is Cosa Nostra. Limited academic work has been done on the Stidda organization in the Italian language, but these sources have been largely inaccessible to

the author with minor exceptions, and the same has been the case with the Cursoti organization. For the other Sicilian mafia organizations, the limited sources available consist of official documents of varying detail produced by District Antimafia Departments, annual reports of the national Antimafia Investigation Department, and reports of parliamentary commissions, as well as articles in the Italian press.

Similar limitations apply to many of the paramilitary organizations in Northern Ireland. With the exception of the three organizations mentioned above, rigorous academic literature is limited, and the primary sources of information consist of publicly available reports prepared by parliamentary committees, the Independent Monitoring Commission, articles from the British and Irish press, and the limited treatments of the smaller organizations provided in works primarily dealing with the larger paramilitary organizations.

While every effort has been made to make the best use of these limited sources in attempting to provide a comprehensive and systematic comparison of paramilitary and mafia organizations, the limitations of the available sources obviously affect the extent to which rigorous conclusions can be drawn in some cases. As such, where findings are provisional, this is noted. Additionally, the bulk of the analysis has been limited to the organizations for which the most amount of quality information is available, with examples from the less studied organizations in both cases included where possible.

Chapter 1

Organized Crime, Terrorism, and a Theory of Violent Organizations

i. Organized Crime and Terrorism – Ideological and Practical Difficulties

It can be said without too much exaggeration that attempting to define both organized crime and terrorism can quickly lead one into a conceptual minefield. Besides being contested in the academic literature, both terrorism and organized crime are deeply political terms, employed in contradictory ways depending upon who is speaking and to which audience. In many jurisdictions they are also legal terms, meaning that their use and non-use in some contexts may also reflect not necessarily the views of the those using them but rather what they can or cannot prove in the context of a criminal prosecution. Making the problem worse is the tendency to use both terms adjectively to describe specific types of organization (ie. criminal or terrorist), which then are assumed to fit into distinct models and patterns of behaviour and action, as well as in an adverbial form to describe a particular activity as having been a case of organized crime or terrorism, regardless of the individual or group having conducted it.

To these grammatical tendencies in conceptualizing terrorism and organized crime must be added the political difficulties inherent in defining both concepts and applying them to specific groups, especially (but not only) when the definition created is to be used for enforcement purposes by a particular state institution. The reasons for this can be both ideological and practical. In the case of a terrorist organization which has the sympathy of a particular state, that state may wish to define terrorism in such a way as to exclude the particular organization. Hezbollah, for example, while listed as a terrorist organization by many Western states, is neither viewed nor defined as such by others such as Syria and Iran. As many sources have claimed (see Bahgat 1999), this is

obviously because both Syria and Iran actively support Hezbollah, and do so to further their own interests. Lebanon, like these two states, has also not classified Hezbollah as a terrorist organization, but in this case the reason appears more pragmatic: because of Hezbollah's military strength, popular support in certain areas of the country, and relative success in electoral competition, the state has been forced into a situation of accommodation. In slightly different terms, though there are no doubt some Lebanese state officials who would consider Hezbollah a terrorist organization, an attempt to officially define them as such would risk a confrontation the state may be unable to win. Such definitional inconsistency is not only to be found in non-Western states; the United States, for example, has historically adopted a similar position where it either believed its national interest to be at stake or where a domestic lobby was successful in keeping a group from being defined as a terrorist organization in spite of the views of other states. The Provisional IRA offers one prominent case of this (Byman 2005:129-132).

Defining a criminal organization can often be subject to similar difficulties. Organizations that employ terrorism and enjoy some level of popular support for the cause that they are seen to represent may well be defined in public statements as organized criminal groups by the state in an attempt to weaken their support base. This strategy was routinely employed by the British government in the case of Northern Ireland (Fierke 2009:500). Conversely, organizations that are popularly perceived to be prototypical examples of organized crime may never actually be defined as such in law, save in specific criminal cases as a one-off instance. This has been the case in Canada for a number of groups, most notably the Hells Angels Motorcycle Club. In this particular case, the reason is one of judicial expediency: defining specific groups in law as criminal

organizations would likely have no impact on either the activities of the groups or state efforts to combat them, and so such definitions have to date been avoided.

ii. Organized Crime and Terrorism – Conceptual Difficulties

As problematic as ideological and pragmatic definitions of organized crime and terrorism may be, the particular problems that they present are not per se the object of this study. The primary reason is because neither type of definition has as its aim an explanation. Political definitions seek to justify something, and in essence are rhetorical. Pragmatic definitions have the aim of limiting something for an instrumental purpose such as judicial prosecution or the definition of a specific policy. Both may well be, and often are, somewhat arbitrary.

If one aims to give a coherent explanation of organized crime and terrorism, or criminal organizations and terrorist organizations, however, more conceptually rigorous definitions are necessary. This is especially the case when attempting to compare organizations that have hitherto been mainly conceived as belonging to separate analytical categories. Conceptual definitions can also be of great assistance when attempting to wade through either pragmatic or ideological debates on controversial issues.

Unfortunately for the study of both terrorism and organized crime, however, there is very little coherence in regard to how the organizations that engage in such activities are to be defined. Confusing the issue even more is the fact that debates on terrorism and organized crime have tended to be carried out in isolation, with very little, until relatively recently, in terms of comparative literature between the two. While both organized crime

and terrorism have inspired significant bodies of literature, these have primarily been conducted by scholars from differing disciplinary backgrounds. Utilizing the concepts and models that each has developed, application outside of the discipline in question can be difficult. In quite simple terms, if there is very little consensus on applying a certain explanatory schema to explaining terrorism, it is difficult to take that same schema and apply it *carte blanche* to organized crime and assume it will engender any greater degree of consensus in its new application.

Rather than attempting to resolve the theoretical problems in the literature on terrorism and organized crime as a basis for the comparative case study in the next chapter, this section seeks to approach the problem from a different angle. Borrowing insights from historical sociology – specifically as outlined in the extensive work of Charles Tilly – the categories of criminal and terrorist organizations will be dispensed with in favour of a broader category into which at least some of the specific groups generally placed in one of these categories can be located. Before doing so, however, the remainder of this section will prepare the groundwork for such a task by showing the difficulties of both terrorist and criminal organization as distinct categories.

The traditional distinction between terrorist and criminal organizations is well known and, until relatively recently, more or less firmly accepted. Terrorist organizations have been accepted as being primarily motivated by political goals, and criminal organizations by financial ones. These two types are conceived as belonging to distinct categories, with a relatively clear line of demarcation separating them. The traditional view is aptly synthesized by the terrorism scholar Bruce Hoffman:

‘Like terrorists, criminals use violence as a means to attain a specific end. However, while the violent act itself may be similar – kidnapping, shooting, and arson, for

example – the purpose or motivation clearly is different...the criminal...is acting primarily for selfish, personal motivations (usually material gain). Moreover, unlike terrorism, the ordinary criminal's violent act is not designed or intended to have consequences or create psychological repercussions beyond the act itself...Perhaps most fundamentally, the criminal is not concerned with influencing or affecting public opinion; he simply wants to abscond with his money or accomplish his mercenary task in the quickest and easiest way possible so that he may reap his reward and enjoy the fruits of his labors. By contrast, the fundamental aim of the terrorist's violence is ultimately to change "the system" – about which the ordinary criminal, of course, couldn't care less.' (Hoffman 2006:36-7)

Hoffman's arguments for the traditional distinction are broad, and apply not only to organizations but to individuals as well, insofar as he recognizes that neither terrorism nor crime depend, per se, on an organization in order to be carried out.

With the end of the Cold War, however, especially among scholars of terrorism in particular, some attention began to be paid to some of the similarities between terrorist organizations and other 'non-state' actors in the context of new security threats. Medd and Goldstein, for example, in tracing the development of terrorism through the Cold War period and into the 1990s argued that organized crime in that decade had become an additional motivating factor for terrorist organizations and that there was a growing partnership between these and criminal organizations (1997:282). Despite this early argument for some form of convergence between the two phenomena, however, Hoffman's emphasis on motivations as a key distinction between terrorist and criminal organizations maintained a good deal of influence on the debate.

Shelley and Picarelli, for example, while noting a similarity in the methods employed by criminal and terrorist organizations, maintained a fundamental difference in the operative motives between the two and made explicit use of Hoffman's conceptualization of these differences (2002:308; 315). While terrorist and criminal organization crimes do not often differ in substance, they do differ in motive: one is

financial, the other political (2002:315). Sullivan (2002), Mair (2003), Leong (2004), Dishman (2001), Hamm and Van de Voorde (2005) and Hardouin and Weichhard (2006) also accept this distinction as fundamental to delineating these two types of organizations. Sanderson also assumes this motivational distinction while recognizing organizational and operational similarities, but makes the further distinction (implicit in the accounts cited) that criminal organizations are not built around adherence to religious or ideological tenets (2004:53; 55). Hutchinson and O'Malley, while recognizing the possibility of organizations that appear to mix these motivations, also maintain that the motivational distinction is the key distinction between terrorist and criminal organizations (2007:1103).

Tamara Makarenko, while still generally recognizing the importance of motivational distinction to differentiate between terrorist and criminal organizations argued for a slightly more nuanced view, pointing out that the distinction is often blurred in practice (2004:130). In placing organized crime and terrorism on the same continuum, however, she recognized the possibility of either type of organization changing over time, or becoming more or less politically or economically motivated at different historical points. Where the ultimate motives and aims of a terrorist and criminal organization no longer make them distinct from each other, according to her model, 'convergence' has occurred between the two types of phenomena (2004:135; see also Bjornehed 2004 who utilizes Makarenko's continuum theory).

In a break from their earlier arguments, Shelley and Picarelli appear to come closer to the views outlined by Makarenko in recognizing that, the motives of criminal and terrorist organizations are becoming increasingly similar, as are the behavioural and

operational methods of the two types of groups (2005:55). Picarelli (2006) develops this idea further, while explicitly recognizing that the motivational distinction is no longer as clear as it once appeared. Cornell goes even further in the same line of argument, and while taking issue with the explanatory value of Makarenko's model, nevertheless contends that the categorical distinction between criminal and terrorist organizations is now an artificial one (2007:377), and that organized crime and militancy can no longer be seen as mutually exclusive categories (2007:393). Oehme, in his case study of post-war Afghanistan and Iraq comes to a similar conclusion, finding that the motives and methods distinction is no longer particularly useful for analytical purposes (2008:82). Roth and Sever, in their study of the PKK, also recognize implicitly the limits of this view insofar as in their case the two types of organization appear to have merged (2007). Finally, Rosenthal also sees a convergence to the extent that, since the end of the Cold War, the motivations of terrorists appear to have moved from political to financial ones, with any political pretensions merely serving to mask this transition (2008:491).

The majority trend in the comparative literature, then, appears to be towards an increasing recognition that there are at least some similarities between terrorist and criminal organizations, with some observers going so far as to contend that the two, at least in the post-Cold War era, represent essentially the same phenomena. As this paper will be directly engaging the same questions as the literature briefly reviewed here, albeit from a different theoretical viewpoint, before outlining that viewpoint the remainder of this section will briefly discuss some of the broader problems in the debate thus far.

As is clear, the problem of the motivational distinction between terrorist and criminal organizations has featured prominently in discussions of these two types of

organization, and has become perhaps the key point of contention in their analysis, despite the change in viewpoint in this regard among scholars such as Shelley and Picarelli (2005). Because this paper aims to compare two sets of organizations which have traditionally been defined, respectively, as instances of terrorist and criminal organizations, it is important to address this problem.

The first problematic aspect of the motivational distinction is in the attribution of 'motives' to a collection of individuals. Strictly speaking, however, the idea of motivation is only applicable to individuals. To speak of a collective motivation is to imply that a group of individuals have the same psychological disposition towards the same conceived end in carrying out the same act. Even when a group of people act together towards the same end, however, their individual motivations may be different, and establishing what these are for any given set of individuals is extremely difficult – those carrying out the act may not even be able to explain what motivated them to do so.¹ To give a theoretical example, we can suppose that three people who are the members of a single organization with ten members set out to kill an individual who is not a member of the group. The individual A is motivated to kill the non-member X because the non-member has failed to pay a debt to A. Individual B participates as well, because he believes that if he does so, he will be promoted within the organization. Individual C participates, but he does so because he does not trust the capacity of A to execute the plan quietly enough without bringing undue attention on the organization as a whole, and so participates to make sure things are done properly. Individuals D through J, however, while members of the same organization as A, B, and C, do not participate at all in the killing, and hence the question of motivation for them does not directly arise.

¹ We need only think of the popular undergraduate refrain 'Why did I drink so much last night?'

How are we to conceive of a group motivation in this case? Following our example, A's motivation was the money he would recover from X, as well as possibly safeguarding his reputation for not being one to roll over on an outstanding debt. B's motivation, on the other hand, was to increase his own standing with the organization and rise through the ranks. We might say that these are both selfish motives, and hence are analytically the same, but the particulars remain different. A will get only what is owed to him, B will get something he doesn't yet have (greater status with the group). C's motivation, however, is to the safety of the group as a whole. No doubt there is something selfish in this as well, as being a member of the group he will suffer if law enforcement comes after the whole group. Nevertheless, C still possesses a different motivation than both A and B. Finally, because we're speaking about the motivation of organizations, how do we account for the absence of a motive for members D through J? Insofar as they are members of the same organization as A, B and C they may endorse the killing after the fact (again, quite possibly motivated by different factors for doing so), but strictly speaking in the action being discussed they had no motivation, even though it may be said by third parties afterwards that person X was killed 'by the organization'.

This example brings out an important distinction that needs to be made when discussing an organization, namely, that organizations as such do not have 'motivations', but rather goals. These tend to be conflated in the literature on terrorism and organized crime; the difference, however, is important, and can be understood by the simple conception of the general versus the specific. Motivations are specific, goals more general. The latter are proper to collective groups or organizations, the former to individuals. More importantly, the connection between the general goal of an

organization and the specific motivations of that organization's members is not a simple one, and it is quite possible that there is no necessary link at all. An individual need not be politically motivated to join a terrorist organization; under the right circumstances it might instead be that joining such an organization is a means of upward social mobility not available through more conventional means. The same can be said of criminal organizations as regards being motivated to attain personal wealth. In short, goals and motivations cannot be equated, and the latter cannot be inferred in a simple linear fashion from the former.

If, however, we take the term 'motivation' as used in the literature to be a synonym for the goals of an organization, there is still a difficulty in basing the distinction between terrorist and criminal organizations on their goals. As Letizia Paoli notes in her seminal work on mafia associations in Southern Italy:

'According to the position dominant today [in organization studies]...it is unrealistic to define an organization with reference to a single function or goal. Both functions and goals change with time and are subject to continuous negotiations among the members of a group, even though the group structure and culture are not necessarily modified' (Paoli 2003:143).

As some of the authors already discussed point out, terrorist and criminal organizations in particular appear to show this tendency towards change in function and goals. While the reasons for this will be explored through a comparative case study in the next chapter, a preliminary inquiry into this is worth making here.

A clear commonality between terrorist and criminal organizations in most states is their illegal status. While in practice this means different things from one state to another and is strongly affected by state capacity, in general the status of illegality means that both types of organization are exposed to pressures that legally sanctioned organizations

are not. First is the pressure of law enforcement and other repressive measures initiated by the state. Because from the perspective of the state both types of organization are criminal (in the legal sense), the range of these repressive measures is as vast as the state can get away implementing. In modern states of relatively high enforcement and regulatory capacity, illegal organizations can face extreme limitations on their freedom of operation. Beyond arrest and imprisonment, there are also risks of asset seizure, regular surveillance, potential restrictions on free movement and so forth. While this may not affect organizational goals directly, it does create a need in both types of organization to develop learning and adaptive skills in order to survive. There is no reason that under certain conditions this adaptive behaviour could not be applied to the goals of the organization if necessary for organizational survival, as will be shown in the following chapter.

A second difficulty with the goal-based distinction stems in part from the illegal status of both types of organization. Being constant targets for state repression, illegal organizations have, in theory, a greater proclivity to obfuscate to non-members about what their real goals actually are than legal organizations have. In other words, organizational dishonesty that may be a liability to a political party or public company should it be discovered can be a strategic asset to organizations that exist outside the law. Conversely, such obfuscation may have less to do with consciously developed strategies than with the fact that the organization itself hasn't formulated its goals in any coherent or systematic manner that could be expressed to a wider constituency in a manner akin to the platform of a legitimate political party (Bruce 1997). This latter situation is in fact quite common among groups forced to exist outside the law, because of the external

pressures that they face from the state; resources that might otherwise be dedicated to formulating goals are channelled into tasks more immediate to the survival of the group.

Third, a goal-based distinction, even in a model such as that proposed by Makaraneko (2004), while accounting for change among groups and even the possibility that a terrorist organization could become a criminal organization or vice versa, fails to acknowledge the ability of some groups to maintain all the characteristics of both types simultaneously (for an elaboration of this critique see Clarke and Lee 2008). This poses a major categorization problem, and indicates that the categories of analysis need to be redefined. Makarenko's model, because of the goal-based assumptions from which it starts, sets out a continuum in which the groups at the extremes – represented by 'pure' terrorist or 'pure' criminal – may not actually be reflected in reality. Importantly, this conflation of goals ought not to be seen as only affecting illegal organizations. Political parties in the industrialized world offer an interesting example of the same phenomenon. The most common perception of a political party's goals are to compete successfully in elections in order to form a government – clearly a political goal. In order to do this, however, any successful political party must also make wealth accumulation a key organizational goal as well; the costs of running a modern electoral campaign ensure that parties that fail in this goal will also fail in their political one (Nice 1987). This does not mean, however, that political parties are organizations that have transformed from political to economic organizations, but rather that the two are not mutually exclusive categories. In slightly different terms, there is no 'transition' as such from political to economic goals, but rather a relatively constant plurality of goals that coexist (not always harmoniously), the pursuit of which has ramifications for development of the

organization. Ultimately, this means that the question is not 'is this a political or economic or criminal organization', but rather what are the characteristics of these organizations, and what determines the relationship between the multiple goals that it pursues over time and their prioritization?

A fourth difficulty with the goal-based distinction is that it tacitly assumes that terrorist and criminal organization structures are all more or less equally centralized, with a centralized power who can set the goals of the organization and ensure that these are pursued by lower-level units of the organization. This view is markedly similar to the classic definition of a rational bureaucracy as outlined by Max Weber. However, illegal organizations especially are often not amenable to such an organizational structure (see Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and Jones 2008; Erickson 1981), and the difficulties of maintaining such a structure would appear to be in direct relation to the size of membership and geographical structure of any particular organization, and the intensity of state repression. Groups of somewhat larger membership that have subunits dispersed across delineated geographic locales have a tendency to develop rival power centres that can challenge the 'official' centre. While not every illegal organization necessarily fits this model, those that do can develop a structure in which each power centre may be pursuing different (and possibly conflicting) goals while nevertheless maintaining at least a formal allegiance to the same overarching organization. In the next chapter this will be demonstrated through the case studies examined.

The motivational factor as the definitive difference between terrorist and criminal organizations has been a central feature of debate in the literature on the relationship between terrorism and organized crime. As demonstrated above, however, it provides an

explanation that is both theoretically shaky and virtually impossible to prove empirically. Furthermore, if analyses of more recent conflicts, such as in Iraq and Afghanistan (see Oehme 2008) claim that there is no categorical distinction between criminal and terrorist groups, a justification exists for looking at past conflicts through a similar lens, and asking whether or not such a distinction was ever an accurate and valid portrayal of such organizations. The following section will outline a different way of conceptualizing terrorist and criminal organizations that moves away from the idea of motivations and provides a theoretical basis for comparing them.

iii. Violent Organizations

As alluded to in the previous section, if terrorist and criminal organizations are to be compared, there must be some conceptual basis on which such comparisons rest. Conventionally, such comparisons have rested largely on the motivational distinction; as the previous section attempted to demonstrate, however, such distinctions are conceptually problematic, and not entirely valid when such organizations are examined empirically.

In order to overcome these difficulties, this section introduces the concept of 'violent specialists', a concept used by Charles Tilly (2003) and others studying the organizations characterized by the use and/or control of violence, especially by those in the fields of economics and economic and political sociology (see, for example, Fiorentini & Peltzman 1995; Lane 1979; Mehlum, Moene & Torvik 2002; Skaperdas 2001; Varese 2001 and 2006; Volkov 2000 and 2002). While theoretically simple, this concept helps to expose the analytical similarity between many criminal and terrorist

organizations, as well as the similarity between these and state organizations such as military and police forces which constitute the modern state's coercive capacity.

Tilly defines violent specialists succinctly as 'people who control means of inflicting damage on persons and objects' (2003:35). While in theory this could be applied to virtually every human being, in Tilly's sense the focus is more narrowly on those whose primary occupational qualification (as opposed to incidental qualification²) is to maintain the means of inflicting damage and the active capacity to do so, and he offers many contemporary examples: 'military personnel, police, guards, jailers, executioners and judicial officers....boxers, gladiators, bullfighters, and rugby players....armed guards, private police, paramilitary forces, guerrilla warriors, terrorists, thugs, bandits, kidnappers, enforcers, members of fighting gangs, and automobile wreckers' (2000:35). While each of these may exist on different points of continua of legitimacy and proficiency, categorically they are the same, insofar as employing violence is what they do.

While the category of violent specialists, without further specification of sub-categories, remains broad, it is still of significant analytical value. The primary reason for this is because the vast majority of social actors – such as civil society groups, most political parties, religious groups, and businesses – do not control both the means and the ability to engage in widespread physical damage, and even where the means may be widely dispersed,³ most individuals do not engage regularly or systematically in violent

² The caveat 'incidental' is necessary here because it is theoretically possible for any group to control the means of doing damage to people or objects, but many individuals and groups who do so do so only accidentally. A group who races cars, for example, may collectively crash during a race causing all manner of damage to spectators and property – this, however, isn't necessarily their purpose, and neither is it inherent in the group of racecar drivers to perform such a function.

³ That is, where arms are available to much of the general population, as in the United States, Switzerland, and to a lesser extent Canada and other European states.

action (see Cooney 1997; Eisner 2003). For example, most of those employed as agents of the modern state are not violent specialists, but rather specialize in some technical function such as administration, accounting, management, law, and so forth; violence has become a specialized function for only a certain segment of state agents. Likewise, and anomalously in an historical sense, the vast majority of politicians in modern consolidated states are not specialists in violence.⁴ Even within the large, complex militaries of the contemporary world not all members can be considered specialists in violence in the strict sense, as many perform non-destructive tasks such as logistics planning, engineering, maintenance and service functions, and rarely, if ever, directly engage in violent action.

Second, and of equal importance, is that whereas when we attempt to define categories such as ‘criminal’ or ‘terrorist’ organizations, as discussed above we end up immediately in the realm of ideological or legal debate where there is a great deal of subjectivity. That is to say, any organization can be criminal or not depending upon the laws of a given jurisdiction, and these differ across space and time; and any organization can be ‘terrorist’ or not depending upon the sympathies of the one doing the defining. By looking instead at violence as the defining aspect of an organization, we can ask an empirical question rather than a legal or political one (does this organization employ violence or not?), which allows for a greater measure of objectivity.

Violent specialists, then, in broad terms are those who specialize in the use of violence in the same way in which doctors specialize in medicine. Their specialization does not preclude the fact that non-specialists may also use violence from time to time –

⁴ As Tilly notes, ‘...over the long run of human history, indeed, most important political figures have combined entrepreneurship with control of coercive means. Only during the last few centuries has the unarmed power holder become a common political actor’ (2003:36).

just as non-doctors may provide medical advice or home remedies – but does imply that their use of violence is more regularized, proficient, and systematic than non-specialists.

Conversely, and lest the impression be given that specializing in violence means a constant torrent of destruction, violent specialists are also, consequently, specialists in the non-use of violence. As Tilly explains:

‘...we should recognize that for most of them [violent specialists] most of the time the ideal outcome of a political interaction is to manipulate others without damaging anything. The genuinely effective specialist deploys *threats* of violence so persuasively that other comply before the damage begins’ (2003:36).

There is a great deal of empirical evidence from the universe of violent action to lend support to Tilly’s argument, although it may seem counter-intuitive given the levels of destruction displayed throughout the 20th and early-21st century. Despite these high levels in the aggregate, it is also quite true that the violence observed in conflicts across the world is regularly far less than is possible based upon an accounting of the total destructive means available. This is especially so in the conflicts involving the two sets of organizations to be examined in the next chapter. In both Northern Ireland and Sicily, the respective violent organizations never maximized their total capacity to inflict damage, and in neither location did full-scale civil war or sustained violent mass mobilization erupt. In this sense the violence was not random or ‘out of control’, but instead appears to conform to some underlying logic determined to some degree by the protagonists to the conflict, and this logic is what needs to be investigated and explained.

While Tilly’s description of violent specialists portrays this as a category of individuals, it is also implicit in his work that it may equally be applied to organizations, just as the category medical specialists could be applied to an individual health care

professional or a group of such professionals who coordinate their efforts. For violent specialists in particular, however, there are some benefits to organization stemming directly from the nature of violence itself. For example, violent action in many cases has a tendency to generate resistance rather than immediate compliance. This is especially the case where a single antagonist attempts to deploy violence against a single victim. All things being equal, the antagonist has a fifty percent chance that the victim will comply with the threatened violence, and an equal chance that he or she will resist, employing his or her own reactive violence. If the victim happens to be a specialist in violence herself, the odds of immediate compliance decrease. The odds of immediate compliance also decrease where a single antagonist threatens violence against multiple victims, and at a certain point even if the antagonist is a serious specialist in violence, there is only so much power one individual can have over a numerically much larger group. In short, there is strength in numbers.⁵ In this sense, it is not surprising to note that in the contemporary western world the largest concentration of violent specialists is to be found as an integral part of the dominant political form, specifically the military and police forces of the modern state.

Adding this organizational dimension to Tilly's category of violent specialists gives us the slightly different but related category of violent organizations which will provide the analytical category for the rest of the analysis.

The category of violent organizations, which we can define as collectivities of individuals who specialize in doing damage to people or things is, like the category violent specialists, fairly broad. Because of this breadth, however, it is able to offer a theoretical basis for comparison of many different specific organizations by bridging

⁵ This idea has been summed up in the age-old military principle 'victory goes to the bigger battalions'.

much narrower categories such as guerrilla forces, terrorist groups, criminal organizations, cartels, and so forth. While this may run against the grain of the specialized disciplines that have sprung up to study each of these phenomena discretely, a response in favour of broader categories has been raised by the important question posed by James Gelvin, namely, ‘...just what is the point of social science if every phenomenon belongs to its own distinct category?’ (2008:564).

Another important reason for the adequacy of the category of violent organizations stems from the character of violence as a fungible resource. That is to say, violence is effective for the pursuit of many and varied ends, from political reform or revolution to the accumulation of wealth, to the control of territory or to the regulation of social or economic life. Because of this fungible character of violence, narrower categories such as terrorist, criminal, or rebel organization often fail to capture the full dynamics of violent organizations, as they tend to focus the analysis on only one of a number of ‘operative goals’ (see above) that any particular organization may undertake. If, however, violence can be equally used for the amassing of wealth as it can be to gain political control, it follows that we would be interested in investigating to what extent these operative goals are chosen and prioritized by different violent organizations.

In order to give this category further analytical value, however, it is important to integrate another category of actor defined by Tilly, that of the ‘political entrepreneur’. Tilly treats violent specialists and political entrepreneurs as distinct, but sometimes overlapping categories (Tilly 2003). Where the two most converge is within the bounds of violent organizations: thus his observation that ‘at the intersection of the two we find leaders of mercenaries, international weapons merchants, regional warlords, military

rulers, and many a political figure who disposes of his or her own armed force' (Tilly 2003:36). To understand why the two types of actors converge in violent organizations, we need to unpack both types of actors a little more.

Like violent specialists, political entrepreneurs also specialize in a type of social action: specifically brokerage. This brokerage role is characterized by four types of activity: activation, connection, coordination and representation (Tilly 2003:34). Briefly, activation consists of mobilizing others towards some end; connection, of linking other, previously unconnected or weakly connected actors; coordination, of directing mobilized actors towards some end in a synchronized manner; and representation, of speaking for those who have been mobilized. An indication as to why these particular skills are especially necessary for an organization made up of individuals specializing in violence is provided by Michael Maltz:

'When all individuals in a group are armed and have no compunction about using their weapons – which may be one of the criteria for acceptance by the group – then the ability to govern them must depend to a great extent on the consent of the governed. Discipline of a group's members can be maintained only if it is shown to be in their own self-interest' (Maltz 1985:29, quoted in Morselli 2005:108).

Governing under such circumstances, of course, is what successful political entrepreneurs excel at, and their internal organizational function consists of performing the brokerage roles outlined above, not only between the organization and the outside, but also internally, between members of the group. In one sense, this role is not particular to violent organizations, but is seen in virtually all organizations, insofar as these functions can be observed universally throughout society. In another sense, however, the difference is acute, because unlike most organizations, where members may simply disengage if

their interests are not taken sufficiently into account, in violent organizations the response to neglect of interests may (and often does) take the form of in-group violence, or fragmentation of the group into one or more hostile factions. Just how often this tendency exhibits itself regardless of the ostensible goals of the given organization, in fact, offers support for the category of violent organizations rather than terrorist or criminal ones. For example, both Sicilian mafia organizations and Irish paramilitaries have splintered routinely over their histories, as will be investigated further in the next chapter. Beyond these, however, to name only a few, similar splits and infighting have occurred within the Colombo, Bonanno and Lucchese ‘families’ of the American *Cosa Nostra* (see Raab 2006:193-4, 332-343, 609-614; 478-487); the Palestinian Liberation Organization (AbuKhalil 1987:368-370); the Kosovo Liberation Army (Hedges June 6, 1999 and June 25 1999); the Mexican Tijuana Cartel (Stratfor 2008:8-9); and a number of Islamist organizations in the tribal areas of Pakistan (Gunaratna & Nielsen 2008).⁶

The internal dynamics that violent organizations are subject to, then, creates a particular need for the incorporation of political entrepreneurs. But this need is also driven by external dynamics. Because most violence is a contentious issue – that is, it is an issue that cuts across social groups, and its consequences are perceived to extend beyond those immediately exposed to it – a group employing violence systematically is generally exposed to external political pressures. An increase in the rate of killings associated with conflicting groups, even if the victims are group members as opposed to uninvolved citizens, inevitably creates public pressure on state institutions to intervene. In turn, the result is usually greater state pressure on these groups from either law enforcement or military agents (depending upon the perception of the threat), and losses

⁶ For an interesting attempt to model the way factions act under certain conditions see Siqueira 2005.

to the group in terms of members jailed or killed. The critical position of the political entrepreneur(s) for the violent organization in this case, however, is managing both the volume and perceptions of the violence. In both cases this may consist of engaging in the function of representation. In terms of the volume of violence, the political entrepreneur may seek negotiations with his counterpart in a rival organization in order to work out some agreement by which the level of violence can be brought back down to a level more in line with public expectations. In the case of managing perceptions, a political entrepreneur may engage in what is in effect a public relations campaign on behalf of the violent organization, either offering a rationale and justification for the increase in violence, or more rarely, a simple apology where uninvolved members of the public have been harmed.

This is not to imply that all violent organizations incorporate political entrepreneurs, or that the latter are always successful. Tilly mentions in his catalogue of violent specialists rugby players, for example, but it is the rare rugby team that requires political skills. The primary reason for this is that while a violent sport, the violence produced by two rugby teams on the pitch is rarely politically contentious, and where it becomes so, it is not those involved in the game who become party to the contentiousness. The same can be said for most other sports clubs of similar form, from boxing to the martial arts. And where there is a lack of political contention, there is little need for political entrepreneurs.⁷

Violent organizations, then, are groups of individuals specializing in the deployment of violence. As a category, they have been present in every society since time

⁷ However, political entrepreneurs can and often do act as initiators of political contention for their own ends, although it is difficult to do so in the context of sports which, in essence, fully contained games, which is to say the contention they produce does not translate to situations outside their immediate context.

immemorial. In the modern period, they have come to be labeled by various names – for example, paramilitaries, mafias, gangs, armed forces, police, terrorist groups, and insurgents to name but a few. Beyond their specialization in violence, however, violent organizations more often than not incorporate (wittingly or unwittingly) political entrepreneurs, given that their existence itself is often a politically contentious issue.

Chapter 2

Comparing Sicilian Mafia and Northern Irish Paramilitary Organizations

i. Sicilian Mafias and Northern Irish Paramilitaries as Violent Organizations

In the previous chapter the difficulties of classifying organizations as ‘criminal’ or ‘terrorist’ for the purposes of analysis were discussed, and instead a concept of violent organizations was outlined as a substitute for comparing organizations generally classified according to the ‘terrorist’/‘criminal’ categorization. Violent organizations were defined in turn as any organization which routinely makes use of targeted violence or intimidation through its threatened use. This violence may be directly targeted at individuals – and often is – but does not necessarily have to be. For example, it might also target the property of individuals or something they value, the destruction of which is sufficient to convince them to meet some demand made by the individual or group doing the threatening.

One of the benefits of employing the concept of violent organizations, as presented in the previous chapter, is that the extent to which an organization is a violent organization is primarily an empirical question rather than an ideological or legal one. This allows the questions of motivation on which an ideological or legal determination depend to be bracketed in order to examine the patterns and characteristics of the violent acts in which the organizations participate. As such, the purpose of this section is demonstrate that both of the groups of organizations to be compared, Sicilian mafia and Northern Irish paramilitary organizations, do in fact fit within the parameters of the violent organizations concept. In doing so, data on the incidents of violent activity of paramilitary and mafia organizations from a number of sources will be used.

For the purposes of determining whether or not paramilitary and mafia organizations are violent organizations, qualitative and quantitative data are both useful. Quantitatively, the number of violent incidents connected to these organizations can be utilized, with violent incidents defined widely to encompass both violence against individual victims, whether resulting in death or not, and violence against property, for instance bombings or arson. At this point the motivation for these incidents, as such, is not important; the point is that the violence has occurred and is linked to the organization.

While this method of determining whether a group fits this definition may be criticized on the basis that a violent action by a single member of an organization, or even a large subset of the membership, may not reflect the actions of the entire organization, in the case of mafia and paramilitary organizations this criticism does not effect the validity of the categorization. The primary reason for this is the substantial body of qualitative information available on these organizations in which the central role of violence in their activities is demonstrated. An overview of some of the most salient points to be found in this qualitative data will also be used in this section to demonstrate the utility of this concept as applied to paramilitary and mafia organizations.

The empirical data on mafia and paramilitary violence is fairly extensive, especially so for the time period with which this study is primarily concerned, namely the 1960s through the early 2000s, although not without certain limitations specific to each case. In the case of Northern Ireland, many types of paramilitary violence have been quite extensively documented, especially those resulting in death and serious injury. In the majority of cases, not only are the incidents known, but the organizational affiliation is often also available for the perpetrator(s). Data on victims of paramilitary violence is also

quite robust, and information on bomb attacks not resulting in death or other non-fatal casualties is also available in aggregate form.⁸

Data on mafia-related violence, while generally available, is unfortunately not as robust as that available for paramilitary organizations in Northern Ireland. Perhaps partially due to the lower international profile of violence in Sicily relative to Northern Ireland, readily accessible databases do not exist. Additionally, much data prior to the early 1980s is available only from citations in secondary sources. Nevertheless, diverse sources have reported figures on mafia-related violence, especially those cases where the violence led to the death of a victim and hence was recorded statistically as an incident of murder. Similarly, it is possible to find partial data on attempted murders linked to mafia organizations, as well as instances of arson or other attacks on property which are suspected of being mafia-related.

While the data sources available reporting actual instances of violent activity are sufficient for the purposes of defining both paramilitary and mafia organizations as violent organizations, as will be demonstrated below, a crucial weakness in the empirical evidence equally applicable to both Northern Ireland and Sicily is the absence of solid quantitative data on threats of violence against individuals by paramilitary and mafia organizations. The reasons for this absence, however, are relatively straightforward and have been addressed under other circumstances in the criminological literature on underreporting. In short, because the possibility that a threat of violence by one of these organizations may turn into an actual use of violence if the victim is found to have reported the threat, there is a tendency toward the underreporting of these crimes. As

⁸ A good deal of data on the Northern Ireland conflict has been made available by the CAIN (Conflict Archive on the Internet) Project, accessible at: <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/>.

such, much of the evidence for this type of activity among paramilitary and mafia organizations must be taken from qualitative accounts and anecdotal information garnered through interviews which, while useful, unfortunately do not allow the extent of the phenomenon to be measured.

Given comparability of data over a specific time period, fatalities from paramilitary and mafia violence will be taken as the first indicator of the relevance of the violent organizations concept to paramilitaries and mafias, covering the years 1983-1997. During this period in Northern Ireland there were a total of 918 confirmed paramilitary-related violent deaths; for Sicily in the same time period the total of mafia-related violent deaths was 1,462.⁹ These figures thus give an average of 104 mafia-related deaths per year, or two per week, and 65 paramilitary-related deaths per year, or slightly more than one per week, over a fourteen year period.

Though relatively straightforward, these figures give an indication of a number of features of paramilitary and mafia organizations. First, the numbers of deaths caused by these organizations may be seen as low compared to those attributable to other state and non-state violent organizations in other regions of the world. Armed groups in the Balkans during the breakup of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, for example, were responsible for far greater numbers of deaths, some 102,622 for the war in Bosnia alone, with these deaths clustered within the much shorter three year time frame of 1992-1995 (Tabeau & Bijak 2005:206-207). The difference in magnitude becomes more evident when the size of populations is taken into account. Census figures for Bosnia at the

⁹ An important caveat for these figures is necessary. Because both paramilitary and mafia organizations are secret organizations – that is, members actively try to keep their membership secret from the authorities – these figures potentially under-represent the actual number of victims. That is to say, it is possible that violent deaths otherwise classified by the authorities may be related to mafia or paramilitary organizations. For a discussion of this issue in the context of Northern Ireland see Bruce (1997:59-60).

beginning of the conflict placed the total population of the country at approximately 4.3 million people (Tabeau & Bijak 2005), slightly smaller than Sicily's population of approximately 5 million, and slight more than twice the size of Northern Ireland's population of approximately 1.7 million. Taking the figures for paramilitary and mafia related deaths in the comparable years of 1992-1995, we see that these are different by orders of magnitude, and that the scale of violence is remarkably higher. As such, in neither the case of Sicily or Northern Ireland does there appear to be what would be recognized as a case of civil war or mass-casualty violence. In other words, the violence of paramilitary and mafia organizations appears, in contrast to that observed in the Bosnian war, markedly controlled.

Moving beyond the issue of magnitude, a second important feature of the violence engaged in by paramilitary and mafia organizations is that it is longitudinally relatively stable. Again, in contrast to Bosnia, where violence spikes markedly over a short period before declining back to pre-conflict levels, violence in Sicily and Northern Ireland, while relatively low, is more or less stable over time. This would appear to indicate first that there in both cases there is some measure of stability to the organizations perpetrating the violence in these regions, because they have continued to exist over an extensive time period. Second, it also points in some measure to the possibility that the violence employed by these organizations is specialized, in the sense that it has not escalated beyond the point at which mass participation in violence appears. For both regions, as will be discussed below, there is some measure of support for this contention in the qualitative literature, with a general recognition that in neither case are we dealing with organizations who are at war in any conventional sense of the term, despite being

characterized by the regular use of violence (Bell 1973:407; Charters 1980:34; Frankel 1982:28).

In comparison to other regions of Western Europe and North America, as opposed to areas such as Bosnia which are characterized by armed conflict, both Sicily and Northern Ireland would not necessarily be characterized as having exceedingly high murder rates. Many American states, for example, recorded murder rates much higher than both regions for the 1983-1997 period. What is different, however, is the character of violence: unlike most of Western Europe and the United States, violence in Sicily and Northern Ireland is primarily driven by paramilitary and mafia organizations, rather than the primarily unconnected and episodic instances of violence represented in general homicide statistics. In short, distinct organizations are behind the bulk of killings.

While rates of violent death related to paramilitary and mafia organizations are an important factor in considering these are violent organizations, other instances of violence are also relevant to this categorization. In terms of severity, after killings, attempted killings are another important indicator of the violent propensities of paramilitary and mafia groups. While the character of this data is primarily anecdotal,¹⁰ it also points to the routine use of violence by paramilitary and mafia organizations. For example, in the Sicilian province of Catania (the only province for which figures appear to be publicly available) which is home to a number of rival mafia organizations, there were an estimated 812 attempted homicides between 1987 and 1999 (CPD 2000:64). The

¹⁰ Unfortunately, systematic collection of figures for attempted murder does not appear to have been conducted for either region, and the character of paramilitary and mafia organizations makes it unlikely that attempting such collection efforts would prove very successful. For example, where members of these organizations are the intended victim, reporting of the incident to the authorities is unlikely. Non-members may also be reluctant to provide such information to the authorities given the potential risks of retribution.

same decade in Northern Ireland saw a total of 2,565 shootings.¹¹ While these data are not strictly comparable given that many of these shootings were likely not intended to be fatal, for the purposes of demonstrating that violence is central to both paramilitary and mafia organizations they are important.

Finally, violence against property is also a useful indicator of the centrality of violence to paramilitary and mafia organizations, because as discussed in the previous chapter, while often indicating a different goal, the skills necessary for effectively deploying violence against an individual and those necessary to damaging or destroying things generally are the same. Northern Ireland, for example, experienced 15,246 bombings from 1969-1998 (Hayes & McAllister 2001:903). While data for the same time period for Sicily are unavailable, arson data from recent years point to a similar use of destructive force by mafia organizations; between 2003 and 2005, there were 4,704 cases of arson, and with 2,435 of these occurring in 2003, Sicily had the most arson incidents of all Italian regions.¹²

From the figures relating to the use of violence by paramilitary and mafia organizations a relatively strong case emerges for considering these as belonging to the same category of violent organizations outlined in the previous chapter. This case becomes even stronger, however, when we include the qualitative evidence from the numerous sources devoted to studying the use of violence by these organizations.

¹¹ Based on figures for security related incidents in Northern Ireland available at <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/ni/security.htm#06>.

¹² Based on data taken from *Dati Statistic sulla Criminalità in Italia* for the years 2003, 2004, and 2005, available at:

<http://pers.mininterno.it/dcds/compendio03/file03/delitti%202004.pdf>

<http://pers.mininterno.it/dcds/compendio03/file04/16%20delitti%202005.pdf>

<http://pers.mininterno.it/dcds/compendio03/file05/delitti.pdf>

Despite analyzing paramilitary and mafia organizations from numerous different disciplinary perspectives, the large body of literature on these organizations is almost unanimous in mentioning their violent character. Steve Bruce, a leading scholar of loyalist paramilitary organizations in Northern Ireland, while noting that they do have other functions, has summed up the centrality of violence for these organizations, noting that ‘while they may do other things, paramilitaries are fundamentally concerned with killing people. The bottom line is violence or the threat of violence (which is only convincing if the threat is sometimes carried out)’ (Bruce 1993:276). A similar consensus is to be found for republican paramilitary groups which, although viewed as more sophisticated than their loyalist counterparts (Bruce 1997:56) are nevertheless recognized as the modern representatives of a longstanding physical force tradition in Irish political and social life (Clutterbuck 2004; Hayes 1998:23). In both cases, this consensus is based upon the public commitment to violence of these organizations, known through both their actions and their public statements and propaganda efforts.

There is a similar consensus in the literature on mafia organizations on the central role played by violence in the life of these organizations. Though different authors have focused on the mafia through political, economic and sociological frameworks (see, for example, Sabetti 2002; Gambetta 1993; Hess 1998), regardless of which particular sphere of action one chooses to examine, violence is never far from the surface. This permeation of violence throughout both mafia organizations and their activities has been explained by Letizia Paoli, who summarizes that:

‘...ultimately violence constitutes the backbone of mafia power. Violence is used foremost by all of the consortia under examination to secure the obedience of their own adherents and to punish those that have betrayed or

not respected the group's authority. It is also routinely employed as a means to threaten, render inoffensive or even physically eliminate whoever endangers the power positions and the business activities of the group. Through the menace or the effective use of violence, mafia associations have also been trying – enjoying for a long time a fairly high degree of success – to impose their rules on society at large in their territory of influence' (Paoli 2002:73).

As will become clear throughout the following sections of this chapter, while paramilitary and mafia organizations engage in a number of different activities, violence as either an implicit subtext or an explicit strategy is central to each of these. Furthermore, both the quantitative and qualitative data on paramilitary and mafia organizations offers robust support for the conclusion that they comfortably fit within the conceptual limits of violent organizations outlined in the previous chapter. Having demonstrated this, in the following section a comparison of paramilitary and mafia organizations as organizations will be provided, by examining the rules and formal structures which shape them.

ii. Formal Rules and Structures of Mafia and Paramilitary Organizations

Organizations, by definition, are always characterized by some type of structure; the degree to which these structures are formalized, however, varies greatly from one organization to the next. The modern state, for example, among other types of organization is characterized by an extensive and high degree of formality. Leadership, for example, and the chain of command through which leadership is turned into action, is relatively straightforward (if often cumbersome), with a clear authority from the top of the structure which is delegated downwards through numerous subordinate levels.¹³

¹³ This is not to deny that in contemporary democracies the consensus is that power has its source in the voters, and hence is ultimately delegated up. As the saying goes, however, what goes up must come down, and

Roles and responsibilities at each level are written down as policy – this process itself a form of formalization – and once written down tend to be more relatively stable over time. In turn, this stability provides predictability and continuity.

The geospatial element of the modern state, though often overlooked perhaps because of its obviousness, also plays an extremely important role in reinforcing its formal structures. Beyond being a collection of politicians, police, soldiers and civil servants, the state is also a series of relatively fixed sites, located in a definite place and not prone to moving frequently. Legislative, executive, and judicial organs of the state, for example, can be identified with a particular location – parliament, superior courts, ministries and government departments, police stations, etc – generally stay in the same place and constitute a visible state presence. The importance of this feature of the modern state in the maintenance of the highly formalized structures associated with it should not be underestimated. The difficulty, for example, of maintaining such structures under conditions of instability such as those associated with the logistical pressures of constantly moving a large number of people and goods on a frequent basis, increases. Under these circumstances, the lines of communication central to formalized structures break down, roles and functions evolve quickly and in unexpected directions, control from the top becomes much more difficult. That the vast majority of state structures avoid this problem because they are associated with a definite geographical location is a strong reinforcement to maintaining formalized organization.

Clearly, not all organizations possess such extensive formal structures, and few, including mafia and paramilitary organizations, approximate the level of formality

even if the ultimate power rests with the voters, once elected their representatives are vested with power that is then delegated downwards once again through the administrative structures of the state.

achieved by the modern state; levels of formalization are extremely variable both across time and type of organization. Nevertheless, formal structures and rules are a constitutive feature of both mafia and paramilitary organizations, and in this section the most important aspects of these will be outlined and compared. It is important to note from the beginning, however, that within the constellation of paramilitary and mafia groups, levels of formality are also variable, and there is a gradation in the organizational sophistication of both types organizations.

The basis of all organizations, upon which their structures depend, are certain accepted rules that, on the one hand govern members, and on the other, distinguish them from non-members through the acceptance and internalization of those rules. To some extent such rules exist within all mafia and paramilitary organizations, but these are most explicit and formalized in two organizations in particular: among paramilitary organizations, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), and among mafia organizations, Cosa Nostra. The formal rules of these organizations will be outlined first before discussing the smaller mafia and paramilitary organizations.

Within Cosa Nostra a number of unwritten rules guide the conduct of members, and the acceptance of these rules is a condition of membership in the organization (Paoli 2003:125). The first of these is the rule of secrecy, or *omertà*. This rule forbids the members of the organization from making known to others both their membership in Cosa Nostra and any information about the affairs of the organization (Paoli 2003:111-112). Beyond simple secrecy, however, *omertà* also implies the 'categorical prohibition of cooperation with the authorities or reliance on their services, even when one has been the victim of a crime' (Paoli 2003:109; also Gambetta 1993:119). This need for secrecy is

reinforced to new members, as Paoli notes, through being 'taught to conceal their own importance, and to minimize any signs of their power,' to 'behave with stringent self-control and self-discipline,' and to refrain from 'getting drunk or using drugs' (Paoli 2003:111), as well as avoiding 'ostentatious displays of sex and money' (Falcone & Padovani 1991:64). Members are also strictly prohibited from keeping written records of any information relating to the group (Paoli 2003:112). The importance of the rule of secrecy to the organization is to be seen in an ancillary rule which supports the general organizational culture of secrecy: two members who do not know each other as members must always be introduced by a third member who knows both of them as members of the organization, thus limiting the extent to which members from different *cosche* (the basic unit of the organization) are exposed to each other (Paoli 2003:113).

While the secrecy of Cosa Nostra has often been discussed in sociological terms and examined as the adaptation of a phenomenon more socially widespread in Western Sicilian society more generally, and there are certainly links between the two phenomena (Falcone & Padovani 1991:44), its adaption by mafia organizations serves a very specific purpose stemming from the particular status of these organizations vis-à-vis the state. The importance of secrecy, specifically, derives from the fact that mafia organizations are illegal, and membership in them carries the risk of serious legal penalties (Coogan 1995:440; Jackson, Quinn & O'Malley 1999:222; Jamieson 2000:28-29). Beyond this, however, secrecy is also necessary because of the risks of retaliation that face an organization which routinely uses violence, and despite its pre-eminence among mafia organizations in Sicily, Cosa Nostra is not immune to having its activities undermined if

it fails to tightly control information on both these activities and the members engaged in them (see Gambetta 2003:35-36; 38-39).

Obedience is another central rule to which members of Cosa Nostra are bound, and this principle regulates the relationships between both individual members of different rank, and the relations of all members with the superordinate bodies of the organization. Decisions, whether of the head of a cosca or those of the provincial or regional cupolas, 'must be executed at all costs', and failures to obediently carry out orders are open to a variety of sanctions, the most serious of these being expulsion from the organization or death (Falcone & Padovani 1991:89). Like secrecy, obedience plays a crucial role in the security of the organization. Because members are committed to the use of violence to attain the ends of the organization and routinely do so, control over members is necessary to ensure that the use of violence itself does not become excessive or misdirected, hence undermining the attainment of these ends. As such, failure to obey an order to kill, but also not to kill, can be and often is punished by death (Page and Smith 2000:81).

In addition to these central rules there are also a number of other rules which have been adopted by Cosa Nostra as conventions. These include, for example, the rule that the murders of important officials be carried out by the capos of a cosca (Follain 2009:199); that members may act as they like when outside of Sicily (Follain 2009:231); that a member may not plead insanity to avoid a jail sentence (Gambetta 1993:121); that members must always tell the truth to other members (Falcone & Padovani 1991:41-

42)¹⁴; and that the son of a murdered member may not be admitted to the organization (Dickie 2007:258; Longrigg 2009:208). These last two rules, interestingly, are closely related, giving some insight into rules in general are aimed to strengthen the cohesion of the organization. The son of a murdered member cannot be admitted because, once he were to become a member, he would be entitled to know the identity of his father's killer, knowledge which could easily place him in direct conflict with the members who had committed the killing, and thus weaken solidarity within the organization (Falcone & Padovani 1991:44).

The PIRA, much like Cosa Nostra, also has a number of formal rules to which its members are subject, though unlike the latter organization some of these have been written down in various documents which the organization has created for the training of new members. Not surprisingly, silence and secrecy are, as with Cosa Nostra, prioritized as essential for members to follow, and they are taught not to talk in public; to keep their membership in the organization secret from family and friends; not to express views about military or political matters; and not to be seen with known members of the organization (Coogan 1994:545). Additionally, at the lower levels of the organization there is an attempt to limit communication between units and knowledge of their membership to the commanding officers of those units (Horgan & Taylor 1997:20,22). The importance of secrecy, once again, is primarily engendered by the PIRA's status as a 'proscribed organization' under the laws of Northern Ireland, meaning that membership in the organization alone is subject to legal penalties such as imprisonment or exclusion orders (e.g., restrictions on travel to other parts of the UK).

¹⁴ This is further observed by Gambetta who notes that 'when mafiosi address one another, according to all the informants who have turned state's evidence, the rule always to speak the truth. The mafioso can choose to remain silent; but if he elects to speak, he must not lie' (Gambetta 1993:122).

Also in direct parallel with Cosa Nostra, obedience of members is also central the PIRA, and members are reminded that in joining they take on the obligation to obey the orders of superiors regardless of their feelings about the particular individuals issuing them, and that total allegiance to the organization without reservation is expected (Coogan 1995:546). Also as in Cosa Nostra, a number of sanctions can be imposed for failure to observe these rules, and both expulsion and death are possible. In the case of the PIRA, however, the former appears to be the more common punishment imposed for such failures (Bell 2000:155; Horgan & Taylor 1997:20), although death is the prescribed punishment for 'treason' – e.g., a member informing to the authorities (Bamford 2005:592).

The PIRA has also adopted a number of secondary rules which, while not as extensive as those of Cosa Nostra, aim similarly at strengthening the security of the organization. For example, members are expected to be circumspect in their actions with regard to the wider community so as not to alienate potential supporters and non-members and create cause for people to risk informing to authorities about the organization's activities (Coogan 1995:554). Members are also cautioned against the use of alcohol, especially in pubs and bars, so as to avoid the risk of inadvertently leaking information that may be useful to the security forces while under the influence (Coogan 1995:545). Finally, because of the difficulties of maintaining constant secrecy in the relatively small and locally oriented society of Northern Ireland, members are cautioned against using their status as members for personal advantage to the detriment of organization's image through activities such as intimidating community members for personal reasons (Coogan 1995:554).

The above described rules of Cosa Nostra and the PIRA provide, in essence, a legal code by which the members of these organizations are bound, what Letizia Paoli has called an 'alternative legal order' (Paoli 2003:120) which for the most part supplant the legal order provided by the state. In turn, these legal orders are also supported by formal structures in the case of both organizations, to which we will now turn.

Beginning with the broad structural features of PIRA and Cosa Nostra, both organizations are structured hierarchically, with members divided into small basic units which are integrated into progressively larger units, which in turn are subordinated to higher level coordinating bodies. While in reality the flow of both information and influence flows both upwards and downwards within these structures, from a formal perspective the power of command rests with the higher level bodies within both organizations.

The formal structure of the PIRA is, at least in terminology, based upon that of a modern military, and refers to the various levels of the organization with a mixture of martial and political terminology. At the lowest level of the organization are individual members, referred to as 'volunteers', who operate in relatively small units of roughly seven members called 'active service units' or ASUs¹⁵. Among the members of each ASU is a designated Commanding Officer, in charge of the unit, an Intelligence Officer, and an Education Officer, in addition to approximately four volunteers (Horgan & Taylor 1997:20). As the basic unit of the organization, each ASU operates within a designated territory (Bell 2000:109; 132; Horgan & Taylor 1997:20), and while the bulk of PIRA's

¹⁵ Active service units were first introduced in the late 1970s, prior to which time the lowest unit of the organization was the company.

ASU's are located within Northern Ireland, a number of them are also located within the Republic of Ireland and, to a lesser extent, in England (Horgan & Taylor 1997).

ASU's, in turn, much like in a conventional military structure, are grouped into companies, which in turn form battalions, which in their turn form brigades, of which there are six in Northern Ireland covering the areas of Belfast, Derry, South Derry, East Tyrone, Mid-Ulster and South Armagh (Moloney 2007:154). At the head of each of these brigades is an Officer Commanding (OC) or Brigadier responsible for all of the activities of the sub-units within its territory (IMC 2004:16). While brigades have always been a standard feature of the organization, their internal organization has changed over time, though not to the same degree within each one. For example, in the more urban areas represented by the Belfast and Derry brigades, the cellular structure of the ASU replaced the internal division into battalions and companies; in the more rural areas represented by the East Tyrone and South Armagh brigades, conversely, the original terminology of companies and battalions was retained (Moloney 2007:177).

Above the level of the individual brigades, in the case of Northern Ireland, and individual ASUs in the Republic, are the Northern and Southern Commands into which these sub-units are integrated. As explained by Horgan and Taylor, these are both command structures and operational areas. The former is centred in Belfast and has responsibility for the six counties of Northern Ireland and the five border counties located in the Republic; the latter is centred in Dublin and responsible for the remaining twenty-one counties of the Republic (Horgan & Taylor 1997:7-8). The division into command areas, which by default created two new internal positions within the PIRA, those of Northern and Southern Commander, was not adopted until 1976, although a similar

division had been temporarily created in the late 1930s by the original Irish Republican Army (Moloney 2007:159-60).

The next level of the hierarchy is filled by the PIRA's General Headquarters (GHQ), which is composed of roughly 50-60 individuals divided into ten departments, each run by a Director or Officer and 4-5 staff (Horgan & Taylor 1997:9). Mirroring to some extent those found in conventional military organizations, these departments include quartermaster, security, operations, foreign operations, finance, training, engineering, intelligence, education, and publicity (Horgan & Taylor 1997:10). The role of GHQ is, in effect, to execute the directives of the Army Council and to act 'as a governing body between Council meetings,' referring decisions it takes back to the Army Council (Horgan & Taylor 1997:6-7).

The Army Council is the highest operational body of the PIRA, and like the subordinate levels of the organization is a permanent body. Composed of seven members drawn from within the organization, Its powers are fairly wide-ranging, and include making declarations of war and temporary peace; appointing the Chief of Staff and all 'Commissioned Ranks'¹⁶; regulating all aspects of the organization and its internal matters; co-ordinating with other republican and foreign organizations or states; and arranging for any necessary care of members or their families (Moloney 2007:278; 606). In carrying out these functions, as mentioned above, the Army Council relies to on the GHQ.

¹⁶ What exactly 'commissioned ranks' means in the context of the PIRA is nowhere specifically defined; in general, however, a commissioned rank could be any position of importance, such as the head of a department within the GHQ, the Northern and Southern Commanders, Brigadiers, or the head of a particularly important ASU.

Above the level of the Army Council are two separate institutions whose roles are less operational, but which nevertheless fulfil important formal functions. At the apex of the PIRA is the General Army Convention (GAC), less a distinct body as such than 'an organised meeting of delegates (usually 100-200) from other structures within the organisation' (Horgan & Taylor 1997:4). According to the PIRA's Constitution, the GAC is the 'Supreme Army Authority', and meets every four years (increased from every two years in 1996) (Moloney 2007:603-604) in order to decide matters of major importance to the organization and gather input from the units across Ireland (Bell 2000:148).

The General Army Convention is also responsible for choosing, by election, the twelve member Army Executive, which in turn elects the Army Council (Horgan & Taylor 1997:5). Until 1996 the PIRA Constitution stipulated that the Army Executive was to meet once every six months, when it was modified to mandate quarterly meetings instead, as well as to provide for the attendance of the Chairman of the Army Council and the Chief of Staff (Moloney 2007:605). At the same time, the Executive was also granted the constitutional role of 'custodians of the constitution' with the 'right to rule on policy matters which may infringe the constitution' (Moloney 2007:605). An important additional power which the Executive possesses, though it has been used infrequently, is that of calling an Extraordinary Army Convention (Moloney 2007:605) which gives it, at least in principle, the ability to check the power and actions of the Army Council.

Based on the preceding description of the PIRA it is clear that the organization is both formally structured and hierarchical. Though neither as formal nor as structured as the modern state, the PIRA is decidedly more developed in this regard than might necessarily be expected of an organization operating under the conditions of illegality.

Like the PIRA, Cosa Nostra is also characterized by a relatively well defined formal, hierarchical structure. At the bottom of this structure is the *cosca* (plural *cosche*) or ‘family’, which is the basic unit of the organization, and is always territorially based, being associated with either a city or town, or in larger cities with a particular district or neighbourhood (Blok 2008:7; Paoli 2003:155). Like the organization as a whole, each *cosca* is organized along hierarchical lines (Gambetta 1993:111), having a *capo* (also *capo famiglia* or *rappresentante*) who is elected by the members – called ‘men of honour’ or soldiers – of the *cosca* as its highest authority (Follain 2008:25; Gambetta 1993:111; Jamieson 2000:5; Paoli 2003:40-41; Pezzino 1995:273). The members also elect up to three *consiglieri* (counsellors) (Gambetta 1993:111) who serve a dual function, both assisting the *capo* and acting as a check against his power and management of the *cosca* (Paoli 2003:40), and potentially acting with the other members to have him removed if he fails in his duties (Paoli 2003:42). In addition the *consiglieri* also safeguards the *cosca’s* common funds which are set aside for the purpose of providing an income to ‘rank-and-file soldiers’ and paying the legal fees or imprisoned members (Schneider & Schneider 2003:86-87; Paoli 2003:176). The *capo* also appoints a *vice capo* (also *vice-rappresentante* or *soto-capo*) whose role is to stand in for the *capo* in ‘the case of impediments¹⁷ or long-term detention’ (Paoli 2003:41). Depending upon the size of the *cosca*, the *capo* may also appoint one or more *capi decina* or heads of ten who act as the coordinator for groups of roughly ten members (Gambetta 1993:111; Paoli 2003:41).

¹⁷ Impediments short of the incarceration can include a number of situations which make the *capo* otherwise unavailable to carry out his role, such as in the case of being the subject of an investigation or surveillance by the authorities, where carrying out mafia activities without detection becomes far more difficult due to the heightened risk of detection. The *vice capo* may also take the place of the *capo* in the case that he becomes a fugitive from justice and must go into hiding.

The *cosche* of Cosa Nostra are in turn grouped into *mandamenti* or districts which are composed of approximately three ‘geographically contiguous’ *cosche* (Gambetta 1993:112) which is headed by a *capo mandamento*. Until sometime in the 1960s the *capo mandamento* could not be chosen from among those members who already occupied an official position within the *cosche* and so was chosen from among the members, with the aim of avoiding concentrations of power (Gambetta 1993:112). Subsequently, however, this rule was abandoned and the *capi mandamenti* came to be chosen frequently from among the *capos* of the most powerful *cosca* in the *mandamento* (Gambetta 1993:112). The *capo mandamento* is responsible for intervening when requested to settle disputes within or between the *cosche* of the *mandamento*, as well as to act as their representative on the provincial cupola (also commission).

The provincial cupolas are the highest authority and coordinating bodies for the organization’s *cosche* in a given province (Paoli 2003:54). While mechanisms of coordination at the provincial level have existed since the earliest days of Cosa Nostra (Dash 2009), the first formal cupola was not established until the late 1950s in the province of Palermo (Paoli 2003:52-53; Schneider & Schneider 2003:63; Pezzino 1995:274). As previously mentioned, the cupola is composed of the *capi mandamenti* of the province who together appoint a *segretario* (secretary) who has no formal powers save for the responsibility to call and organize meetings of the cupola (Paoli 2003:53; Pezzino 1995:263).

Not unlike the Army Council of the PIRA, the cupola plays a key role in managing the use of violence by and within the organization (Gambetta 1993:114). As described by Letizia Paoli, ‘from its inception the commission was given exclusive

authority to order the murder of police officials, prosecutors and judges, politicians, journalists, and lawyers,' as well as to authorize the killing members of one *cosca* by another (Paoli 2003:53-54). Internally the cupola also has an important role when a *capo* is removed, either through being killed or arrested, and there is the potential for the development of a power vacuum within the *cosca* which may lead to violence. This role can extend as far as disbanding a *cosca* and reassigning its members to different *cosche*, or merging the *cosca* with a neighbouring one. Additionally the cupola may also simply appoint a temporary replacement (Gambetta 1993:115). Additionally, the cupolas are vested with a general management role with regard to the political and economic resources of the organization, ensuring that they are exploited to maximum effect (Paoli 2003:53, 57).

It is important to note that there is some differentiation in the roles of the cupolas described above from one province to another across Sicily, and in at least two provinces – Siracusa and Messina – neither cupolas nor other formal coordination mechanisms exist given the limited presence of Cosa Nostra in this part of the island (Paoli 2003:27). The *cosche* in the provinces of Agrigento, Caltanissetta and Trapani, for example, which have historically been dominated by Cosa Nostra, are also divided into *mandamenti* (DIA 2008:22, 29, 41), but Catania, Ragusa, and Enna are not, despite the presence of Cosa Nostra *cosche* in those provinces (DIA 2008).

Above the level of the provincial cupolas there also exists the *Interprovinciale* or *Regionale* (regional cupola) which is similar in form to the provincial cupolas but acts as a representative and coordinating body for all of the *cosche* across the island (Paoli 2003:56-58). Originally based upon the cupola of the Palermo province, its purpose and

functions largely mirror those of the provincial cupolas, and like those it claims 'the right to examine all cases of conflicts among mafia brothers and, eventually, to impose the most appropriate sanctions' (Paoli 2003:128). Established in the mid-1970s on the initiative of the head of Cosa Nostra's *cosca* in the province of Catania, the aim 'was to set up a forum in which to discuss and peacefully settle disputes among families from different provinces and to plan the most important economic and military activities' (Paoli 2003:56-57; Pezzino 1995:222), as well as to oversee the business activities of members where these crossed provincial lines (Gambetta 1993:113). Mirroring the rules of the provincial cupolas, the regional cupola was to consist of representatives from each province who would elect a regional *segretario* who, like his counterparts at the provincial level, would have no formal powers save that of calling and organizing meetings. Although originally the regional cupola was to meet once a month in a different province on a rotating basis, shortly after its creation a 'permanent seat was established' for regional meetings in the Palermo province (Paoli 2003:57). While the composition of the regional cupola was in practice dominated by the representatives of the Palermo province given the much greater numbers of members in that province (Gambetta 1993:113; Paoli 2003:57), at least in principle each province represented 'had the same formal standing' (Gambetta 1993:113).

Much like the PIRA, Cosa Nostra clearly has fairly well established and defined formal, hierarchical structures, and in both organizations, despite differences in terminology, these structures fulfil many parallel roles and functions. At the lower levels of both organizations, there is a relatively clear territorial principle which serves as the underlying framework for the organizations as a whole (Bruce 1993:71; Hayes 1998:24).

Hierarchy, moreover, is the formal principle of organization at both the lower and higher levels of both organizations, with distinctions between simple members and those holding some office within the unit.¹⁸

In the case of both organizations there is also an evident tendency to the management of power, and while certain positions are vested with significant powers of command over both members and resources, there are also formal mechanisms which are clearly intended to act as a break on those powers. Thus, the power of the individual *capi* within Cosa Nostra is in theory limited by the rulings of the cupolas, and the significant powers of the Army Council are in theory limited by the role of the Army Executive. While these safeguards operate at different levels within each organization, the operative principle is the same, what Letizia Paoli, citing Max Weber, has described as the ‘minimization of power’ in which ‘the holders of office are obliged to act only according to the will of the group members as a whole, in their interests and by virtue of the authority that the latter have entrusted them’ (Weber 1978 cited in Paoli 2003:41).¹⁹

Another important similarity between the organizations is the importance placed on the regulation through formal structures of the use of violence in both organizations. Though seemingly a counterintuitive finding for groups who regularly engage in the

¹⁸ These parallels are interesting in a broader context insofar as neither territoriality nor hierarchy are absolutely necessary as organizing principles for violent organizations, though these may implicitly operate within a relatively well defined geographic area and like any organization potentially tend to a natural hierarchy based upon the skills of the members as they emerge through action. Many networks and cells of Islamic ‘terrorist’ groups operating, for example, are neither hierarchical nor tied to a particular territory (for example see Mishal & Rosenthal 2005 and Vidino 2009), nor are groups who form to carry out armed robbery generally organized along such lines (see Enstadter 1969).

¹⁹ The specific difference between the two organizations in this regard appears in the directness of this minimization of power. In Cosa Nostra, because elections take place at a more local level (within each *cosca*) for a number of offices, the minimization of power is direct. In the PIRA this takes a more circuitous route through the formal structures, with the wide participation of the membership in the General Army Convention which then acts on their behalf in electing the Army Executive which in theory safeguards the interests of the membership and organization as a whole vis-à-vis the Army Council. The difference, then, would appear to be in terms of the ‘representativeness’ versus ‘directness’ of the democratic operation of minimization of power in each organization.

killing of both members and non-members, as discussed in the previous chapter, violent specialists – those who form violent organizations in the first place – are specialists not only because they use violence, but because they develop the competence to exploit their capacity for violence through its strategic non-use. Put in slightly different terms, both organizations are structured formally not so much to maximize the volume of violence, as much as its utility.

In addition to these formal similarities, however, it is also important to mention some of the apparent differences observed as well. The first of these relates to internal differentiation within the organizations. While both organizations exhibit functional differentiation, as seen by the division of responsibilities in formal offices, within the PIRA this appears to be more formally developed. For example, the departments of GHQ, clearly modelled on those of a conventional army, have no direct parallel in the formal structures of Cosa Nostra. This is not to say that similar functions to those assigned to PIRA's GHQ departments are not carried out by those more 'specialized' in these activities within Cosa Nostra, as will be seen in the following section, but rather that in terms of a formal differentiation and specialization the two organizations do differ.

A final point of difference worthy of mention is the balance of power within the organizations that appears from the formal structures within both organizations. In the case of Cosa Nostra this balance appears to some degree weighted towards the lower levels of the organization, insofar as their role in choosing office holders and constituting the higher level coordinating bodies is more direct (the principle of 'directness' discussed above). In the case of PIRA, however, the converse appears to be true, as specialization is concentrated at the upper levels of the organization, such as in the GHQ and Army

Executive, which are further removed from the direct influence of the lower level units such as the ASUs, companies and brigades. One possible reason for this can be found in the structures of formalization themselves which appear from the above examination of these organizations. In the PIRA, as has been seen, the higher levels of the organization are associated with somewhat higher degrees of formalization, again, specifically with regard to institutions such as the GHQ, Army Council and Army Executive. The first of these, moreover, implying as it does a centralization of functions necessary to the operation of the organization (e.g., departments which control functions without which a conventional army could not really operate)²⁰, could be expected to be more necessary to the continued existence of the organization, and hence have greater power than the lower levels of the organization. Put in somewhat simpler terms, it is difficult to conceive, within the formal terminology used by the organization to describe itself, how the lower level units would be able to continue without the higher.

In the case of Cosa Nostra, however, the converse appears to be true. The formal structures of the organization appear to tend more toward a decentralization of necessary functions, the bulk of which exist within the individual *cosche*. Each of these is self-financing and self-arming, and the higher levels of the organization from the beginning have been more a creature of these lower level units, as reflected in the original limitations that the *cosche* attempted to place on them (for instance, the rule against holding two offices mentioned above). Thus, if the lower level units were to withdraw their support from those formal structures, it is difficult to see how they could continue to

²⁰ Units of a conventional army, for example, are relatively dependent upon the centralized quartermaster department where one exists, because by definition this is the body that controls access to and distribution of weapons to these units. Likewise, a finance department controls pay. If the functions of these departments are truly centralized in them, they clearly possess a good deal of control over the structure's lower levels.

exist. In summary, unlike the PIRA, authority and capacity appear to run more from the bottom up than the top down when examining the logic of the organization.

All of these formal rules and structures, of course, are subject to variations in practice which are not necessarily captured in a descriptive analysis that focuses exclusively on them as they are formulated by the organizations. As is true of any organization, there is always a difference between what is written down or spoken as the way things are, and how things actually unfold under both internal and external pressures. In the following section, which will look at the organizational dynamics of paramilitary and mafia groups, what happens to the formal rules and structures of paramilitary and mafia organizations under these pressures will be examined in greater detail. Before turning to this analysis, however, the other organizations in the paramilitary and mafia constellation will be briefly discussed relative to formal structures and rules.

The focus thus far, as stated at the beginning of this section, has been on two paramilitary and mafia groups specifically: the PIRA and Cosa Nostra. The reason for this is largely that out of the roughly half-dozen other groups in each constellation, these are the only two which have formal structures in the strict sense of the term. While the other organizations nominally follow similar structures, especially at the lower levels, there are often no truly 'higher' levels to the organizations at all, or where there are, these are only nominally superior. The two largest loyalist paramilitary organizations in Northern Ireland, the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) and the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) both have brigades which contain smaller groups of members within them, again delineated by the principle of territoriality, but these are far more autonomous than their equivalents in the PIRA. As noted by Bruce, for example, a 'company' in relation to the

UVF or UDA might be “any self-identifying group of men who joined’ one of these organizations (Bruce 1993:113). These lower level units have a distinct fluidity to their structure, being characterized by a relative absence of formality and the ‘lack of a centralized command structure’ (Steenkamp 2008:170; see also Neumann 2002:130).

Both also have executive level bodies – the Inner Council and Brigade Staff, respectively, but the powers and roles of these remain far less formalized; rather than being rule-based, for example, factors such as personal charisma are far more important in determining leadership functions (Bruce 1992:130-131; Crawford 2003:30-31). As noted by Steve Bruce, both ‘the UVF (and the UDA) was never a democracy....People “emerged” as leaders because they took the initiative in organizing a group of men, and they held their positions so long as they had the active support (or fearful acquiescence) of their men (Bruce 1993:130-131).

The smaller republican paramilitary organizations, primarily the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA), the Real IRA (RIRA), the Continuity IRA (CIRA), as well as Saor Eire and the Irish People’s Liberation Organization (IPLO) before these two latter organizations were disbanded, are likewise characterized by far less formality in their organizational structures, despite sometimes attempting to mimic the formal structures of the PIRA (IMC 2004:13, 18). Likewise, the Official IRA (OIRA) is similarly less formally structure, but has also progressively done away with even the original IRA terminology to refer to its internal structure since it moved away from open existence in the mid-1970s, from whence it eventually took the name of the Workers’ Party as it moved further into conventional politics (Rekawek 2008).

Sicilian mafia organizations independent of Cosa Nostra are generally similar to that organization at lower levels insofar as they are likewise territoriality based, but much like the paramilitary organizations just described, they tend to be far less formally structured and hierarchical. Leadership, again, is generally based more upon personal charisma and self-appointment than formal mechanisms,²¹ and between *cosche*, even within the same organization, there is generally little formal coordination. For example the Stidda (Sicilian 'star), an organization which fought a bitter war with Cosa Nostra in the province of Agrigento throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, had no collegial body in which the various *capi* of the *cosche* took decisions; rather, where coordination was necessary it was generally taken on the basis of ad hoc arrangements reached between individual leaders, thus giving the organization an extremely federal structure (CPD 1997:28,30; 35; CPD 2006:294, 430).

The Carcagnusi, another loose knit group from the province of Catania, is organized along a similarly loose structure of allied *cosche*, although there is some speculation that these are coordinated by a 'triumvirate' of the organization's three most powerful leaders (CPD 2006:450 n.290). Similarly the Cursoti, another group centered in the city of Catania, also more closely fits the model of a group of relatively independent *cosche* in which there is no clear selection process for leadership save for the personal power of individuals who emerge largely from self-selection and tacit acceptance by the group (Sciarrone 1998:220). The Laudani organization, also of the province of Catania, appears to follow a very similar organization, experiencing more or less integration between its individual *cosche* depending upon the presence of a charismatic figure

²¹ Some leaders of Stidda *cosche* are in fact members of Cosa Nostra who have been expelled from the organization (Gambetta 1993:154).

capable of commanding the support of its membership (CPD 2006:470; DDA 2004:6). The Pulvirenti group, also of the province of Catania, appears to have followed a similar organizational structure until its leader and highest ranking members were made members of Cosa Nostra's *cosca* in the province, leading to the acceptance of formal structures by the new affiliates and the disbandment of the Pulvirenti as a distinct organization (DDA 2004:3; Paoli 2003:28).

The previous description of the smaller paramilitary and mafia organizations and their structures contrasts markedly with those of the PIRA and Cosa Nostra. While the possibility that there is simply not enough solid data available on these organizations, and they may in fact have far more formalized structures than has been argued, from the information that is known about these groups this seems unlikely. A more plausible explanation would seem to be that these organizations are in fact far less organized than their larger counterparts, and that their structures, in contrast, are actually much flatter and, tied more explicitly as they are to the importance of individuals rather than offices or positions, are also far more fluid. On the other hand, much like the larger organizations, the territorial principle appears to be equally strong in the way both the organizations as a whole, and the various sub-units of these organizations, delimit themselves from each other (see, for example, MDI 2004:463-64).

In summary, this section has attempted to provide an analytical description of the formal rules and structures of mafia and paramilitary organizations, paying specific attention to the similarities between them but also highlighting, where pertinent, some of the more important apparent differences. What emerges from this descriptive exercise is, in the case of both Sicily and Northern Ireland, a picture of a constellation of violent

organizations in which, at least in terms of the level of formalization and structural sophistication, one particular organization in each case is dominant. Having sketched out these differences, the following section will turn to an analysis of how the formal structures – or lack thereof – influence the organizational dynamics of these organizations.

iii. Organizational Dynamics

In the previous section, the formal structures and rules of paramilitary and mafia organizations were discussed. It was noted, however, that such formal structures may often diverge from actual practice, and the dynamics of violent organizations may vary in the extent to which those formal rules are reflected in practice. This section will set to examine these dynamics and their relation to formal rules and structures. Specifically, these dynamics include: the tendency for mafia and paramilitary organizations to depart from formal rules and structures where these are in place; the tendency toward both violent fragmentation and splits within these organizations, not infrequently related to the departure from formal rules; the tendency for individual defections from these organizations, specifically to the benefit of the state; and, the appearance of cooperation between rival organizations under certain circumstances.

As discussed above, the presence of well developed formal structures and rules distinguishes the PIRA and Cosa Nostra from the rest of the paramilitary and mafia organizations in Northern Ireland and Sicily. However, there is also a good deal of evidence to suggest that while these formal structures and rules play an important role in the way these two organizations function, in reality the departure from these is also a regular feature of the organizations. In other words, while recognizing the existence of

these formal rules and structures is an important step in analyzing the PIRA and Cosa Nostra, we must go beyond them in order to understand the dynamics of the organizations.

As seen in the last section, the PIRA takes the organizational form of a modern, conventional army, at least in the terminology it employs to describe its internal organization. The reality of the organization, however, is somewhat at odds from what the terminology implies, and while the internal bodies described in the PIRA's constitution do exist, they do not often function according to rules which the constitution lays out.

For example, the General Army Convention, mandated by the constitution to meet every two years to provide for orderly changes in the organization's leadership in fact met only twice during the height of the Northern Ireland conflict, first in 1969 and then in 1986, and then subsequently three more times during the key years of the peace process from 1996 to 1999 (Moloney 2007). Just as important as the frequency of these meetings, however, have been their outcomes. The first meeting in 1969 was intimately linked with the split within the original IRA which gave birth to the PIRA and OIRA (Coogan 1995:337-338). The meeting of 1986, called to reassess the PIRA's political strategy and its position regarding the contest of Northern Ireland and Westminster elections, resulted in another rift in the organization which gave rise to what would later become the Continuity IRA (Moloney 2007:289). Finally, at the meeting in 1996 in which the organization's position to the peace process was outlined, yet another break occurred, resulting in the creation by disaffected PIRA members of an additional republican paramilitary group, the Real IRA (Moloney 2007:479). While the PIRA was nevertheless

able to continue to function without the regular meetings of the GAC called for by the constitution, what is of importance from the institutional perspective is that the way in which the organization actually functioned departed quite substantially from the manner implied by its formal structures.

This departure from formal structures and rules is also to be seen at the lower levels of the organization as well. For example, because one of the key roles of the General Army Convention, as previously stated, was to facilitate changes in the organization's leadership through electing an Army Executive which would then elect an Army Council, without this regular change in these bodies both (but especially the latter) came to be closely associated with specific personalities which in many instances dwarfed the importance of the 'office' which they occupied and hence were able to act outside of its prescribed constraints. This also had the tendency of strengthening the power of the Army Council relative to that of the Army Executive, relegating the latter to little more than a 'formal oversight board and a holding pen for potential Army Council replacements,' and a possible source of patronage to the Army Council through seats offered as 'a reward for service and more often to give balance to various factions' within the organization (Bell 2000:159). In turn, this imbalance made the Army Executive's attempts to fulfill its constitutional role particularly contentious, and when it did in fact attempt to check the power of the Army Council at the few General Army Conventions which were held, the friction caused between the two bodies was a major cause of the PIRA's organizational splits (Moloney 2007:379).

These formal departures do not only effect the internal functioning the higher level bodies of the PIRA, however, but also characterized the vertical relations between

the units of the organization. The constitutional role of the Army Council, for example, implies that much like the equivalent type of body in a conventional military it would issue specific commands to lower level units of the organization which in turn would be executed within relatively clear parameters. This analogy cannot be applied, however, because in contrast to what is formally prescribed, the Army Council of the PIRA is not in fact the supreme authority in the traditional 'command and control' sense found in a conventional army. As Bell explains:

'The IRA Army Council is the core command and yet the Army Council is largely a validating organization, seldom meeting more than once a month...reviewing options and prospects, dealing with matters of finance and discipline....It almost never votes formally, rather authorizing and recognizing initiatives that arise from the independent units or from the staffs. And if there is to be a vote, it is largely a formality to allow dissent a statement....Since consensus and local initiative play a very large role in IRA tactics and for all intents there are no strategic decisions to be made except to persist, control at the top is seldom exercised and so seldom a contentious matter' (Bell 2000:141-2).

Not unexpectedly, the absence of a conventional command and control function is replicated as well in the PIRA's GHQ. As discussed in the previous section, the formal structure of the GHQ replicates the model found in a conventional army, with departments and positions divided along functional lines. This functional specialization and the control it implies over subordinate units, however, is not as firm in reality as the formal structures imply.

As noted by Horgan and Taylor, 'there are said to be "extremely close connections between the Army Council and GHQ,"' and that this allows the Army Council to 'control a number of levels within the movement' (Horgan & Taylor 1997:9). However, this close connection also implies that to some degree whatever inefficiencies exist within the command function of GHQ will be replicated in the Army Council; in

other words, with such a symbiotic relationship the 'control' that the Army Council is able to exercise depends upon the extent to which the GHQ actually controls the units below it. If the functions of the GHQ were performed exclusively by it, as in a conventional army, this control would no doubt be extensive as it would have control over the essential resources needed for lower units to function. However, in reality these functions are not the exclusive preserve of the GHQ, and they are often carried out at much lower levels of the organization. Intelligence, for example, is gathered at every level of the organization down to the individual volunteers (Bell 2000:244); these, moreover, along with the local units of which they are a part are often more efficient in doing so than the GHQ intelligence department which is removed from the many local situations in which such intelligence is gathered. Compounding this, however, is the fact that even when this intelligence moves up the hierarchy, there is no real repository for it at the top; as such, intelligence is not 'collected'²² by the organization as a whole in the sense that this usually implies (Bell 2000:251).

The financing, education and quartermaster functions of the organization display a similar pattern, as once again these functions have been historically performed as low as the level of the local ASU (Horgan & Taylor 1997:19,20), meaning in practice that the GHQ has no necessary monopoly over the supply of arms, funds, or the indoctrination of new members. Similarly, operations rarely rely on the planning of a centralized GHQ department but rather are conducted as a matter of course by the lower level units of the organization through their own planning and reliance on locally available resources (Bell 2000:142). This does not imply that GHQ has no role in any operations, of course, but

²² Collection, of course, as regards intelligence implies that it is written down and put somewhere where it can then be accessed again and made sense of by someone who was not necessarily involved in its collection.

rather that where it does have a role, this is far less than would be the case in a conventional army.

To some extent the functions of training, foreign operations, and security depart from this pattern because they are more amenable to monopolization by the centralized GHQ. PIRA cells located in England, for example, would be limited in their contact with other units located in Northern Ireland by the constraints of geography and a more dangerous operating environment, and so to some extent more dependent upon GHQ for lack of other contacts. However, here too to speak of either strict command or control may be an overstatement, and these cells also operated with a relatively significant degree of operational autonomy (Horgan & Taylor 1997:23). Training, likewise, could be somewhat more tightly controlled by GHQ because of the role of GHQ members in locating facilities for training in the Republic through contacts not necessarily available to PIRA members originating in Northern Ireland.²³ Again, however, this would only necessarily be an advantage of the GHQ in the case of training large numbers of volunteers; individual members, on the other hand, could be relatively easily trained by other local members in firearms and intelligence gathering given the experience in these functions at the local level. Finally, security, much like intelligence, has been a preoccupation of all members of the organization from the highest to the lowest levels, but insofar as GHQ retained a centralized capacity for this activity internally, this did allow for some element of control which could be exercised by both GHQ and the Army Council over local level units (Horgan & Taylor 1997:11). This was mainly attained by the fact that centralized security units, generally small and with a membership known

²³ Much of the training of PIRA members necessarily occurred in the Republic of Ireland given the lower risks of detection compared to those in Northern Ireland (Bell 2000:137).

only to the leadership, provided the GHQ and Army Council with a potential weapon against overly oppositional local commanders or volunteers (Moloney 2007:122, 156).

Finally, if we move to the lower levels of the organization, that is, the brigades and the units out of which they are constituted, while formal structure is still present, what we find is a pronounced variability in these structures from one area to another. As discussed in the previous section, there are differences in the ways in which the PIRA's individual brigades have organized themselves, with more the ASU model being adopted in the more urbanized areas, and the persistence of the older, more explicitly 'military' model of battalions and companies in the rural areas (Moloney 2007:177). To a certain extent, however, there is even more variability than these different naming conventions imply, because again unlike a conventional military, none of the units within the PIRA has a standard number of members; as noted by David Charters, in this regard the terminology of 'brigades, battalions and companies... bore no relation in terms of strength or organization to conventional military formations' (Charters 1980:33; see also Clare 1989:43). As such, the relationships of subordinate units within a brigade to the higher authorities may also differ, with more trusted commanders or units given a freer reign than others found to be less capable or reliable (see Collins 1998:75).

In summary, concerning the PIRA there are many indications that the formal structures of the organization, despite persisting as recognized principles and categories of conceptualizing organizational structures, frequently do not capture the dynamics and roles of all of the 'moving parts' of the organization in reality. What appears to emerge, in contrast to the rigid hierarchy these formal structures imply, is rather a much looser organization with some elements of hierarchy, but equally elements more characteristic

of a group of relatively autonomous units bound together more by a fairly coherent corporate identity and the idea of a shared common purpose (Hayes 1998:24; Horgan & Taylor 1997:23; Toolis 1995:319).

Turning to Cosa Nostra, the tendency toward the departure from formal structures observed in the case of the PIRA can also be observed, and there are many parallels between the two organizations in this regard. As noted in the previous section, the superordinate bodies of Cosa Nostra are both hierarchical as well as collegial, and while higher level bodies of the organization exercise authority over lower levels, within each level members are in theory equal. In both respects, however, there has been significant divergence from these principles in actual practice. The *Regionale*, for example, although established originally to act as a body for the coordination of the *cosche* from all of the provinces, and to give these provinces a greater voice in the affairs of the organization as a whole, fairly quickly became a mechanism by which the numerically superior *cosche* of the Palermo province were able to extend their influence over the other *cosche*, especially in those areas not traditionally associated with dominance of Cosa Nostra (Pezzino 1995:274). As such, rather than acting as an authority over the Palermo *cosche*, the institution became instead subordinate to them, and with them many other traditionally more independent *cosche*.

In turn, at the provincial levels, similar departures from the established formal procedures vested in the various *cupolas* have also been a regular feature of the organization, especially in the province of Palermo. For example, and not unlike the PIRA's General Army Convention, there have significant periods of time in which the Palermo *cupola* in particular has been effectively non-functional. First established in

1957, by 1963 the *cupola* had ceased functioning with the outbreak of violence between various *cosche* in the province which later came to be known as the first mafia war (Follain 2008:61; Dickie 2007). Not until 1970 were successful attempts made to reinstitute the *cupola*, but rather than the full institution with representation from all the *mandamenti*, until 1974 it operated, in effect, as a triumvirate drawn from the most powerful *cosche* of the province (Falcone & Padovani 1991:16; Lodato & Grasso 2001:91). Only in 1974 was the full *cupola* restored along its original lines (Lodato & Grasso 2001:86). During the hiatus, however, the key functions which the *cupola* was originally created to perform became the provenance once again of the most powerful *cosche* in any given area.

After the reinstatement of the *cupola* in 1974, beginning towards the end of that decade, its actual functioning began to diverge very significantly from that originally envisioned by its creators, largely due to the increasingly successful attempts of the *cosca* of Corleone to dominate the institution. Through direct manipulation or disregard for established practice, the *Corleonesi* as they came to be known, changed a number of important rules. First, the position of *segretario*, occupied by a member of the *cosca*, was strengthened by in effect creating an administrative staff to carry out its orders; members of this staff, contrary to practice, were drawn from members of various *cosche* across the province (Paoli 2003:57). Additionally, the commonly accepted practice of holding meetings of the *cupola* attended by all *capi mandamenti* was dropped in favour of partial meetings with selected *capi*, allowing the *Corleonesi* to build alliances with selected parts of the organization (Paoli 2003:57).

Effective control of the *cupola* also allowed the *Corleonesi* to undermine the formal structures and rules on the which the *cosche* had traditionally been based. For example, by using contacts made with lower level members through the ‘administrative staff,’ the *Corleonesi* were able to build alliances across *cosche* through which they could gather intelligence on potentially rival *capos*, as well as feed misinformation to rival *cosche* (Paoli 2003:137-138). This practice was also a clear violation of the hitherto strict principle of the ‘territorial integrity’ and jurisdiction of each individual *cosca*. Conversely, in order to maintain the secrecy and security of their own *cosca*, the *Corleonesi* also adopted the practice of secretly initiating new members without, as traditionally had been done, informing the heads of other *cosche* of their identity; as has been noted, this allowed the *cosca* to build up its own ‘secret army’ within the organization (Paoli 2003:45, 120).²⁴

To some extent, however, the departures from adherence to the formal rules and structures of the organization observable at the higher levels of the organization are in line with similar dynamics present at the level of the individual *cosche*. Again taking the example of the *cosca* of Corleone, the leadership in place within the *cosca* during the takeover of the *cupola* of Palermo had itself taken power through the violation of many of the organizations formal rules in the 1950s. The impetus for this was a conflict between the original *capo*, Dr. Michele Navarra and Luciano Liggio, a member of the *cosca*. The former was murdered by allies of the latter in 1958, after the deaths of many of the members loyal to him, with the latter taking control over the *cosca*. A similar attempt to take over the leadership of the Santapaola *cosca* from its *capo* Benedetto Santapaola (of the Catania province) by one of his soldiers, Alfio Ferlito, was less

²⁴ This practice, evidently, was not only practiced by the *Corleonesi* but also the *cosca* of the town of Riesi.

successful than that undertaken by Luciano Liggio when Ferlito was himself murdered in 1982, ultimately leading to a split within the *cosca* and the establishment of an independent mafia organization, the Pillera clan (DDA 2004:2-3).

As observed in the case of the PIRA, Cosa Nostra has similarly been characterized by a departure from the formal structures and rules of the organization so frequent that such departures form a rule in themselves rather than exceptions. In both cases, however, it is not simply the case that formal structures and rules do not exist; they do, and they serve very definite functions. However, of equal importance is the fact they can be easily become the subject of manipulation by various factions within the organization, used instrumentally to gain control and strengthen the power of particular factions vis-à-vis the power and position of others.

Beyond the instrumental use of formal rules and structures, however, especially as observed in the failure of internal bodies of both Cosa Nostra and the PIRA to meet according to specific timelines, another important dynamic appears to be at work. This will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, but it is worth noting here that as illegal organizations, both the PIRA and Cosa Nostra are equally subject to what has been called the efficiency/security trade-off (Morselli 2009:1-9). In essence, because both organizations cannot operate openly under the threat of state repression, the internal efficiency of the organizations can never be the only consideration. In other words, while regular meetings of the *cupolas* or the GAC according to established rules may lead to the most efficient operation of the organizations, given the risk of detection it may also make them less secure with regard to possible arrest or disruption from the state. Thus, while part of the failure of the internal bodies of these organizations no doubt stems in

part from internal struggles, broader, state-driven dynamics are also at work in forcing these organizations into an acceptance of informality as they trade the desire for efficient functioning for greater measures of security.

The second organizational dynamic apparent in paramilitary and mafia organizations is the tendency toward violent internal conflicts and fragmentation, as well as organizational splits. These appear both within the larger and more established organizations discussed above, Cosa Nostra and the PIRA, as well as in the smaller and less formal organizations.

As noted by Edwards, 'paramilitary groupings are volatile creations and have tended to split, hemorrhage support, and feud when the prospect of policy change looms on the horizon' (Edwards 2009:159). Given that the combined violence within and between mafia organizations in Sicily has in some years surpassed the annual death toll related to the conflict in Northern Ireland, we can reasonably say that Edwards' observation applies just as well to these organizations also.

As alluded to in the previous section, fragmentation has been an enduring characteristic of republican paramilitary groups over the entire course of the 20th century, but especially since the late 1960s. The first split of this period occurred in 1969 within the IRA, when those members who would form the PIRA split from the organization to establish their own organization. Ostensibly, the decision of the IRA leadership at the time to drop its abstentionist policy toward elections in the Republic of Ireland was a key cause of this split. However, additional factors included the perception of some members of the organization primarily based in Northern Ireland that the leadership in Dublin (which would become the Official IRA) was derelict in its duty to provide weapons for

volunteers to counter loyalist attacks on the nationalist community (Moloney 2007:80). Following this organizational split, throughout the early 1970s a violent feud erupted between the two organizations in which a number of members on both sides were killed or injured in what became a cycle of attacks and reprisal attacks (Holland & McDonald 343-344).

During the same period, the OIRA also underwent a series of internal struggles between opposing factions within the organization, again driven in part by matters of policy. The result of these struggles was a split in the organization in 1974, with a section of the OIRA leaving to establish the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA). Once again a feud between erupted between these two organizations, resulting in a number of casualties on both sides (Holland & McDonald 1994). The INLA, in turn, experienced internal fragmentation almost from its inception culminating in an internal split in that organization in 1986 out of which emerged yet another republican paramilitary organization, the Irish People's Liberation Organization (Holland & McDonald 1994:279). Another feud then erupted between the IPLO and the INLA, again leading to casualties in both organizations, and was then followed by an internal split within the IPLO resulting in violent clashes between rival members of that organization (Holland & McDonald 1994:335). The cycle of feuding continued until 1992 when, mindful of the negative effects republican feuding was having on their own organization, the PIRA intervened, launching a quick assault against the IPLO, killing the leader of one of its factions and injuring a number of other members, and ultimately forcing the organization to disband (Coogan 1995:542-543; Holland & McDonald 1994:341-343; Horgan & Taylor 1999:28).

Even the PIRA, which has been more stable than most paramilitary groups has, as discussed above, lost factions of the organization at various times since the early 1970s, with those members who left the organization after the 1986 GAC going on to form the Continuity IRA (CIRA) (Page & Smith 2000:95; Patterson 1990:6; Tonge 2004:671), and another group who left following the GAC of 1997 forming the Real IRA (RIRA) (Dingley 2001:453) – the group who would become infamous for the 1998 Omagh bombing which killed 29 people and wounded over 200 (Dingley 2001). Unlike the previous splits in the original IRA, and those which occurred within the OIRA, INLA, and IPLO, however, immediate violence did not follow between the PIRA and these splinter organizations. While the specific cause for this lack of immediate is difficult to determine, it has been speculated that it was largely due to the marginalization of the CIRA and RIRA and the much stronger ability of the PIRA to disband them through force should this have been necessary (Moloney 2007:508-509).

Among loyalist paramilitary organizations there has been a similar tendency toward the splintering of the organizations, although there also appears a stronger likelihood of this fragmentation to lead to violent changes in the leadership of existing the organizations rather than the establishment of wholly new ones. The UVF, for example, underwent an internal coup in 1975 when a series of organizational mishaps in which the then leadership was implicated coincided with the release of a number of UVF members from prison. Already unhappy with their status within the organization, these newly released members had the ‘brigade staff’ removed from their offices at gunpoint, with the support of UVF’s leader inside the Maze Prison. While this action led to some internal dissent among specific UVF units, there was ultimately no split leading to the emergence

of a new organization (Bruce 1993:129-30). In 1996, however, the beginnings of a split which would lead to the creation of new organization did occur when members of the UVF's Mid-Ulster Brigade ignored the ceasefire called by the organization and were 'stood down' by the leadership, at which point, in cooperation with some disaffected members of the UDA they created the Loyalist Volunteer Force (Bruce 2004:510-511).

The Ulster Defence Association (UDA) has followed a somewhat similar pattern, although its more confederal structure, and the looser association between units to begin with, has meant that splits leading to the formation of distinct new organizations have been less common than internal coups and leadership changes, or feuding between factions which already possess a good deal of autonomy (Aughey & McIlheney 1981:37). In one of the earliest examples, in 1974 a number of left-wing elements were purged from the UDA in the wake of the Ulster Workers' Council strike (Aughey & McIlheney 1981:44). In the following year Charles Harding Smith, a leading figure in West Belfast UDA, declared that the West Belfast section of the organization was leaving the UDA and would henceforth be under his control. This led to an attack planned by the East Belfast UDA in which Smith was shot twice in the his West Belfast headquarters and nearly fatally wounded. Shortly after recovering and being released from hospital Smith was shot again in his office and wounded, after which he personally left the organization and moved to mainland Britain (Bruce 1997:105-108; Wood 2006:59-60). Subsequently in 1988 Andy Tyrie who had occupied the position of 'Supreme Commander' of the UDA since 1972 was also forced to resign from the organization when, in the wake of a number of internal disputes, a bomb was found under his car. Following confirmations from both the PIRA and the Royal Ulster Constabulary that the bomb had not been

planted by republican paramilitaries, and Tyrrie's failure to win a vote of confidence from the UDA's other commanders, he resigned his position and left the organization (Bruce 1997:257; Wood 2006:137). Most recently, in 2002, Johnny Adair, an influential figure in West Belfast and leader of the UDA's so-called 'C Company' was expelled from the organization for his close associations with the rival LVF, as well as historical rivalries with other powerful figures in the organization in West Belfast and elsewhere. Following his expulsion Adair and members of his unit faced a number of assassination attempts. Returned to prison in 2003 for violations of release conditions of the Good Friday Agreement, upon his release in 2005 Adair (as well as members of his family and a few remaining supporters from the UDA) was forced into exile by continued threats against him from hostile UDA members (Gallaher & Shirlow 2006:166; Wood 2006:289-292).

Organizational splits and internal fragmentation have also been an enduring characteristic of Sicilian mafia organizations, some indication of which has already been seen in the previous discussion of the departure from formal structures and rules. As briefly discussed above, the Corleone *cosca* underwent a period of fragmentation in the mid-1950s in which two rival factions fought each other for control, ending in the death of the leader of one of these factions, after which the internal situation returned to a period of relative stability. Not long after the internal struggles of the Corleone *cosca*, however, rival Cosa Nostra *cosche* in the city of Palermo also became involved in a bitter conflict which led to the suspension of the *cupola* of the province. In an attempt to settle a dispute over the loss of a large portion of a heroin shipment which some of the *cosche* of the city had invested in, the representative of the Palermo Centro *cosca* sought redress from the *cupola*, but was unable to convince the other representatives of the guilt of those

accused of being responsible, for which he personally blamed the representative of the Ciaculli *cosca*. Subsequently, one of the accused bosses was murdered, and the Ciaculli *cosca*, blaming *cosca* of Palermo Centro for the killing, was successful in having the *cupola* issue a death sentence against the head of the Palermo Centro *cosca* and his brother. This killing led to series of reprisal and counter-reprisal killings and bombings between the *cosche* and their allies (Follain 2008:61; Schneider & Schneider 2003:64-65). The conflict was brought to an end in 1963 after a car-bomb explosion in Ciaculli killed 7 military personnel and police officers, leading to public outrage and nearly 2,000 arrests (Dickie 2007:305-308; Jamieson 2000:16; Longrigg 2009:19-20). The intensive state repression which followed the incident (which came to be known as the Ciaculli Massacre) virtually destroyed Cosa Nostra, driving most of the membership underground and leading to the dissolution of the *cupola* (Longrigg 2009:81).

The Corleone *cosca* again experienced internal frictions in the 1990s, despite having by that point managed to extend its control throughout the whole organization to an unprecedented degree. With the arrest in 1993 of Salvatore Riina, the head of the *cosche*, the role of *capo* was taken over by the second-in-command, Bernardo Provenzano who had been in hiding from the state for many years (Dickie 2007:426-427; Longrigg 2009). A number of *capos* who remained loyal to Riina, however, were distrustful of Provenzano and the organization began to break down into rival factions once again (Longrigg 2009:118). As part of the fallout of this factionalization, in 1994 a number of suspected allies of Provenzano from the *cosca* of Villabate were murdered (Longrigg 2009:125). This conflict was also to extend to the province of Catania, where the historic Santapaola clan allied themselves with Provenzano, and the Mazzei

organization, to that point an ally of the Santapaola, chose to back the faction loyal to Riina, again resulting in a number of murders (DDA 2004:3).

Similar tendencies toward fragmentation and organizational splits are also observable to an even greater extent in the smaller mafia organizations, the bulk of which are present in the eastern Sicilian province of Catania, an area not as firmly controlled by Cosa Nostra as the western half of the island (Gambetta 1993:164-5). The Cursoti organization, for example, founded in the mid-1970s (Sciarrone 1995:218), while initially undergoing a process of greater integration of the membership as a result of violent confrontations with the Santapaola *cosca* of Cosa Nostra in the 1970s (Sciarrone 1995:219-20) began to fragment once again in the 1980s. During this period, an internal feud sparked by the return of a faction of the organization which had relocated to Milan led to a series of violent confrontations which left the organization extremely fragmented (DDA 2004:3). In almost all the other smaller mafia organizations similar dynamics appear to have been at work since the 1970s to the extent that it becomes difficult to discern which organizations are still unified to a sufficient degree to be fighting internally or whether or not they have in fact broken down into distinct organizations (see the descriptive chronology outlined in DDA 2004).

A third important organizational dynamic at work in both mafia and paramilitary organizations is the tendency of these organizations to lose members not only through violence or defection to other organizations, but also to the state. This happens, of course, when members are arrested, but in the sense employed here is meant to refer to the tendency of members, especially when arrested, to attempt to reach a deal with the authorities of the state to provide evidence, generally directed at prosecuting other

members, in exchange for state protection.²⁵ Additionally, members of an organization may volunteer to cooperate with the state without necessarily having been arrested or detained. As discussed in the previous section, of course, in the case of mafia and paramilitary organizations there are rigid formal rules against cooperating with or giving information to the state. These rules notwithstanding, in both Sicily and Northern Ireland the cooperation of members with the state has been an increasingly regular (if not always frequent) dynamic of these organizations. In the case of Italy, for example, there were forty 'state's witnesses' in late 1992; by the end of December 1997 this number had jumped to over one thousand (Jamieson 2000:104).²⁶ Comparable figures for the same time period are more difficult to produce for Northern Ireland, but as Holland & McDonald note, from the early 1970s until 1986, there had been approximately thirty supergrasses 'whose statements had led to six hundred arrests with nearly three hundred people being charged' (Holland & McDonald 1994:209).²⁷ While a trend in these numbers is difficult to determine for republican informants, the increasing numbers of informants in the case of Italy, it can be hypothesized, is likely tied in some way to the increasing use of internal violence within most mafia organizations, but especially Cosa Nostra, throughout the 1990s. As an ancillary point, it is also the case that the system in place in Italy for dealing with collaborators of justice became more effective throughout

²⁵ The significance of this phenomena has given rise to its own lexicon in both Sicily and Northern Ireland, where it is called '*pentitismo*' and 'grassing', respectively, referring to the words *pentito* (literally someone who repents) and supergrass, both used to refer to someone who becomes a state informant.

²⁶ While not all of these witnesses were members of or linked to Sicilian mafia organizations only, but also to mafia groups from other regions of the country or organizations such as the Red Brigades, a significant number in line with the general increasing proportion did originate from Sicilian mafia organizations. See, for example, Paoli 2003:99-100.

²⁷ It is quite possible that these numbers represent undercounting as it is unlikely that all successful informants would become publicly known. Especially where they remain unsuspected by fellow members of their organization, there is a great deal of benefit to the security services of keeping them in place in order to gain further intelligence information.

the 1990s, whereas in the case of Northern Ireland the same system of relying on informant testimony had already come under widespread criticism and fallen into disuse (Bonner 1988; Hillyard & Percy-Smith 1984:353; McEvoy 2000:552-553).

A final organizational dynamic that mafia and paramilitary organizations also appear subject to, and which appear somewhat counterintuitive in light of their tendency towards internal fragmentation and conflict, is the tendency toward periods of pragmatic cooperation or relatively stable coexistence between otherwise hostile organizations. In some cases this even extends to the incorporation of a member or members of a rival organization. The significance of these relationships, in the context of this comparison, is twofold. On the one hand, in the case of Northern Ireland, because the conflict between paramilitary groups is often perceived as one based simply on sectarian religious hatred, cooperation between rival groups indicates that the situation is possibly more nuanced than such interpretations recognize. On the other hand, in the case of mafia organizations in general, it has often been argued that they seek a monopoly of control through violence (Abadinsky 1988; Catanzaro 1994; Gambetta 1993; Sung 2004; for a contrary view see Smith & Varese 2001). Again, however, the situation may not be as clear cut as this, and it is possible that if monopoly is unattainable because of the presence of strong rivals, mafia organizations may cooperate with these rivals instead.

Among paramilitary organizations there are a number of instances of cooperation between organizations and the incorporation of members of rival organizations. In the wake of the feud between the rival INLA and IPLO, for instance, which was ended by the intervention of the PIRA, at the disbanding of the IPLO a number of former members were accepted in the ranks of PIRA. Sections of the PIRA also cooperated at times with

certain units of the INLA in 'joint operations,' despite the fact the relationship between the two organizations was generally characterized by a mutual distrust if not outright hostility (Holland & McDonald 1994:78; 168-9; 184-5, 272). Incarcerated members of the two organizations also had periods of mutual cooperation, most notably during the 1981 Hunger Strike, despite the fact that relations between the organizations outside of the prison remained strained (Holland & McDonald 1994:168-169). Smaller republican organizations such as the CIRA and RIRA have also attempted to cooperate with each other in a limited capacity when this has been seen as mutually beneficial, especially in regard to conducting joint operations or providing aid to members of the other organization (IMC 2008:8; Moloney 2007:507-508), despite the personal and political disagreements of senior members of both organizations (Moloney 2007:508).

Loyalist paramilitary organizations have also seen such phases of cooperation, despite having experienced periods of violent confrontation with one another. Again, joint UDA-UVF operations, while not commonplace, have occurred occasionally among certain units (Dillon 1988:219; Dillon 1989:16). Additionally, during the early phases of the Northern Ireland peace process in 1991 the UDA, UVF and Red Hand Command (RHC) established a joint, superordinate body – the Combined Loyalist Military Command – in order to 'co-ordinate both paramilitary action and political initiatives' (Wood 2006:148). Finally, the Loyalist Volunteer Force, which was initially formed by a breakaway section of the UVF, also came to incorporate a number of disaffected members of the UDA as well as further members of the UVF who had a personal loyalty to the LVF leader Billy Wright. Incorporating these members, however, led ultimately to increased hostility against the LVF by both UVF and sections of the UDA resulting,

ultimately, in violent confrontations (Bruce 2004:514-515; Gallaher & Shirlow 2006:150).

The possibility of cooperation between paramilitary groups has also on some occasions extended across the republican-loyalist divide. While these relationships have primarily been economic in character, as will be discussed below, cooperation has also occurred in other fields. In the mid-1970s, for example, members of the UDA and the OIRA held a number of meetings with the aim of ending sectarian killings of members of each others' communities which had dramatically escalated in the early years of the decade; there were also meetings between the OIRA and UVF to discuss other issues of common interest (Holland & McDonald 1994:57; Sanders 2009:92). A very similar arrangement was worked out between the UVF and the PIRA in the area of South Armagh as well (Harnden 2000:140). There is also some evidence, however, that the OIRA also used contacts with a leading UDA figure in the early 1980s to have that organization kill rival republican activists by feeding information on these individuals to the UDA (Bruce 1995:247). For their part, however, there is also some evidence that the a similar arrangement between the PIRA and the UDA also occurred on at least one occasion in the other direction, with the UDA providing the PIRA with information used to remove a member of the UVF who had caused increasing problems both to that organization and the UDA (Dillon 1989:255-259; Dillon 1988:449-452). The PIRA and UDA, on a less sinister note, also maintained a secret dialogue from the late 1970s to discuss various potential political initiatives from the perspective of each organization, including the UDA supported initiative for an independent Ulster, and the forging of a 'no-car bombing' pact (Coogan 1995:451). More generally, there was also a relatively

longstanding agreement between the major paramilitary groups, republican and loyalist, to avoid directly targeting the leadership of each others' organizations, as well as those figures important to the operation of various racketeering activities (Dillon 1988:443,453). Although these agreements were sometimes observed in the breach, they nevertheless represent an interesting point of collaboration between the two rival groups of organizations. Most recently within the Northern Ireland prison system there have also been indications of cooperation between incarcerated members of various dissident loyalist and republican organizations who do not accept the outcome of the peace process in order to push for a change to the prison regime which would allow prisoners to segregate along the lines of paramilitary affiliation (NIAC 2004:22).

Cooperation and incorporation have also been an interesting feature of the relations between Sicilian mafia organizations. The Stidda organization, for example, while primarily composed of independent *cosche* (that is, not affiliated to Cosa Nostra) from the province of Agrigento incorporated, in the early 1990s, a number of former Cosa Nostra members who had been expelled from that organization. Following their incorporation, the Stidda subsequently began to attack Cosa Nostra *cosche* in Agrigento and other provinces, both out of revenge and desire to take control of Cosa Nostra interests (Bugea 2002). After a period of extensive violence leading to hundreds of deaths between the organizations, however, many Stidda members were either affiliated or readmitted to Cosa Nostra or, remaining independent, reached settlements with Cosa Nostra to end the violence and divide control and profits between them (PDA 2002:10).

In the province of Catania which has seen, as discussed above, high levels of violence between various mafia organizations, there have also been a number of

cooperative arrangements between these organizations at various times. When the Santapaola *cosca* experienced an internal split in 1982 and a subsequent conflict with the Pillera group (composed of the former members of the Santapaola *cosca*), the former began to enter into a series of alliances with other mafia organizations in the province, most notably the Pulvirenti organization (DDA 2004:3; Paoli 2003:28). The Pillera organization, experiencing a similar split in the 1980s which led to the creation of the Cappello organization, pursued a similar strategy, forming alliances with the Laudani, Sciuto and Puglisi organizations in order to strengthen its position vis-à-vis the Cappello organization and other rivals (DDA 2004:3). Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, these informal arrangements and alliances continued to evolve, often changing rapidly, but eventually coming to some form of equilibrium in the early years of 2000 in which the numerous mafia organizations of the province had established themselves into two roughly equal camps, with Cosa Nostra (represented by the Santapaola *cosca*) and its allies on one side, and the three or so organizations that remain autonomous from Cosa Nostra on the other (DDA 2004:5,12; CDD 2008:51-56).

This section has examined four particular organizational dynamics that appear to affect both paramilitary and mafia organizations: the departure from formal structures, the tendency towards fragmentation, the defection of members, and the pragmatic cooperation that often develops between rival organizations in each group. Without going so far as to say that these dynamics have the same causes in every circumstance, in each of these four areas there do appear to be important similarities in the dynamics according to which both mafia and paramilitary organizations operate. The next chapter will attempt to generalize about the possible causes of these similarities. Before doing, so

however, the following sections of this paper will examine paramilitary and mafia organizations in three particular fields of action.

iv. Paramilitary and Mafia Organizations as Economic Actors

As Letizia Paoli has explained, mafia organizations are ‘multifunctional’ organizations (Paoli 2003), meaning that they are not simply tied to one field of action – for example, crime – but operate in a number of fields simultaneously. Though never claimed as explicitly in the case of paramilitary organizations, these too can be termed multifunctional, insofar as they too pursue a range of goals that are rarely reducible to set of motivations or goals.

It is possible, however, to examine both groups of organizations within a specific field of action for the purposes of comparison, and in this section this will be done by examining both mafia and paramilitary organizations as economic actors. This is not to imply that they are solely economic actors²⁸ – only that economic action is an important part of what these organizations do. And like all modern organizations, both paramilitaries and mafias, in order to sustain and perpetuate themselves, need access to funds.

Many of the activities engaged in by (but no means all) both paramilitary and mafia organizations to raise money have generally been classified as ‘organized crime’. As discussed in the previous chapter, however, this category, despite being commonly recognized and frequently used, often lacks analytical utility because it can convey many different things to many people, depending upon their particular preconceptions. Without entertaining the debate over definitions and meanings once again, however, it is fair to

²⁸ For an interesting, though somewhat reductionist, analysis of paramilitary organizations from a purely economic perspective, see Jennings 1998.

say that mafia and paramilitary organizations (or more specifically their members) often engage in illegal activity to raise money. There is, however, a distinction to be made here between the types of illegal activities engaged in. Bank fraud, for example, is an illegal activity by which money can be obtained, as is drug dealing, selling stolen cars and so on. In each of these cases, and in many others like them, while one might use violence or the threat of violence to support any of these activities, it is not logically necessary to any one of them, and many illegal markets of this type operate without the presence of violence (Naylor 2003; Varese 2006). Other activities generally classified as illegal, on the other hand, become if not impossible at least far more difficult if the threat or use of violence *is not* employed. This is the case for many so-called ‘predatory’ crimes such as extortion and armed robbery. It may also be useful, however, where the individual or group seeking profit lacks the necessary skills for the first set of illegal activities mentioned above insofar as threatening violence may be sufficient to intimidate someone with the necessary skills to hand over their own profits.²⁹ In this sense violence can be a fungible resource in illegal, profit-driven activities.

Perhaps the most prominent of illegal activities engaged in by both mafia and paramilitary organizations that is directly dependent upon the use or threat of violence is extortion, which can be defined as the extraction of rents in exchange for protection, where the threat which must be protected against also originates with the seller of protection. While extortion has been contrasted by some authors with the authentic provision of protection in the case of mafia organizations (Gambetta 1993; Gambetta 1994; Varese 2006), to some extent the distinction is an arbitrary one for the simple reason that, in the case of protection rents in general, the relationship is usually

²⁹ This is not to deny, of course, that simple blackmail may be sufficient to achieve the same purpose.

characterized by a power imbalance, with one side have a level of control over the means of violence that the other does not, making coercion the basis of the relationship (see Paoli 2003:160).³⁰

Almost all of the paramilitary and mafia organizations of Northern Ireland and Sicily have made regular use of extortion as a key means of financing their organizations. In Sicily, among Cosa Nostra *cosche* in fact, this is perhaps the most regularized of the profit-generating activities in which they engage (Paoli 2008:26; Paoli 2007:865; Paoli 2003:165-6). Following the more general territorial principle of the organization, each *cosca* generally extracts protection payments exclusively from businesses within its own area, and in cases where members from one *cosca* wish to operate in another's territory, this can only be done with the permission of that *cosca's* leadership (Schneider & Schneider 2003:83). Likewise, the *cosche* of other mafia organizations in Sicily also make extensive use of extortion against the businesses within their territories, and in the case of all organizations violence is a frequent response to incursions against their interests (DIA 2008). However, there are also occasions where recourse is had to negotiation to settle disputes over who should receive protection payments and sometimes these may be divided between *cosche*, as well as cooperation between *cosche* where the nature of the business being extorted crosses territorial lines (DIA 2008).

In Northern Ireland as in Sicily extortion is also operated by paramilitary organizations on a territorial basis, and there is extensive cooperation between groups controlling different territories (Adams 1986:168; Bruce 1995:247; Silke 1998:336). As an informant described to journalist Martin Dillon:

³⁰ As Charles Tilly has explained, this is the case whether we are discussing the state or 'organized crime,' as insofar as both aim to provide protection exclusively, and do not allow the subject of protection to withdraw from the deal, the activity is analytically the same in both cases (Tilly 1985).

'The paramilitaries, Republican and Loyalist, met occasionally in a pub off the Antrim Road in North Belfast. The city was divided so that an area, even though it contained Catholic and Protestant areas, was defined as [P]IRA, UDA, Official IRA or INLA. In this way they ensured that no one encroached on another's territory. It was in all their interests. I know of examples where a job needed to be completed quickly and it was on a site in a Protestant area. Roofers were required and the UDA approached the INLA and asked for assistance. A squad of Catholic roofers was escorted in every day to this UDA-controlled site and their protection was ensured. The reverse also happened. This is a dirty business' (Dillon 1988:423-424).

The targets of extortion by both paramilitary and mafia organizations are varied, but generally fall into two broad types: businesses of a local character which are generally immovable, such as shops and pubs, wholesale suppliers and manufacturers; and movable businesses, primarily contractors and sub-contractors in the building industry. It is this latter category in which inter-organizational coordination in the case of Northern Ireland and inter-*cosche*/inter-organizational cooperation in the case of Sicily appears to be most common (Naylor 2002:63). The reason for this cooperation has been captured by Steve Bruce, and his explanation, while dealing specifically with the UDA, summarizes the key problem faced by organizations attempting to extort 'movable' businesses regardless of the region in which they operate:

'Although building sites provided easy targets for extortion, they did cause problems. Demanding protection money from a builder working in the middle of the Shankill [a loyalist paramilitary dominated area of West Belfast] was easy enough, but what did one do when he finished that job and started work on a site at the bottom of the Road, next to the republican Unity Flats? Now PIRA or INLA would want their cut and arrangements would have to be made' (Bruce 1997:194).

The common problem with extortion of such a sector, then, is that movement. Because both mafia and paramilitary organizations are inherently territorial as well as being reliant on the threat or use of violence for much of their power, the movement of the target of

extortion out of the area of control of one group into that of another leaves only two options if extraction of rents is to continue. Either the organization can attempt to expand its control into the new area, which carries the risk of violent confrontation and the potential for a loss of all profits; or it can attempt to make a deal with the organization that is in control in that area. Because all organizations involved face the same problem as the targeted businesses move location frequently, the proper incentive exists for cooperation.

To some extent this raises the question, however, of what the point is in attempting extortion of movable businesses is at all if it requires a degree of coordination which can simply be avoided if the targets of extortion are kept to businesses tied to a specific location. The answer to this question appears to lie primarily in the peculiar features of the building sector relative to others which makes it particularly vulnerable, and hence potentially very lucrative. As Robert Kelly explains:

‘The construction industry is fragile because it is so atypical. Construction work more than most other types of industrial work depends on weather, coordination and integration of dozens of subcontractors, specialized crafts, and groups of laborers. Site clearance, demolition, and excavation must be done; concrete poured; superstructures raised; plumbing installed; carpentry and electrical work carried out; telephone wiring and elevator installation completed – all in a predetermined order and often unchangeable sequences’ (Kelly 1999:90, quoted in Schneider & Schneider 2003:167).

In short, the complexity of the construction sector makes it extremely vulnerable to external factors with the potential to affect timelines and the completion of projects, and with so many different actors involved in each project, there are numerous potential points which these external factors can affect. One such external factor is, of course, violence against any of the companies involved in any part of a project, against the

equipment they rely on to complete their particular tasks, or against completed or partially completed project itself. In short, it is a sector which is particularly ripe for 'protection', and one which has been an important sector of both the Northern Irish and Sicilian economies.³¹

In both Sicily and Northern Ireland, extortion in the construction sector as well as regards local businesses can be considered relatively sophisticated. In Sicily, for example, simple cash payments on a regular basis are only one of a number of payment systems which mafia organizations may employ. In addition, payment may also take the form of providing a certain number of jobs to specific people designated by the *cosca*; of agreement to purchase supplies only from designated suppliers, often controlled by the *cosca* itself; or of entering into a formal business partnership with a particular member of the *cosca* (Gambetta 1993:181). In some cases, payment may also consist of some combination of each of these methods (Paoli 2003:164). The system of extortion has also become relatively sophisticated since it first emerged in the early years of the Troubles. Though initially characterized to some degree by its clumsiness (Horgan & Taylor 1999:21, 24), paramilitary organizations have become more subtle in their methods largely due to the attention of law enforcement. One particular example of this is to be found in the use of legally registered security firms created by paramilitary organizations to provide protection, which also offered a source of employment for members or

³¹ In part the reasons for this are similar, insofar as both Sicily and Northern Ireland, being among the poorest regions in the UK and Italy respectively, have been the beneficiaries of substantial central government funding for infrastructure projects. This has been compounded somewhat in the case of Northern Ireland, with the UK also funding the reconstruction of infrastructure destroyed throughout the Troubles.

associates as guards.³² These security firms, operating with a veneer of legitimacy, could then approach construction firms offering their services in much the same manner as mafia organizations, backing up the offer of protection with an implied threat of violence (Adams 1986:171). While both republican and loyalist paramilitaries have made use of the control over private security firms (Horgan & Taylor 1999:21), it appears to have been more common among loyalist groups (Adams 1986:172) who in turn (as described above) then enter into agreements with their republican counterparts when necessary (Clare 1990:31). Additionally, another avenue more open to paramilitary than mafia organizations, due to the ostensibly more 'political' nature of their activities, has been to mask extortion demands by soliciting 'donations' to various prisoners' or other welfare associations controlled by the organizations (Maguire 1993:280).³³ This latter method adds another layer of apparent legitimacy when the funds collected are actually declared to the authorities for tax purposes, thus avoiding the risk of attention from Inland Revenue over undeclared income.

Among other sectors of the economy, primarily small businesses with immovable premises, the degree of cooperation between mafia and paramilitary organizations evidenced in the construction sector does not appear to be as extensive. Because such businesses are clearly either within an organization's territory or not, there would appear to be less incentive, as well as less necessity, to coordinate activities or share profits, and it appears that both individual mafia and paramilitary organizations have retained a somewhat more exclusive control over such businesses (Maguire 1993:280; Schneider &

³² An additional advantage to controlling such companies for the paramilitaries was the ability to then offer employment to formerly incarcerated members who would otherwise be difficult to employ given their criminal record.

³³ Interestingly there is also some evidence that mafia organizations have made use, on occasion, of a similar strategy by soliciting donations for prisoners.

Schneider 2003:83). The importance of territoriality, once again, must be emphasized as a crucial factor in this regard. The *cosche* of mafia organizations have in the majority of cases occupied the same territory for generations, and hence the contours of each one's territory are relatively well known and accepted. In Northern Ireland, paramilitary organizations are also supported in this regard by the implicit territoriality of their own populations, especially in cities such as Belfast and Derry, where segregation between Catholic and Protestant populations has actually increased since the late 1960s (Hays 2010:356-357; Salazar 1998:382 n.4).

The ability to control a system of extortion over a number of varied businesses also creates the potential for mafia and paramilitary organizations to participate in a number of additional illegal activities which have been broadly described as racketeering. Because the provision of 'protection' provides the protector an extensive degree of control over the 'client' and his resources, this control can be leveraged to engage in other profit-making activities. Among the most common of such activities in both Northern Ireland and Sicily are various forms of fraud used to divert public funds to mafia and paramilitary organizations. An example from Northern Ireland which has become somewhat iconic of these types of fraud – the use of false tax exemption certificates in the construction sector – is explained by Paul Clare:

'...the tax rate, if a sub-contract on a building site does not have a tax exemption, is 33 percent. The main contractor, acting on behalf of Inland Revenue...is required to hold back one third of the contract price. Therefore, if a sub-contractor completes the requirements of a 9,000 pound contract, for example, and he does not have a tax exemption certificate, he only receives 6,000 pounds. The main contractor keeps 3,000 pounds and sends it to Inland Revenue. The racket occurs when the OIRA provides the sub-contractor with a false certificate and he presents it to the main contractor. After examining the apparently legitimate document, the main

contractor pays the sub-contractor the full 9,000 pounds. The OIRA usually charges the sub-contractor ten percent for the use of the false certificates' (Clare 1989:22).

This racket, also operated by other paramilitaries at various times, while possible without a relationship of 'protection,' is made easier by such relationships because there is both a pressure on controlled businesses to participate, as well as a clear incentive for them to do so insofar as they directly profit. This solidifies the relationship between protector and client by adding to the relationship the provision of an actual service not otherwise available.

Comparable racketeering activities associated with mafia organizations, primarily Cosa Nostra, are to be found operating in Sicily, though to some extent there also appears to be a greater degree of official collusion in such activities. For example, through the engagement of a high-profile associate from the Palermo business community with extensive contacts in the public administration responsible for awarding public works contracts, the *cosca* of Corleone and their allies were able to establish an extensive cartel system in the awarding of these contracts to companies of their choosing, some of which were owned by members of the organization (Schneider & Schneider 2003:72; Paoli 2003:174-75). By being able to insinuate itself in the contract-awarding process, Cosa Nostra was thus able to exercise an 'up-stream' control over the entire process which it does not appear that paramilitary organizations have ever been able to replicate. However, this does not mean that some degree of official collusion has been entirely absent from Northern Ireland. As Martin Dillon notes, for example, it appears as though paramilitary groups were able to co-opt at least one member of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (the body responsible for awarding construction contracts for public housing) in order to negotiate the degree to which bids for such projects could be inflated,

while remaining within the bounds of tolerability to the Executive's board (Dillon 1988:424-25). Additionally, 'until 1988 businessmen were permitted to claim income tax relief for having to pay extortion monies to the paramilitaries,' (Dillon 1988:424), which while not equivalent to direct collusion as such at least demonstrates some level of tacit acceptance for the practice on behalf of the authorities.

The fact that both mafia and paramilitary organizations control significant means of violence gives them a clear advantage in raising funds through exploiting legitimate companies. In Northern Ireland, however, the general level of ostensibly political violence has also given rise to some unique opportunities for profit. In particular, the high frequency of bombings since the late 1960s has given rise to a particular form of insurance fraud, in part because in addition to public facilities these have also often targeted private businesses. As such, it has not been unknown for business owners to enter into agreements with paramilitary organizations to have their own buildings targeted, and when the property is subsequently destroyed, to share a portion of the insurance payment with the paramilitary group (Holland & McDonald 1994:151-2; Maguire 1993:285). This is broadly similar to the use of arson and bombings by mafia organizations, although in the former case there is the added benefit that insofar as most bombings would on balance be taken as instances of politically motivated violence the risks of an insurance fraud investigation would be comparatively lower. An additional profit-making venture borne out of the specific circumstances of widespread violence in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s and early 1970s has been the operation of so-called 'black taxi' firms, owned and operated by various paramilitary organizations. Taking advantage of fairly widespread destruction of buses and the public transport system at the

beginning of the Troubles (much of which the paramilitaries were responsible for), both loyalist and republican paramilitaries purchased a number of London-style black taxis and began operating these in their respective neighbourhoods (Clare 1989:30-31; Clare 1990:32-33; Maguire 1993:282-283). In addition to providing a steady source of income, this transportation system has also been useful in gathering intelligence, as the drivers themselves provide a source of information on happenings in the area.

A final profit-making activity that has been pronounced in Northern Ireland and, to a lesser extent in Sicily, is armed robbery. In the case of paramilitary groups these have been most frequent inside Northern Ireland, but have also been carried out with some regularity in the Republic of Ireland and England as well (Horgan & Taylor 1999:9). Generally businesses with a comparatively large amount of cash on hand, such as banks and post offices, have been targeted (Horgan & Taylor 1999).³⁴ Interestingly, however, the high volume of robberies has also given rise to the creation of a market for protection in this area, and the PIRA especially has been known to enter into arrangements with a number of banks whereby in exchange for regular payments they are able to avoid the more risky and publicly embarrassing attention of having been the victim of an armed robbery (Dillon 1988:420). Though armed robbery is less common among mafia organizations in Sicily and Cosa Nostra specifically appears never to have regularly engaged in this activity, a number of Catania-based mafia organizations have developed a reputation for specializing in cash-in-transit robberies against armored vehicles, not infrequently carried out in other parts of Italy (CDD 2008:55 n. 39).

³⁴ While the most common target, cash is not the only resource sought in armed robberies. Lorries transporting liquor and beer, for example, have also been targeted by paramilitary organizations with the aim of reselling the product through paramilitary-controlled pubs or social clubs (Maguire 1993:281).

In addition to the activities previously outlined both mafia and paramilitary organizations have, at various times, engaged in numerous other profit-oriented criminal activities, primarily consisting of various types of fraud against the state or the European Union – such as the smuggling of cattle and pigs or the defrauding of EU subsidies (Maguire 1993:285; Allum & Sands 2004:142) – as well as the smuggling of other types of commodities such as fuel and cigarettes (Clare 1990:33; Maguire 1993:285). In general, in the case of both types of organization, as regards the raising of money the operative principle appears in both cases to be pragmatism. In this sense, there is a definite economic aspect to these organizations insofar as at least to some degree they respond rationally to openings in the (illicit) marketplace. However, at least in the case of the two largest organizations in each region – the PIRA and Cosa Nostra – there is also evidence that they cannot be reduced solely to economic-type organizations, because in both cases there are also clearly markets in which they do not participate, despite the relative ease with which they could theoretically enter these markets.

Both the sex trade (e.g., prostitution) and illegal gambling are two illegal markets which can potentially generate significant profits, and there is some evidence that certain paramilitary and mafia organizations have participated in these markets. However, there appears to be a consensus that both the PIRA and Cosa Nostra have purposely eschewed participation in both (Becucci 2008:67; Falcone & Padovani 1991:103; Horgan & Taylor 1999:28-31). The reason for this in both cases appears to be linked to both the formal rules of these organizations which caution against ostentatious displays, as well as the self-perception of members as ‘honourable,’ and unwilling to engage in particular behaviours viewed contemptuously by both the organizations themselves and among

members of the wider society. In both cases the absence of participation in such activities shows that, at least to some extent, the activities of these organizations are circumscribed by social mores which can impede participation in certain activities regardless of their high potential for profit.

A third activity not systematically engaged in by paramilitary and mafia organizations, and for similar reasons, is kidnapping for ransom. While at certain times both organizations have participated in this activity, in both cases the effects have generally been negative for both organizations. The PIRA, for example, largely abandoned this practice after two botched operations which damaged its public image (Horgan & Taylor 1999:11), although in principle maintaining the threat of possible kidnapping as leverage in extortion attempts against particularly wealthy figures (Horgan & Taylor 1999:11-12). In the case of Cosa Nostra, the organization through the regional cupola also instituted a formal ban on the activity in order to ensure the safety of certain important figures under the protection of various *cosche*, as well as to avoid negative public perceptions and law enforcement attention (Gambetta 1993:177-178).

A final profit-oriented activity worthy of discussion in relation to paramilitary and mafia organizations, and one in which there appears to be some variation between the two types of organization, is drug trafficking. In the case of Sicilian mafia organizations, their role in Italian, European, and international drug markets has been extensively analyzed (Becucci 2008; Paoli 2004), and while their degree of power and influence in these markets has often been sensationalized (see, for example, Sterling 1990), it has been proven in numerous judicial proceedings in both Italy and abroad that numerous members of both Cosa Nostra and other mafia organizations have been regularly involved

in the drug trade.³⁵ Despite this participation, however, two features of this participation are noteworthy. First, while individual members have participated in drug trafficking, at times on a fairly large scale, it has not been an activity in which the organization as such has participated (Falcone & Padovani 1991:105). Secondly, Cosa Nostra has never been directly involved in organizing the distribution of drugs within territories under its control (Falcone & Padovani 1991:103).

As regards paramilitary organizations, the role of drug trafficking is somewhat more ambiguous. In the case of the PIRA, for example, it appears that neither the organization nor its members have ever played an active role in the drugs trade as traffickers, and the organization has in fact been involved in various anti-drug campaigns in both Northern Ireland and the Republic (Horgan & Taylor 1999:26; Maguire 1993:286). On the other hand, there also appears to be some evidence that the PIRA has profited indirectly from the drug trade, especially in Northern Ireland, through the extortion of drug dealers operating within PIRA areas of control; in these cases, drug dealers are told where and when they can operate, and must pay protection money to the PIRA in order to avoid physical violence (Horgan & Taylor 1999:30-31). Among other paramilitary groups – both loyalist and republican – however, the relationship to drugs trafficking has been more ambiguous. Despite denials and denunciations of drug use and drug trafficking in their communities, members of numerous other paramilitary groups, including the UDA, INLA, IPLO, and LVF, have been linked to the drug market in various ways (Holland & McDonald 1994:311-312; Maguire 1993:286; McAuley 2004:532; Silke 2000b). Like the involvement of Cosa Nostra members, however,

³⁵ See the numerous reports of the Direzione Investigativa Antimafia, available in digital form from 1998 at: http://www.interno.it/dip_ps/dia/pagine/semestrali.htm.

paramilitary involvement appears to have been, by and large, the provenance of individual members (not always acting with organizational approval) rather than the involvement of entire organizations as collective actors. Additionally, there appears to be no evidence that any paramilitary group has ever been able to profit to the same extent from drugs trafficking as mafia organizations, nor of any significant role in international drugs markets.

As this section has attempted to demonstrate, there are significant parallels between mafia and paramilitary organizations as economic actors. Many of profit-oriented activities in which they engage are the same, and many of the means by which they engage in them are also very similar. Likewise, in both cases, violence or the threat of violence also underpins these activities, and is a key element through which both organizations are able to provide the funds by which they survive and perpetuate themselves. In this sense, there is little systematic difference between the two types of organizations (least of all to their victims), and regardless of motivation the results of these in both Sicily and Northern Ireland amount to a 'system of generalized extortion' which is analytically the same in both regions. Without revisiting the discussion of motives presented in the first chapter, however, there does appear to be one significant difference between the two types of organizations regarding profit-oriented activities which is of great importance, namely, the internal allocation of economic resources.

Despite engaging in very similar illegal profit-making activities, the resources generated from these activities are, for the most part, reallocated very differently within mafia and paramilitary organizations. In the latter, despite occasional deviations, there has always existed a relatively strong consensus that criminal activities should not be

made use of to enrich individual members of an organization (Clare 1989:3, 26; Clare 1990:28). The PIRA has been the most rigid in enforcing this rule among its members. Despite a number of scandals, loyalist paramilitaries, broadly speaking, also at least formally recognize the same principle, and though it has often been violated in practice there appears to have always some section within the loyalist paramilitaries who have been hostile to personal profiteering (Crawford 2003:109-111, 118-119). By contrast, among mafia organizations there is no similar rule against members using their membership for personal gain. Though as noted above when discussing formal rules ostentatious displays of wealth are frowned upon by the organization as a whole, and certain profit-making activities are not to be engaged in, within these limits there is no sanction for amassing wealth as such.³⁶

To summarize the discussion thus far, both mafia and paramilitary organizations engage in numerous illegal activities to finance their organizations, and many of the key activities in which they engage are underpinned, indeed made possible, by their command over the means of violence. Through violence, both types of organizations operate what can be considered a ‘system of generalized extortion,’ in which control is exercised over legitimate economic actors through threats, backed up by violence, which are employed to extract rents from these actors. The relationship does become nuanced in some cases, however, as the control exercised by both organizations is used in some cases to provide clients with services which, albeit illegal, may be of benefit to them. Despite the systemic

³⁶ It is tempting to move from this observation to a claim about the ‘motives’ of each organization and its members. However, for the reasons outlined in the previous chapter, such a jump is difficult to make and by no means straightforward. Indeed, motivations in both cases can always differ from individual to individual, and based upon the available data it seems more reasonable to examine what is known – that resources are allocated internally in a different way – than to argue from what is difficult to establish empirically, e.g., that distinct motivations drive members of the different organizations in a uniform way.

similarities, however, the key difference between the two types of organization as economic actors appears to be found not in their profit generating activities as such, but rather in the way the resources from these activities are reallocated internally among members of the organizations.

v. Paramilitary and Mafia Organizations as Social Actors

In the previous section mafia and paramilitary organizations were examined as economic actors – that is, as actors operating within markets in search of profit. In addition to acting within markets, however, both mafia and paramilitary organizations must operate within the broader societies of which they are a part. The reasons for this consist in the following. First, despite being ‘secret’ organizations, most of the activities in which both types of organizations engage bring them into direct contact with non-members. Most non-members, in turn, are aware, if not of specifics, then at least of the general activities in which these organizations engage. Finally, insofar as both the organizations and specific members are known to society³⁷ more broadly, they are necessarily put into relationships with the wider members of that society. For organizations which depend upon secrecy to continue to operate, however, these social relationships are a source of potential threat: the more people that know about a secret organization, the less secret it becomes. If those people who know about it decide to share their knowledge with the authorities, then the organization and its members could face serious problems. As such, a large part of the role played by both paramilitary and mafia organizations as social actors consists in their management of relationships with members of their wider societies to maximize their security. Much like in the economic sphere, this management

³⁷ The broad term ‘society’ is used here, but in specific instances we are actually talking about local societies – for example a town, village, or particular neighbourhood or housing block.

consists in both the threat and use of violence against those posing a threat to the organization, as well as the employment of various strategies to co-opt members of society into at least tacit support for the organizations and their members.

As social actors, both paramilitary and mafia organizations play an interesting role in their respective communities which allows them to both strengthen perceptions of their organizations as potentially very violent, thus deterring those who would potentially inform on their activities to the authorities, as well as perpetuating an image of 'defenders' of community. In short, this can be called the policing function of paramilitary and mafia organizations. For paramilitary organizations this role came to the fore in the contemporary period with the outbreak of sectarian rioting in Belfast and other parts of Northern Ireland in the late 1960s and early 1970s. During this period of rioting, a number nationalist areas became effectively off-limits to the Royal Ulster Constabulary, and the inability of the police to patrol these areas created a vacuum which republican paramilitary groups (primarily the PIRA initially) were, and continuously have been, able to fill (Knox 2001:208; Patterson 2008:502). As M.L.R. Smith and Peter Neumann explain:

'During the early years of the crisis in 1969 and 1970 policing in a number of city areas had broken down. Barricades were erected in Catholic areas of Londonderry and Belfast in order to protect these districts from incursions by loyalist rioters and the attentions of what was seen by many residents as an unwanted and discredited police force. Behind the barricades the Provisional IRA was able to build up its organization, and in due course control these areas. Although not always liked by residents, who had to put up with the IRA's gun-rule in their neighbourhoods, the Provisionals were nevertheless tolerated because they were seen as an instrument of community defence' (Smith & Neumann 2005:418).

Although to a lesser extent, given the generally stronger legitimacy of the police among the Protestant population, loyalist paramilitary organizations, specifically the UDA and

the UVF, were also able to fill a similar function in their respective communities (Bruce 1992:193; Silke 1999).

The general character of paramilitary policing has been described as ‘vigilante justice’ or ‘informal justice’ (Silke 2000a; Monaghan 2002), referring primarily to its ‘private’ rather than ‘public,’ and non-institutionalised character, in the sense that unlike the police forces of the state paramilitaries are self-selected to perform such policing functions, and of course not subject to the same judicial procedural rules as are police officials representing the state. As such, paramilitary policing broadly speaking is characterized by a certain arbitrariness, and is often driven more by the priorities of the organizations themselves than by those of the community. This does not mean, however, that there is not a certain amount of support for the paramilitaries in fulfilling this function, and indeed it has actually become commonplace in certain areas of Northern Ireland for many community members to bring complaints that would otherwise be directed to the police to paramilitary representatives for resolution (Bruce 1992:193; Silke 1999:26).

The problems policed by paramilitary groups, as such, are generally those activities viewed as problems by the wider community, commonly termed in the Northern Ireland context ‘anti-social behaviours’, and including such things as small-scale drug dealing, joyriding, vandalism, and other petty crimes, as well as much more serious crimes such as sexual assault (Knox 2001:207; Monaghan & McLaughlin 2006:172-174; Monaghan 2002:44-45). While members of paramilitary organizations may become aware of these problems through their own intelligence-gathering activities, often it is members of the community who will themselves bring it to the attention of the

organization (often through contact with the local office of Sinn Féin). Although paramilitary organizations do not conduct 'investigations' of these complaints in the strict sense of the term, usually some effort will be expended to determine whether or not the complaint is justified (Monaghan 2002:45-46), although to what extent this is done and how thoroughly in each case is difficult to determine. Again in contrast to conventional police forces, between complaint and punishment, there are rarely intermediate steps in paramilitary policing such as a trial. Instead, the subject of the complaint (or their family if the person is underage) will be approached by members of the paramilitary group with a formal warning of more serious sanctions if the behaviour continues. For those who don't cease, a range of punishments may be employed, including shaming behaviour, such as tarring and feathering or being forced to wear a placard detailing one's crimes in a public place; punishment beatings, with bats or nail-spiked cudgels for more intransigent offenders; 'kneecappings,' that is, being shot in the leg knee or leg; exile from Northern Ireland; or, ultimately, death (Silke 1999:9; Monaghan & McLaughlin 2006:175-179). Importantly, the choice of punishment is not necessarily tied to the severity of the crime; because there is no formal procedure for dealing with 'offenders,' as such, which punishment to be used is usually influenced by subjective factors such as status of the victim, the status of the 'offender', and the political calculations or personal views of the paramilitaries (Monaghan 2004:444; Bell 2000:227), and 'many people are punished for blatantly personal (and not criminal) reasons' (Silke 2000:6). Broadly speaking, the role of loyalist paramilitaries is similar, though certain differences in the characteristics of those targeted for punishment, as well as the extent to which the Protestant community turns to loyalist groups for such services have also been discussed

(Silke 1999; Silke 2000a:93). Likewise, the smaller republican paramilitary groups also engage in such activities, but to a lesser degree than the PIRA or loyalist groups, given their smaller size (Silke 2000a:93).

Mafia organizations, especially Cosa Nostra, also fulfill a very similar policing function within the communities in which they operate, and in much the same way as paramilitaries, act as agents of social control. As Gambetta notes, ‘the mafia at times polices its territory as if it were responsible for public safety’ (Gambetta 1993:166). Likewise, the activities policed consist largely of activities viewed as problems by the wider community, and can include harassing women; committing acts viewed as sexually perverse (e.g., homosexuality or child molestation); drinking to excess, especially in cases where this leads to boisterous behaviour; committing petty crimes, such as burglaries and small-scale thefts; and more serious crimes such as extortion (by non-members, of course) and murder (Gambetta 1993:166-174; Paoli 2003:160-161). These crimes may come to the attention of the local *cosca* a number of ways, but often the victim, if one is known, may approach a member, or members will learn of a particular crime through their own sources of ‘intelligence’. As with paramilitaries, the punishments for such violations may vary, including being forced to turn oneself in to the authorities (Gambetta 1993:167); being beaten or shot in the legs (Gambetta 1993:166-167), or being murdered. One of the more infamous examples, related by Letizia Paoli, is illustrative:

‘Around the mid-1970s...a Czech female dancer touring in Palermo was slashed on her face while her bag was being snatched. This was presented with great uproar in the local press. A few days later, the body of the young bag-snatcher was found in the back of a car with a piece of cardboard tied around his neck, reading: “Any vermin disgracing Sicily must die like this”’ (Paoli 2003:161).

As further noted by Letizia Paoli, however, the policing of crimes committed by non-members of Cosa Nostra is no longer carried out to the same degree it was in previous decades, at least in the city of Palermo, although it continues to be widespread in the smaller towns of the Palermitan hinterland and in the province of Trapani where Cosa Nostra remains the dominant power (Paoli 2003:157-161). In some cases, as well, the prevention of criminal activities by non-members has given way to a more economic type of relationship in which such activities are 'taxed,' with the organization 'severely sanctioning all attempts by small criminals to avoid paying,' in which case 'there is no gradation of sanctions, and the criminals who are considered guilty are punished with death' (Paoli 2003:16).

Thus far the discussion of paramilitary and mafia policing has focused primarily upon those activities for which there is also some degree of social consensus surrounding the need for repressive action. The 'populist' nature of the punishments meted out by both groups, as well as their speed and efficiency as compared to the formal justice system, moreover, thus allow paramilitary and mafia organizations to increase their standing among certain segments of the population who lack faith in the state's ability or willingness to address these issues. As such, the control of violence by these organizations is fungible not only as applied to economic situations, but also to social ones, where it can be turned into increased public support, or at least a greater tacit acceptance by some segments of the community.

There is also another side to the policing role of paramilitary and mafia organizations, however, which allows them to gain power within their communities, and this involves the use of their policing function to enforce the rules of the organizations

themselves upon the wider community through fear of sanction. As Letizia Paoli has explained of mafia organizations – an explanation that appears valid in the case of paramilitary groups as well:

‘To use Weberian terminology...we can say that mafia associations come into being as “voluntary associations” (*Vereine*), that is, as social groups that claim authority only over voluntary members, but they frequently end up acting as “compulsory” organizations” (*Anstalte*), social groups whose legal order is forced with relative success onto the surrounding population’ (Paoli 2003:155).

This ability to enforce order on the surrounding population stems from ultimately from the capacity for violence of both mafia and paramilitary groups. However, the policing function plays an important role (like other acts of violence by mafia and paramilitary organizations) in this process. Obviously, neither type of organization does (or could) threaten violence directly against every non-member. However, if the successful targeting of even a small number of specific individuals for specific acts becomes widely known, this increases the reputation of the organizations as capable of enforcing their rules, usually to a greater degree than may actually be deserved.

This applies especially to rules that are central to the security of paramilitary and mafia organizations but may not necessarily be viewed by the community as activities deserving of punishment, unlike those discussed above. Most importantly these include the rules surrounding secrecy and non-cooperation with the authorities, as well as obedience to specific requests or commands from these organizations to individuals.

Enforcing secrecy and non-cooperation with the authorities, as discussed above in the section on formal rules and structures, is of crucial importance to paramilitary and mafia organizations because both membership and participation in many of the activities of these organizations can result in both incarceration as well as potentially being

targeted by a rival group. As we have also seen, however, it is not always easy for members to maintain absolute secrecy as they must interact regularly with non-members for a number of purposes. The imposition of secrecy on non-members thus becomes a necessary priority of both types of organization, and violations tend to be punished severely as a deterrent. While especially the case for members who cooperated with the authorities in some way, this also applies to general members of the community, and there are numerous cases of both paramilitary and mafia organizations – again, especially the PIRA and Cosa Nostra specifically – murdering those suspected of being informants or of having cooperated with the authorities in some way (Sarma 2005).

The obedience of wider society to the order or desires of members of these organizations is another significant rule enforced with some vigor. Once again, the logic is similar to that of secrecy and non-cooperation in that punishment is meant to deter others, but there is also a different dynamic at play as well. In punishing those who do not follow the specific commands of the organization, the aim is to safeguard the reputation of the organization as capable of commanding obedience from members and non-members alike. The importance of maintaining this reputation, again, stems from the potentially tenuous position of both mafia and paramilitary groups not with regard to the state, which has significantly greater resources, but also society in general which is numerically far superior. The ability to maintain a position of power with regard to the latter depends on the ability of these organizations to maximize the reputation for violence against uncooperative non-members in order to inflate the threat of wider retaliation. The intended result, not infrequently achieved, is appearing threatening enough to stem any widespread social mobilization against the organization.

This section has focused on the social role of paramilitary and mafia organizations, specifically the tendency for both types of groups to engage in a policing function amongst their communities in which both elements of the wider social order, as well as the legal order of the organizations themselves is enforced. In both cases some vague similarities to the policing role of the state can be seen, insofar as the state also aims to control crime as well as assert its own normative order through the policing function. Paramilitary and mafia organizations, however, insofar as they attempt to administer justice can be contrasted by the extent to which the process remains personalized and the virtual absence of procedural safeguards. Significantly, at least within contemporary Europe, the types of punishment administered by mafia and paramilitary groups are also extremely severe, and offer little (if any) possibility of appeal.

vi. Paramilitary and Mafia Organizations as Political Actors

As has been discussed in the previous two sections, paramilitary and mafia organizations can be examined as both economic and social actors, and within both spheres, the capacity for violence is a key characteristic of their social and economic relations with other actors. These relations, however, are generally asymmetric: within Northern Ireland and Sicily, paramilitary and mafia organizations retain this capacity for violence whereas most businesses and private citizens do not. In the political sphere,³⁸ however, there is also an asymmetry, but in this case it is paramilitary and mafia organizations which are the weaker party; the dominant party is the state.

³⁸ Political sphere as used in this section is meant to refer to relations with the state and its institutions.

The state, in fact, is a key factor separating both paramilitary and mafia organizations from violent organizations in many other parts of the world. In both Italy and Northern Ireland the state is, if not always as effective as some may wish, nevertheless a powerful third party influencing the range of possible actions of mafia and paramilitary groups. This is a distinct difference from many countries in which violent organizations exist but the state, as such, remains a fiction, as for example in many parts of Africa and Central Asia, as well as some regions in Latin America and for a time parts of the former Soviet Union.

The state in both Northern Ireland and Sicily, however, like much of the rest of modern Europe, is both present and functional. Executive, legislative and judicial institutions, despite imperfections, manage to function with enough popular legitimacy to avoid collapse, as well as offering the full range of services characteristic of the modern liberal welfare state. None of this is to imply that the arrangement of the state and its institutions in contemporary Europe is objectively the fairest or best that can be imagined, of course, but rather to say that broadly speaking – especially in comparison to other regions of the world – the state in Northern Ireland and Sicily on balance functions to a level at least sufficient to guarantee a measure of order, stability, and popular participation sufficient to command the support of the wide majority of citizens. In neither case, as such, can we speak of state collapse or state failure (in the conventional sense), despite the enduring presence of violent organizations.

In both Sicily and Northern Ireland, as regards paramilitary and mafia organizations, there are two important features of the state which will be examined in this section in relation to these organizations as political actors. The first of these is the

representative aspect of the state. Unlike many areas characterized by the presence of violent organizations, both Northern Ireland and Sicily have regular, ostensibly fair, elections to representative bodies at numerous levels of government. The second is the presence of functioning agencies of security and justice – police, military, judicial system – as well as a functioning executive body. As political actors, paramilitary and mafia organizations relate to these aspects of the state in different ways, as this section will outline.

Most paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland, especially on the republican side, have some ideology and political platform. For the PIRA and those organizations which have splintered from it, the core of this platform is the removal of the British presence from Northern Ireland and the reunification of Ireland North and South in a unitary republic. Beyond these principles, however, there has always been a degree of ambiguity around specific policies and what they might look like in practice, as well as frequent changes along the political spectrum from socialism to conservatism (O'Brien 1977:59;). The backdrop to these changes, however, has been relatively consistent: Northern Ireland is an oppressive colonial state, propped up solely by British oppression, which continues to deny to self-determination to the Irish people the majority of whom, it is claimed, desire national reunification. Important here, however, is what is meant by majority: for republicans, this means the entire population of the island of Ireland, and not a majority solely within Northern Ireland.³⁹ Securing this reunification through all possible means, including the use of violence, is the right of the PIRA (or, more generally, of whichever republican paramilitary group happens to be speaking).

³⁹ The majority within Northern Ireland, of course, is in favor of a continued union with the United Kingdom, the majority of the province being Protestant and unionist.

Before examining how these claims play out in political action, it is important to note the difficulties with republican interpretations, especially because these have been prominent in characterizing the nature of the Troubles due to the success of republican propaganda. First, while initial claims from both republican and civil rights groups in the late 1960s about the unfairness of a number of policies of the Northern Ireland government towards the Catholic population including education, housing, discrimination in employment, and gerrymandering in local elections were not without a good deal of merit, when the PIRA's major campaign began in the early 1970s the British government was already actively intervening in order to address these issues (Patterson 2008:497). Nor, as is commonly imagined, were these problems solely ones affecting the Catholic population. Especially as concerns voting rights in local elections, loyalists (e.g., working-class unionists) were often not adequately represented by Northern Ireland's peculiar voting system (Hewitt 1981:365).

Secondly, as regards the oppressive nature of British influence on Northern Ireland, such claims must be taken with a good deal of skepticism, especially in their economic aspects. As Kevin Toolis points out:

'Economically there is no merit in any of the republican arguments for the reunification of the island. Northern Ireland is a poor country beset with decaying, unprofitable industries and sustained by massive subsidies from the British taxpayer. The total annual net cost of maintaining the Crown's Irish province is £2,200 per annum for each and every one of Her Majesty's Irish subjects. The Irish Republic is poorer still and it is beyond the economic means of any foreseeable Dublin Government to sustain such a level of public investment. If Britain is a colonial oppressor, then it is particularly benign and indulgent overlord' (Toolis 1995:25).

These facts are often, and not surprisingly, ignored in the propaganda of republican paramilitaries, but remain starkly reflective of reality nonetheless. In addition, however,

is the forgotten (or more accurately ignored) political reality of reunification both north and south of the border. For example, though claiming sovereignty over the six counties that have since partition made up the province of Northern Ireland through a constitutional clause (repealed in 1999), no Dublin government, even during the height of the Troubles, has ever taken serious action, political or otherwise, to assert this claim (O’Halpin 2008), and the vast majority of the Catholic population on both sides of the border, in terms of concrete action, has remained decidedly apathetic to the issue. Again, as Toolis points out:

‘...the mass of the southern Irish population, who constitute four million out of the total Irish population of five and a half million, although paying lip service to the concept of a United Ireland, express little urgency about their desire to see an all-Ireland state established. The burning urgency of the Irish electorate’s demand for Irish reunification, as measured by votes for Sinn Féin in the Irish Republic, is felt by less than two per cent of the population’ (Toolis 1995:24-25).

As such it has seldom been considered by any outside of the republican movement that its political program of removing the British from Northern Ireland and reunifying the island by force provided a feasible option grounded in political reality. In light of the end of the PIRA’s active campaign and the acceptance of the Good Friday Peace Agreement in 1998, moreover, it might be plausibly asserted that even the leaders of the organization themselves were well aware of this reality, at least from the point at which the PIRA began directing Sinn Féin to take a more active role in conventional politics by contesting elections,⁴⁰ thus abandoning what had once been a key principle of the organization – abstention from the participation in ‘partitionist’ institutions (Neumann 2005:951; for a critical discussion see Lynn 2002). Even more telling in this regard is that with the

⁴⁰ Of course it is impossible to either prove or disprove such a claim. However, as described below, it does appear that whether or not the impossibility of their goals were realized by the PIRA leadership, the course of the organization was frequently guided by pragmatism rather than ideological principles.

PIRA's active campaign now at an end, it can be said that the organization settled for peace on substantially the same terms it had been offered by the British on every occasion of negotiations since the beginning of the Troubles.

There is, however, one key difference to the political conditions in which the Troubles ended when compared to those at its beginning, and that is the role of key members of the PIRA. At the beginning of the Troubles, these individuals and the organization as whole were in political terms marginal, and without a solid base in much of the province. With the end of the Troubles, however, the same individuals have become holders of key positions of power in a new devolved Northern Ireland Assembly (two prominent examples include Gerry Adams, President of Sinn Féin and Martin McGuinness, deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland). While such an assertion may be controversial, it can be said that the PIRA effectively bombed and shot itself into power, while simultaneously making use of the state's own representative institutions, in what, analytically, can be described as an immensely successful case of political extortion.

This point, in fact, is of key importance for both mafia and paramilitary organizations: both, as well as being characterized by a political pragmatism, represent a paradox as political actors. While on the one hand they deny the legitimacy of the state and its institution – as discussed above, both types of organizations impose their own legal order which is at odds with that of the state – on the other hand, they simultaneously make use of those same institutions to increase their own power. While the PIRA was somewhat late to come this strategy, as mentioned due to their policy of abstention from conventional politics until the early 1980s, other republican paramilitary groups were involved in contesting elections at a much earlier point. The OIRA, for example, first

through the Republican Clubs and later through Sinn Féin/Workers' Party (thereafter simply the Workers' Party), contested elections from the early 1970s in both Northern Ireland and the Republic, and was not without a measure of success (Rekawek 2008). Its off-shoot, the INLA, also had a political wing, the Irish Republican Socialist Party, although this party became increasingly marginalized following the fortunes of the INLA itself with its many splits and high levels of internal violence, and was never able to make much headway in conventional politics (Holland & McDonald 1994:220-221). And while the PIRA and its political wing Sinn Féin were the latest into conventional politics, as already mentioned they ultimately the most successful at it, insofar as through the 'armalite and the ballot box' strategy they were able to gain a significant position within the post-agreement devolved institutions of Northern Ireland.⁴¹

Cosa Nostra has also been characterized by its pragmatism as a political actor. As discussed previously, as an economic actor the organization has been able to intervene in the process of awarding public contracts, thus bringing it into contact with legitimate state institutions. More conventionally, however, the organization has also become involved in the representative institutions of the state through more conventional means such as electoral participation, much like paramilitary organizations, especially since the end of the Second World War. Though it initially supported the Sicilian Independence Movement in the early post-war period (Jamieson 1994:2,3; Lupo 1997:27), Cosa Nostra soon shifted its support to the newly founded Christian Democrat party (DC).⁴² In doing

⁴¹ The same cannot be said, however, for the political fortunes of loyalist paramilitary groups which have never been as successful as their republican counterparts with the possible exception of the Ulster Workers' Council strike of the early 1970s. On the strike see Bruce 1993:92-97, Wood 2006:28-54; on the political fortunes of loyalism, see McAuley 2004 and 2005.

⁴² As noted by historian John Dickie, the reason for this shift in official support stemmed from the fact that 'by successfully proposing a regional assembly for Sicily rather than full independence, the DC had taken much of the steam out of separatism' (Dickie 2007:250).

so, the organization was able to form a compact with the DC in Sicily in which members of Cosa Nostra would assist the party's electioneering efforts on the island in exchange for a guarantee of favours from elected DC members and officials (Schneider & Schneider 2003:52-53). Thus at elections individual members acted as 'party hustlers,' rounding up voters on behalf of the party (Schneider & Schneider 2003:52). According to the *pentito* Antonino Calderone this was particularly effective as the average mafioso was able to 'guarantee the loyalty of 40-50 persons' and with '1,500 to 2,000 men of honour in the province of Palermo, that would add up to from 75,000 to 100,000 "friendly" votes in that province alone' (Schneider & Schneider 2003:52; see also Jamieson 1990:17; Longrigg 2009:74-76).

What appears to emerge as the most salient difference between paramilitary and mafia organizations in regard to conventional political participation is not that both types of organizations develop relationships with political parties as such, or even that the former possess an ideology whereas the latter do not, but rather that the character of these relationships with political parties differ. In the case of paramilitary organizations the political parties with which they are associated are largely creations of, and organic to, the organizations themselves, and there is often an overlap in membership (Horgan & Taylor 1999:2). In the case of Cosa Nostra, while there may also be an overlap in membership, with mafia members holding elected offices (Longrigg 2009:168; Paoli 2003:194), its relationship with political parties, even the DC, is not organic. Rather, despite the significant influence among some sections, the party as such is not beholden to Cosa Nostra and the latter exercises no veto power over the former. Because of the differing character of these relationships, Cosa Nostra appears to have a flexibility not

possessed by paramilitary organizations to shift its support from one party to another. For example, at the 1987 elections ‘...in the neighbourhoods of Palermo where the mafia was strongest the Socialist vote went up around 10 percent. Mafiosi, worried about the Christian Democrats’ ability to protect them from the consequences of the maxi-trial, had apparently told their voters to send the party a message’ (Schneider & Schneider 2003:179; see also Jamieson 1994:8). There is also some indication that factions of Cosa Nostra also supported Communist Party members on local councils controlled by that party (Longrigg 2009:159), despite the otherwise historical animosity of Cosa Nostra towards communism (Blok 2008:11).

The other side of mafia and paramilitary organizations, of course, is the tendency of both not only to make use of state institutions but also to deploy violence directly against the state. While this is a well known feature of republican paramilitary organizations, and indeed most treatments of these groups treat them primarily from the perspective of ‘terrorism’ (e.g., as actors who deploy violence against the state)⁴³, loyalist paramilitaries, despite being ostensibly fighting on behalf of the state according to their own interpretation, have on numerous occasions attacked state representatives, primarily members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary as well as employees of the prison service (Steenkamp 2008:165-166).

Perhaps even less well known outside of Italy, however, is the propensity of Cosa Nostra to similarly use violence directly against the state and its representatives, both alone and in conjunction with other organizations and movements, including at least two

⁴³ There have now been numerous treatments of the PIRA’s terrorist campaign throughout the course of the Troubles as well as the organization’s negotiations with British and Irish officials ending that campaign. For some recent examples, see Bew 2007 and McGarry & O’Leary 2004.

attempted coups d'états (Jamieson 1994:14). In one dramatic example, Alison Jamieson relates that:

'Mafia witnesses have testified on several occasions to the proposed involvement of Cosa Nostra in a coup d'état in 1970, planned by a certain Prince Julio Valerio Borghese together with his far right group, the *Fronte Nazionale*. Cosa Nostra was invited to provide assistance in Rome on the night of the coup (7/8 December 1970) and thereafter to take over the functions of law and order in Sicily. In exchange a revision of court verdicts on several imprisoned mafiosi was promised. In preparation for the coup, Cosa Nostra carried out a series of bomb attacks in Palermo in 1970 to create a climate of instability and "to damage the credibility of the state"' (Jamieson 1994:9).

In the late 1970s, as Cosa Nostra began to increase its demands upon its political contacts, attempting to extend its influence beyond Sicily to national level, it also began to use violence directly against state representatives. As Paoli notes, 'for the first time' Cosa Nostra 'began to kill the politicians who did not honor the pacts underwritten with them, to punish their betrayal and to warn the remaining referents,' notably including 'the secretary of the Palermitan DC, in March 1979' and 'the DC president of the Sicilian regional administration' a few months later (Paoli 2003:201).

From this point violence against the state by Cosa Nostra continued to increase. In 1982 General Dalla Chiesa, along with his wife and driver, were also killed by the organization. General Dalla Chiesa, famous for successfully defeating left-wing terrorism in Northern Italy, had been appointed as prefect of the Palermo province and high commissioner against the mafia (Paoli 2003:204). This was only one of several high profile attacks on the state, however. As further noted by Paoli,

'between 1979 and 1983, all the following were killed: the chief of the Palermitan *squadra mobile* [police investigative squad], Boris Giuliano; the judge Cesare Terranova, who was to take over the Investigating Office of the Palermo court; the chief prosecutor Gaetano Costa; Pio La Torre, head of the Communist Party in

Sicily, who had just presented the first anti-mafia bill in Parliament;...the Trapani prosecutor Giangiacomo Ciaccio Montalto; and the chief of the Palermo Investigating Office and Terranova's successor, Rocco Chinnici' (Paoli 2003:203).

While violence against the state declined in the latter half of the 1980s (Paoli 2003:204), the early 1990s witnessed a renewed attack on the state when in 1992 the famous Palermitan mafia prosecutor and then head of a new centralized anti-mafia body in Rome, Giovanni Falcone was killed en-route to Palermo along with his wife and three body guards in a massive explosion by a roadside bomb (Jamieson 1998; for a reconstruction by one of the killers see Lodato 1999). Only two months later Judge Falcone's close friend and fellow prosecutor, Paoli Borsellino, was also killed by a car bomb in the city of Palermo (Jamieson 1998). These killings, in turn, were followed by bomb attacks in mainland Italy, including an attempted car-bomb murder of a television journalist in Rome famous for his criticisms of the mafia; a car-bomb attack on the historical city centre of Florence which killed five people and damaged historic buildings; and a coordinated, simultaneous bomb attack against the Basilica of Saint John Lateran, the church of St. George in Velabro in Rome, and the Via Palestro in Milan which caused the death of six people and wounded many more (Paoli 2003:207). Further plots to terrorize both government and people were also planned, such as spreading HIV-infected needles on public beaches with a warning to state officials, but thankfully these were not ultimately carried out (Jamieson 1994). Attempts were also made to revive the Sicilian separatist movement, with the aim of having a political movement that could be controlled by Cosa Nostra from the inside, but this to seems to have been abandoned with the rise of the new centre-right coalition under Silvio Berlusconi (Paoli 2003:207-208;). The ultimate success of Cosa Nostra's strategy of direct violence against the state,

however, appears to have been far less than envisioned by the organization, and largely resulted in much greater state repression, as well as greater engagement from an increasingly angered public (Jamieson 2000). In addition, many of those responsible for the initiation of the strategy, some having been fugitives for many years, have been arrested and tried, severely damaging the organization as a whole.

This final point is an interesting contrast to the political fortunes of the paramilitary organizations of Northern Ireland, who having begun their campaigns of violence against the state from a position of political weakness, have finished it, if not all necessarily in position of power, then at least by and large released from incarceration and eligible for various 'demobilization' programs. Cosa Nostra, by contrast, having arguably been far more powerful prior to its campaign of violence, has ended up in the opposite situation. Despite these different start and end points, however, there have been numerous similarities between the two types of organization in their roles as political actors. Though both have been capable of and willing to deploy violence against the state and in practice (and often in rhetoric) have denied the legitimacy of state institutions, their role as political actors has also been characterized by an at least tacit acceptance of the legitimacy of those very institutions, which have been a necessary vehicle for the expansion of their power and legitimacy.

vii. Summary

This chapter has aimed to compare Sicilian mafia and Northern Irish paramilitary organizations along a number of trajectories, including their formal structures and organizational dynamics, as well as examining both as economic, social, and political actors. A number of similarities and differences have been highlighted in these

comparisons, and the central role of violence in both types of organization, as well as how this plays out in various fields of action, has been discussed.

While certain elements of these similarities and differences have been explained throughout this chapter, there is a broader question which remains to be answered. This is, namely, what is the wider explanation for these similarities and differences? Are there common contextual factors at work in Sicily and Northern Ireland relevant to the existence of these violent organizations? Can some common 'independent variable' be found to account for these similarities and differences? The following chapter will attempt to answer these questions.

Chapter 3

Towards an Explanation of the Similarities Between Paramilitary and Mafia Organizations in Northern Ireland and Sicily

i. Paramilitaries and Mafias as Constellations of Violent Organizations

The previous chapter attempted to compare paramilitary and mafia organizations in Sicily and Northern Ireland along a number of trajectories. This chapter will attempt to summarize these similarities and differences, and provide explanations for them. In doing so, it is hoped that the differences can be given a more nuanced explanation than that offered by simply stating that these stem from the fact that one set of organizations are ‘criminal’ and the other ‘terrorist’, as well as showing that the central role of violence in both types of organizations can help in understanding their similarities.

As described in the previous chapter, Sicily and Northern Ireland play host to a number of violent organizations. In each region, moreover, none of these violent organizations exists in total isolation from the others, and there are various historical links between them – some having their origin in other organizations – as well as connections through various fields of action, in the economic, social and political spheres. Insofar as all of these organizations are linked in various ways, they can be conceptualized as constellations or systems of violent organizations.⁴⁴

More specifically, in both Sicily and Northern Ireland, these constellations share some particular characteristics: while there are numerous violent organizations in each one, in both cases one particular organization is dominant – the PIRA and Cosa Nostra, respectively. This dominance can be seen in their stability over time relative to other organizations; the extent of their economic, social, and political control; and their higher

⁴⁴ The concept of constellation or system is here meant to imply that there is a not simple dyad, but multiple organizations with varying degrees of contact between them.

capacity for organized, coordinated violence. In slightly different terms, while all paramilitary and mafia organizations are both organizations, as well as economic, social, and political actors, some are both more organized and more successful actors in these spheres. While the capacity for and use of violence underpins the participation in each of these spheres by all of the organizations in each constellation, some are more successful in translating this capacity into other resources, primarily economic, social and political power; so successful, in fact, that the lesser organizations remain marginal players in the latter two areas relative to the dominant organizations.

Before examining in greater detail the similarities between these constellations, it is important to bring in one particular difference between them, namely, sectarianism. While we have seen in the previous chapter that, despite what might be expected, paramilitaries across the sectarian republican/loyalist divide do cooperate with each other in certain fields of action, it is important to note that there is a limit to this cooperation, and the master-cleavage that divides Northern Irish society places important limits on the freedom of action of the organizations. This operates on at least a few levels. First, in terms of recruitment of individual members, by and large these only come from the respective sectarian community to which a paramilitary organization belongs. Thus, Catholic or nationalist citizens will not join loyalist paramilitary groups, and vice versa. Though there have been limited exceptions to this rule, they have been few and far between, and more notable for being exceptions than evidence of a particular trend. Second, because the membership of paramilitary organizations is drawn from specific communities, their support base is in turn intimately tied to these communities and non-transferable across the sectarian divide. As such, while both loyalist and republican

organizations fulfill many of the same functions, they do not – and arguably cannot – carry out these functions in communities of the other tradition. This limitation in turn has an important effect at the systematic level, which is to limit to some extent the possibility for cooperation, as well as eliminating the possibility of incorporation of some organizations by others. To give a specific example, in the previous chapter it was noted that upon being disbanded, some members of the IPLO were incorporated into the PIRA. What would not have been possible, however, is the incorporation of the remnants of this organization into one of the loyalist organizations, such as the UDA or UVF.

We can contrast this with the system level dynamics in the case of mafia organizations. Incorporation of new members from a rival organization is a regular occurrence among mafia organizations, especially in the province of Catania (DDA 2008). Because these groups do not follow any particular master-cleavage represented in wider society, however, there are no comparable limits as to which particular organization may be incorporated into any other. As such, a group may split apart into two rival factions, only for each faction to join the opposite side in a dyadic conflict between two rival coalitions. Put more simply, there appears to be more latitude for both cooperation and incorporation among groups within the system of mafia organizations than within the system of paramilitary organizations, and the key determinant of this would appear to be the sectarian master-cleavage in Northern Ireland, no equivalent of which is present in Sicily. Still, because there is in fact cooperation across this cleavage line between paramilitary organizations, it is not accurate to speak of two entirely separate constellations of organizations in Northern Ireland (e.g., a republican and loyalist one). Rather, the two constellations, despite many similarities, operate within

social contexts that are structured differently, and these different social contexts in turn affect the extent of cooperation and incorporation between organizations.

It is also important to note, however, that the sectarian situation, while predating the paramilitary organizations, is not simply a situation in which they have found themselves which is independent of them. Since the outbreak of the Troubles, in fact, Northern Ireland has actually become more divided among sectarian lines, in large part due to the activities of the paramilitaries themselves, through the forced movement of members of mixed communities into homogenous areas (Campbell, Cairns & Mallett 2001; Doherty 1988; Southern 2008). As such, while in part a situation which has constituted the divisions among paramilitary organizations, sectarian segregation has also been a mechanism exploited by the paramilitaries to increase their power by creating communities that can more easily be manipulated.

Noting this clear difference between Sicily and Northern Ireland, the rest of this chapter will seek to explain the remaining similarities between paramilitary and mafia organizations, as well as attempting to explain what conditions give rise to these constellations of violent actors in the first place. In order to do so, however, we must first bring in what is a crucial element of the situation in both Sicily and Northern Ireland which has thus far only been mentioned in passing. This element is the modern state, which in the next section will be described with specific reference to the regions under discussion.

ii. The Contemporary State

A wide body of scholarship on numerous aspects of the modern state has been produced within the last forty years, detailing many aspects of its development, current functions,

and challenges to the state as the dominant form of political organization in an age of increased international communication (see for example Axtmann 2004; Hurrelmann et al. 2007; Van Creveld 1999). The purpose of this section, however, takes a narrower view of the state, and will offer a model of the contemporary state which focuses on those aspects most relevant to explaining how the contemporary state is a major factor affecting the similarities between mafia and paramilitary organizations.

One of the most enduring definitions of the state remains that proposed by Max Weber in *Politics as Vocation* as ‘a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given a territory,’ and further that ‘the right to use physical force is ascribed to other institutions or to individuals only to the extent to which the state permits it’ (Weber in Dreijmanis 2008:154). As Weber and other scholars who focus on the link between the state and violence readily concede, violence is ‘not the normal or only means of the state’ (Weber in Dreijmanis 2008:156), but it is the central defining means to which the state can be reduced.

Beginning from a similar premise as Weber, Charles Tilly has offered a typology of four different types of activity under the heading of organized violence which the state undertakes. The first of these war making, which involves eliminating or neutralizing the rivals of the state outside of the territory or territories in which the state claims its monopoly. The second is state making, the elimination or neutralization of rival claimants to the monopoly of violence within the territory of the state. The third activity is protection, which consists of eliminating or neutralizing the enemies of the state’s clients – that is, those who have accepted (e.g., accorded legitimacy to) the state’s claim of monopoly. The final activity is extraction, which involves the expropriation of resources

necessary to undertake the first three activities on a continuous basis (Tilly 1985:181). From these four categories of organized violence, as further explained by Tilly, come the general framework of the contemporary European state:

‘Each of the major uses of violence produced characteristic forms of organization. War making yielded armies, navies, and supporting services. State making produced durable instruments of surveillance and control within the territory. Protection relied on the organization of war making and state making but added to it an apparatus by which the protected called forth the protection that was their due, notably through courts and representative assemblies. Extraction brought fiscal and accounting structures into being. The organization and deployment of violence themselves account for much of the characteristic structure of European states’ (Tilly 1985:181).

Tilly’s model of the organization and use of violence by the state offers a good analytical description of the basic structure of most contemporary European states which has remained relatively constant in most individual cases. The degree of strength and sophistication of these structures, however, varies widely, and generally along at least two trajectories. First is the actual sophistication of the mechanisms used to perform each function. Contemporary European states, in this regard, are generally among the most sophisticated in terms of these means. Extraction, for example, has become a function that is permanently carried out by a specialized, permanent and full time administration of systems of taxation, using the high technology which allows for the constant monitoring of the individual wealth of citizens. While analytically no different in function from armed tax farmers on horseback making annual visits throughout the territory, the former system is clearly a far more efficient system for recovering the portion of private wealth claimed by the state.

While Tilly notes that these four categories of organizing violence generally reinforce each other when successfully undertaken (Tilly 1985:181), they are also

reinforced by the seemingly more benign regulatory functions undertaken by the contemporary state, covering a range of activities from the licensing of those eligible to drive motor vehicles to the registration of privately held firearms. In contemporary states, for example, there is very little activity that is not in some way regulated and monitored by the state. Increasingly, moreover, systems of surveillance built for a specific, limited purpose – how many road accidents does each licensed driver have, for example – and controlled by the state can be combined with other systems, such as an individual's tax information, or history of contact with the justice or health care system. In short, the contemporary state has unprecedented access, historically speaking, to information on what is actually going on in the territory in which it claims a monopoly of violence (Broeders 2007; Hills, 2006; Passavant 2005; Shields 2006).

While this increase in the capacity of the state to actually administer and enforce its claims effects all who are subject to it, whether citizens or migrants within its territory, state capacity clearly gives an advantage over potential rivals to state claims – for example, paramilitary and mafia organizations. Once the state monopoly has been established, and especially where it is reinforced by the regulatory power of the state briefly outlined above, potential rivals must always begin from a position of disadvantage. In the first instance through law, which is the creation and preserve of the state, rivals can be criminalized, allowing even ostensibly liberal democratic regimes to direct the full weight of police and judicial resources against them; alternatively, they can

be labeled as a security or terrorist threat, possibly allowing even more repressive measures beyond the use of legally defined judicial sanctions.⁴⁵

Secondly, and of equal importance, is the geospatial dominance of the state, which is the concrete expression of the monopolization of violence within a given territory. The advantage to this is quite evident but perhaps because it is so commonly experienced is often missed in analyses of state power. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the state benefits from having the privilege of openly and publicly occupying space. This has an infrastructural component, for example, as demonstrated by the existence of police stations and military bases, courts, and government ministries. But there is also that aspect of the ability to operate publicly that applies to state officials. A most straightforward example of this is to be found in the fact that police and soldiers – often the most visible of state representatives – can go about armed in public, having both legal protections and significant powers that remain unavailable to citizens in general and potential rivals of the state. This public aspect of the state, in the sense of the freedom to occupy space without the necessity of having this occupation recognized by a superior power, is perhaps one of the most powerful advantages of the modern state when compared to potential rivals, made all the more so when the majority of the subject population recognizes this occupation (whether implicitly or explicitly) as legitimate, as do the vast majority of the populations of contemporary European states, Italy and the United Kingdom included.

A final aspect of the contemporary European state that must be mentioned, given its importance to state legitimacy, is its role as service provider. While the categories of

⁴⁵ Hence the difficulty with the concepts ‘criminal’ and ‘terrorist’ organization outlined in the first chapter which are almost invariably politically defined terms, not clearly defined analytical categories that can be employed objectively by some neutral empirical criteria.

violence outlined by Tilly can also be seen as services provided to a subject population, the contemporary European state has gone far beyond protection from physical violence in respect to the functions it fulfils.⁴⁶ Protection, in fact, especially in the post-War period has come to encompass numerous new fields. While these differ somewhat even among the most 'advanced' states, they generally include protection of individual health through forms of health insurance or publicly provided medical care, as well as the regulation of harmful or potentially harmful products; protection against unemployment or loss of income directly through unemployment insurance plans and indirectly through state-funded retraining for obsolete workers; environmental protection through the regulation of waste disposal and commercial development; protection against economic loss through the regulation of the banking sector and commercial or financial activity; and in some cases, even the protection against the results of violence through monetary compensation schemes for victims of crime or terrorism. While detailed analysis of these functions is beyond the scope of this discussion, we can say that all of these features of the modern state tend to the strengthening of its legitimacy among the vast majority of the population if for no other reason than the fact that the contemporary state has come to be viewed as a necessary provider of goods and services on which the existence of a modern and accepted social order depends. In short, through its extension into these new activities of protection, the contemporary state has increased the base of clients with a personal stake in its continued functioning to an extent that other organizations, even the strongest, are

⁴⁶ It must be noted that the state's services of protection are qualitatively different from private services, such as those that might be sought by an individual from an accountant or a nutritionist. In the latter case, one is quite free to make use of these services or not. In the former case, however, at least as far as payment for the service is concerned, it is compulsory. According to Béland, 'the construction of the modern state can be understood as a process where populations have to pay the fiscal (taxes) and human (military service) price of protection they do not always seek against threats that state-builders sometimes fabricate' (Béland 2005:27). A very similar view is provided by Tilly (1985).

faced with huge resource constraints which act as a barrier to entry into competition with the state for popular legitimacy.⁴⁷

Recalling the description of mafia and paramilitary organizations in the previous chapter, it is clear that in respect of the organization of violence within a specific territory, these organizations do not differ analytically in many respects from the state itself. Like the state, for example, they claim the right to monopolize violence; to extract resources from the population in exchange for protection; to regulate certain activities, especially economic ones (primarily, of course, in illicit markets which are by definition not protected by the state); to establish laws for members and non-members alike; and to administer these laws within their territory. But as Letizia Paoli notes of mafia organizations, an observation which is equally valid for paramilitary organizations, they continue to 'constitute' only 'small proto-states, none of which has succeeded in conquering and legitimizing its monopoly of physical force' (Paoli 2003:172), much less developing the far-reaching structures, territorial domination, and social penetration of the contemporary state.

Having outlined the contours of the contemporary state, which are valid in both the case of Italy as well as the United Kingdom, as well as the similarities and differences between mafia and paramilitary organizations on the one hand, and the state on the other, in the following section the implications of this will be used to explain some of the fundamental similarities between paramilitary and mafia organizations by discussing the similarity of positions that each type occupies with respect to the state.

⁴⁷ Prior to the creation of modern technology-driven standing armies and the expansion of the state into such varied forms of protection, of course, barriers to competition were far lower; in effect, with many states remaining simply the strongest among other strong providers of both violent threat and the consequent protection from that threat. In the contemporary period, at least in Europe, North America, and parts of East Asia, this no longer remains the case.

iii. Explaining Structural Similarities

A number of similarities between paramilitary and mafia organizations, and the constellations of these organizations, were discussed in the previous chapter. A key factor in explaining these similarities is the role of the state as a functioning monopolist of the legitimate means of violence in each of the categories of violence described by Tilly and outlined above. The similarities to which the existence of a stable state are attributable will be discussed in this section.

The first organizational dynamic which mafia and paramilitary organizations share, as outlined in the last chapter, is the tendency for those organizations having well developed formal structures to regularly depart from these structures in practice. In large part the reason for this is to be found in the criminalization of these organizations by the state, which limits their ability to keep these formal structures functioning as specified by internal organizational rules.

As we have seen, the formal institutions of the contemporary state are supported by a physical infrastructure which can, save for in the most extreme circumstances, exist permanently and publicly in specific locations. Legislatures can, but generally do not, change location, and the same is true for most state institutions. The formal structures of mafia and paramilitary groups, however, primarily because of their illegal status, do not benefit from the same freedom. This is an extremely important feature of the formal structures of mafia and paramilitary organizations, and any other organization, for that matter, that cannot operate openly and hence must disguise its activities from the state. In the case of both the PIRA and Cosa Nostra, for example, the various internal bodies of these organizations – cupolas, Army Council, GHQ, etc. – do not have a permanent

location in which they meet; the risk of detection if they did have such a location is simply too great. As such, even though specified by formal internal rules, the meetings of these bodies cannot follow the formal template of the organization unless certain conditions are met, not least of which are ensuring a secure site at which to meet, being reasonably confident that the attentions of the state are temporarily directed elsewhere, and making sure that the members who must attend are not under state surveillance. The ultimate effect of this constant pressure from the state is, if not the total breakdown, then at least the irregular functioning of the formal structures of the organizations.

In this respect it is important to note that the formal structures of both Cosa Nostra and the PIRA both predate the contemporary state and came into being by and large prior to the expansion of the state in the pre-World War I period, being in turn based upon the structures of earlier violent organizations which have, in both Sicily and Northern Ireland, a long pedigree. Since at least the early 19th century, in fact, numerous types of armed groups have formed in both regions, sometimes for political reasons – to oppose the Bourbon regime in Sicily or English rule, for example, or in order to foment revolution – or for more ‘economic’ reasons, such as opposing, or attempting to force the implementation of, agricultural reforms (Beames 1982; Garvin 1982; Harnden 2000: 80-87; Monaghan 2002:141-144; Riall 1998). In each case these organizations, while eventually disbanding or being folded into new organizations, influenced similar organizations formed subsequently in a somewhat linear (if somewhat difficult to trace) evolution, up to the present day organizations of Cosa Nostra and the PIRA (Skaperdas

2001:175; Paoli 2003:33-36, 38-40; Schneider & Schneider 2003).⁴⁸ The importance of these lineages is the fact that help illustrate the difficulty of creating formal institutions under the pressures of a state criminalization policy which the state in turn has the capacity to actually enforce. In this respect it is important to remember that when the IRA and Cosa Nostra were able to once again expand in the early 1970s and late 1940s, respectively (as discussed below) they simply reinvigorated old organizational forms already known and understood (Bell 2000b:51), rather than adopting new forms which may have proven more efficient. In short, both organizations had the benefit of precedent; violent organizations had been organized and developed formal structures for over a century, beginning in an age when the state's ability to suppress such organizations was much weaker. In this sense they weren't so much as developed anew, but simply readopted given their familiarity.

In this respect, we can also see why the other paramilitary and mafia organizations lack the same degree of development with regard to formal structures. Unlike the PIRA and Cosa Nostra, the bulk of the other paramilitary and mafia organizations in Sicily and Northern Ireland have developed only since the 1970s, and lack a direct historical link to past organizations. Since the period in which the organizations have developed, however, the state in both Sicily and Northern Ireland has been relatively strong in terms of its coercive and repressive capacity, and has been able to maintain a state of relatively constant threat to rival violent organizations. Additionally, however, the PIRA and Cosa Nostra have presented an additional and sometimes more immediate to threat to these organizations, meaning that since their

⁴⁸ While it is beyond the scope of this discussion to offer detailed comparisons of these earlier organizations, interesting similarities between secret, violent organizations in Ireland and Sicily have been made in some of the literature (see, for example, Clare 1990:44-46).

creation they have faced existential threats from two powerful rivals. While such conditions of conflict can sometimes be conducive to building solidarity and cohesion between members of an organization (which increases with heightened perceptions of 'us-them'), cohesion is not equivalent to formalization which depends upon a certain latitude for members to devote time to organizing and negotiating structures. In the case of other mafia and paramilitary organizations, such latitude has simply not been available to the same degree as it was to the IRA and Cosa Nostra in earlier historical periods. Thus, while the younger organizations may mimic to some degree the structures of these larger organizations insofar as they have any formal structures, these have remained weak and often existed in name more than reality.

Violent fragmentation of paramilitary and mafia organizations is similarly linked to the power of the state at maintaining the constant threat of repression against these groups. The first link is indirect, however, and derives primarily from the departure of formal structures. As has been shown, the formal structures of PIRA and Cosa Nostra have well defined purposes and generally play a mediating role among members of the organizations, offering a venue where disagreements and questions of policy or strategy can be negotiated. Because it is difficult to maintain these formal organizations under the threat of state repression, however, it becomes more difficult for internal disagreements to be negotiated and settled. As such, tendencies towards falling back on charismatic figures within the organizations to provide leadership and mediate disputes develop (Paoli 2003:60). The problem with this, however, is that unless there is only one charismatic capable of maintaining the loyalty of all members, which is rarely the case, rival internal centres of power tend to develop, leading to organizational splits. Often

state repression may further this more directly, however, if often inadvertently, through actions which tend to exacerbate the inherent problems of trust in such situations. If rival groups in an organization are beginning to separate into two different organizations, for example, and the formal mechanisms to settle the dispute before a split occurs are not working, a routine repressive measure by the state such as an arrest of key members of one faction can lead to greater separation between the two factions if the one targeted by law enforcement has reason to believe its rivals had something to do with ‘tipping off’ the authorities. As such events are known to have occurred on occasion, unless solid information can be obtained one way or another by the suspicious faction, there are many reasons for it to hedge its bets and split from its rival in order to minimize the threat of further damage by remaining associated with the potential threat. What is important here, however, is that the dynamic is initially driven from outside of the organizations, by the existence of a state with strong coercive powers and the ability to take members out of circulation through arrest and incarceration. The state is not the only phenomena driving this dynamic, however, but it is the most important, because its presence means that whatever violent organizations do they must do so with a view to avoiding state sanction.

The other salient element driving internal fragmentation of paramilitary and mafia organizations is the use of violence itself. As has been discussed, the penalties for violations of the rules which members may be subject to are serious, often including death, a potential punishment harsher than either the Italian or British state will impose for any crime. This obviously raises the potential costs for members of both types of organization, even more so when we recall that in the administration of justice mafia and paramilitary organizations are far from objective appliers of the rules. This provides a

clear incentive for members to defect, with a support base of other members if possible, to avoid the threat of serious sanction if they believe their position within the organization has become vulnerable. Just this dynamic, in fact, was a large factor in the creation of many *Stidda cosche*, as these were formed when member of Cosa Nostra who had been expelled from the organization – hence losing the protection afforded by membership – sought alliances and formed bonds with looser groups to protect them from their former fellow members. Importantly, it must also be remembered that if a particular member wishes to remain engaged in the activities generally associated with violent organizations, there is generally no recourse available to the dispute settling mechanisms of the state.

Such mechanisms may, however, be available to members who decide to defect to the state, another organizational dynamic to which both paramilitary and mafia organizations have been routinely been subject. Much like the fragmentation within both types of organization, defection of members is in part a result of the relatively constant threat of possible violence against them, whether from members of other organizations or their own. It is also in part driven by the similar threat of state repression, which for individual members can mean prison sentences of varying length, potentially served under harsher terms of incarceration than for others convicted of lesser crimes (Jamieson 2000:45-46). While the threat to members is one side of the coin with regard to this dynamic, there is also the potential benefit that cooperation with the state can bring. For example, leniency in how a member is treated by the justice system in exchange for providing evidence or intelligence to the state is a significant lever that the state can use, especially where the police have evidence of particularly serious crimes against the

particular individual. Often, in fact, it is when a member is arrested and faces the threat of sanction that they decide to cooperate with the state. This has been the case with many famous *pentiti* from various Sicilian mafia organizations. Alternatively, members may simply choose to cooperate with the state on their own initiative for numerous reasons, from a heightened threat to their own survival from within the organization, to a religious conversion, to simply becoming alienated from the organization and fellow members. While an analysis of these various individual-level reasons is beyond the scope of this paper, the point is that whatever such reasons may be, the threat posed by state punishment as well as the benefits that the state can provide are predominant factors driving this organizational dynamic.

The final organizational dynamic discussed in the last chapter, the emergence of cooperative arrangements between rival organizations who are often in violent conflict with each other, does not appear to be caused directly by state repression as such, but on occasion may be. For example, regarding the cooperation between hostile loyalist and republican prisoners imprisoned in Maghaberry prison, the state's denial of 'special category status' to these prisoners appears largely responsible for causing the organizations to cooperate in order to influence state policy. Conversely, in other situations it appears to be the absence of effective state intervention which caused cooperation, most notably in the case of cooperation between certain republican and loyalist paramilitary organizations to bring down the level of sectarian murder in the early 1970s. Had the state been more successful, for instance, in stemming this particular outbreak of violence, it is quite possible that the cooperative relationship which developed would have been unnecessary.

The primary driver of this cooperation, instead, seems to be the essential character of paramilitary and mafia organizations which, like other political organizations, is fundamentally pragmatic, and committed above all to organizational survival and replication (Catanzaro 1985; Clare 1989:38). This is not to deny that individual members of these organizations may be driven by concerns not based on pragmatism (though those cynical about political organizations in general have reason to be skeptical), but at the organizational level if the choice is one of principle over survival, the latter is most frequently the winner.⁴⁹ This pragmatism, then, explains much of the cooperation between ostensibly rival organizations. Cosa Nostra, for example, having always been numerically weaker and less entrenched in the province of Catania than in Western Sicily has sought alliances with or attempted to incorporate other mafia organizations and their members because this has been the most efficient path to securing the position of the organization. Likewise, where cooperation between republican and loyalist organizations has developed, it has been in cases where a failure to cooperate would have had significant consequences for the organization. In protection rackets, for example, as has been discussed, the alternative to cooperation would either have been an increase in violence leading quite likely to greater state intervention, or economic loss to both sides given the parceling out of the market. By instead cooperating across sectarian lines, however, both sub-optimal outcomes were avoided and both sides were able to increase their profits in an enlarged market.

⁴⁹ The official disbandment of the PIRA in 2008 may appear an exception to this, which in one sense, it is: by all official accounts the PIRA no longer exists as an organization. However, it must be remembered that in the case of the PIRA many member of that organization have simply been integrated in Sinn Féin. In this sense, the imperative of organizational survival was still followed, merely under the guise of new name and a change in priorities.

Though not a direct cause of this cooperation *per se*, the existence of the state nevertheless has played some role in this cooperation from a structural viewpoint. For instance, if we imagine a similar situation where the state is absent, the impetus to cooperate in order to avoid the heightened risk of state sanction would of course be absent. This means that at least potentially it might be in the interests of one side or the other to attempt to conquer the other and thus gain total control. The existence of the state itself, however, makes this to some degree a moot point.

In summary, it can be seen that one of the most powerful factors influencing the dynamics of mafia and paramilitary organizations is the state, which is in both cases the only organization which actually rivals them as a violent organization. But contrary to the level of threat that these organizations are often conceived as posing to it, they are actually far weaker than the state.⁵⁰ Both mafia and paramilitary organizations are cases of, to use Letizia Paoli's term, 'a political community which is not yet fully institutionalized' (Paoli 2003:172); the contemporary state, on the other hand, is not only fully institutionalized, but also fully legitimized. As such, the danger that they pose does not stem so much from their objective strength vis-à-vis the state – they are, essentially, embryonic states which can expand only so far as the state allows them – but rather from the ineffectiveness or unwillingness of the state to undertake concerted efforts to 'neutralize' them.⁵¹ Where mafia and paramilitary organizations do pose a threat as violent organizations is thus not insofar as they openly challenge the state with violent

⁵⁰ In comparison to a private citizen or small businesses, of course, both types of organization are extremely powerful and hence they do pose a very real threat to members of their local communities. But again, if the state is committed to actually fulfilling the protection function which it claims to monopolize, this threat can be minimized.

⁵¹ Here such state measures as allowing contractors to deduct extortion payments from their taxes in Northern Ireland until 1988 (Dillon 1988:424) and the Sicilian regional government's use of a private firm to collect taxes for a fee until 1984 (Schneider & Schneider 2003:56-57) stand out as particularly ineffective state policies.

means – as one member of Cosa Nostra was overheard saying, ““You don’t touch the state...you can say what you like, but no one touches the state. The state, if it wants to, can crush you”” (Longrigg 2009:37) – but rather by inserting themselves between state and society, exploiting those areas where the state’s presence is comparatively weak or characterized by loopholes in its own legal structures. And it is as economic, social and political actors that both types of organizations do this. In the next section, as such, the some explanation for the similarities between the two organizations in these spheres will be proposed.

iv. Explaining Similarities in Economic, Social and Political Action

As outlined in the last chapter, there are a number of similarities between mafia and paramilitary organizations as economic, social and political actors. This section will offer some explanations for these, focusing specifically on the role of these organizations in operating systems of generalized extortion, their policing and social regulation functions, and the dual nature of their action in the political field as both violent opponents of the state, as well as participants in its institutions.

Turning to the economic role of paramilitary and mafia organizations, while participating in various illicit activities, the most prominent of these is extortion, analytically the same as state extraction, but without the same degree of legitimacy. The question is why this activity is prominent when, arguably, there are other illicit activities which could generate greater profits with potentially less risk? The answer to this question is to be found in the particular strengths of these organizations, their organizational structure, and the combined political economic nature of extortion itself.

Paramilitary and mafia organizations, we have seen, are specialists in the use of violence; much organizational energy is expended on building and maintaining a capacity for violence, and deploying this capacity for specific goals. Violence in this sense is a skill particular to both types of organization. Part of this skill includes maintaining a reputation for violence, often just as important as its actual use. Extortion, depending as it does on just such a skill set, is an activity ideally suited to organizations with this capacity, because in order to be carried out successfully it is necessary that the threat be credible, not only that which underpins the relationship between protector and protectee, but also between protector and potential rival protectors. As such, an organization without such a skill faces significant barrier to entry – extortion, in order to be conducted systematically and on a wide scale as in Sicily and Northern Ireland, depends upon a capacity for violence.

While a capacity for violence is a necessary condition for successfully engaging in extortion, however, it is not the only condition. As has been mentioned, many organizations and groups with a capacity for violence do not engage in extortion; for example, extortion does not appear to be a mode of financing for small organizations without strong links to the community in which they are located – again, small cells of Islamic extremist groups in Europe and elsewhere offer an example. The reason for this is that beyond a capacity for violence, in order to operate a system of extortion on a continuous basis⁵² it is necessary to have a permanent presence in the area in which the targets of extortion are located.

⁵² Technically speaking, extortion is always continuous; if it is instead a one-off payment, it would be more accurately described as blackmail.

Finally, extortion is an activity which, although profit-generating, cannot be reduced merely to economics; because it directly involves the establishment of dominance and control by one party over another it is also a distinctly political activity. As such, it is an activity which fits the patterns of organizations concerned with attaining power more so than do more commercially based activities such as trafficking in illegal goods which, while certainly facilitating the financing of an organization, do not necessarily translate into greater direct power over individuals or communities. And as organizations which are primarily concerned with increasing their power within a given territory (Clare 1990; Siebert no date:5; Di Maria & Lo Verso 2007:90; Lo Verso & Lo Coco 2007:160), extortion is an activity well suited to both mafia and paramilitary organizations.

This concern with the establishment and maintenance of power and control is also a powerful explanatory factor in the roles of policing and social regulation played by paramilitary and mafia organizations, functions that are not generally associated with terrorism or organized crime more generally. As discussed above, these are primarily functions which the contemporary state aims to monopolize, and which can be a powerful source of both control and legitimacy: all things being equal, if one is the victim of a crime or experiences some social problem and the state is able to remedy this, the state will gain in legitimacy. The contemporary state, however, is also characterized by a certain slowness in its responses to many types of criminal activity, in part due to the very level of institutionalization it has achieved and the procedural safeguards that are a part of this institutionalization. In this sense, both mafia and paramilitary organizations again show their pragmatism in seeking to exploit this gap in the state's own policing

function, allowing them a relatively straightforward and low risk mechanism to undermine the state's own legitimacy and increase their own standing. This ability is aided, however, by the animosity and lack of trust in state institutions among significant sections of the population in both Northern Ireland and Sicily (Cottino 1999:104; Ellison 2007:246-247; Fierke 2009; McGloin 2006:94). Once again, however, this function depends primarily on the ability of both types of organization to deploy coercive means, without which any pretension to act as agents of social control or community defenders would lack credibility.

In addition to the similarities between mafia and paramilitary organizations as economic and social actors, the last chapter outlined similarities between the two types of organizations as political actors, the most striking of which is the dual nature of the relationship between these organizations and the state, on the one hand often using violence against the state and its representatives, on the other participating in or otherwise using its institutions in order to increase their own power and legitimacy.

Beyond sharing the tendency to deploy violence against the state, both mafia and paramilitary organizations do so in similar ways. For example, so-called mass casualty attacks as perpetrated by some groups are not a feature of either organization's use of violence, and where the violence is used in the majority of cases the source of the attacks is meant to be known, and the purpose for it to be understood. In this sense, both types of organization use violence instrumentally within the framework of a wider set of goals. The reason for this similarity is that neither type of organization, as such, aims to destroy the state (nor has the capacity to do so), but instead aims merely to influence its decisions or course of action in a particular situation. Cosa Nostra, as we have seen, uses violence

against the state primarily when the state becomes active in repressing it. The PIRA has acted with similar aims when, for example, it targeted the building housing the Northern Ireland Forensic Services in order to both destroy evidence and weaken the state's capacity to process evidence against those charged with terrorist offences (Walker & Stockdale 1995:74).

Further, the use of violence has also been seen to be restrained, comparatively speaking, to that observed in other regions of the world. In part this can be attributed simply to a more effective and powerful state in Northern Ireland and Italy than in other regions, but it is also an indication of the recognition of the necessity of the state for the continued strength of the organizations themselves. This claim may sound paradoxical, but there is a logic behind it. While both paramilitary and mafia organizations have a definite capacity for violence, this is nowhere near the capacity of the modern state. It is also most likely not strong enough for either organization to maintain the dominance they do have amidst a total breakdown of social order in the wake of state collapse. To this end it should be remembered that while the state represses both types of organization, its claimed monopoly on violence is also the primary restraint against more widespread violence by the new armed groups which would most likely emerge if the state's monopoly collapsed. In short, both types of organization, in order to maintain their power base, depend upon the state, without which they would quite likely become merely one organization among many more, thus potentially losing much of their power. In support of such an argument, moreover, there is some historical precedent. In Northern Ireland, for example, at the outbreak of the Troubles in the late 1960s and early 1970s numerous self-defence organizations emerged within Catholic communities across Northern

Ireland, the most prominent of which was formed by the Catholic Ex-Servicemen's Association, a body independent of and opposed to the IRA, as well as numerous self-defence association within the loyalist community (some of which went on to become the UDA) (Alcock 1979; Monaghan 2002:44). Had the state, rather than slowly restoring order, completely collapsed, it is likely the IRA would not have been able to gain the prominent position that it did given the presence of such rivals for control. Similarly, in Sicily at the end of the Second World War, numerous armed bands emerged, having formed in the general situation of instability of the war and post-war period. Only with the successes of the state in demobilizing many of these bands (in some cases with the help of the Cosa Nostra itself) was the organization able to secure its position of dominance (Schneider & Schneider 2002:777).

The political violence of both mafia and paramilitary organizations, then, is shaped in large by a common factor: the overriding need for the order that the state provides on the one hand, with the historically demonstrated fact that violence, when properly applied, can be successful in gaining political concessions even from a dominant power.

If violence is a useful tool for political influence, however, it is also of limited value in powerful contemporary states such as Italy or the United Kingdom where the state, as discussed, has a fairly widespread legitimacy, as well as offering services which virtually all subjects of the state – whether members of violent organizations or not – depend upon, and has a much greater capacity for both violence and keeping order. This is to say, while potentially very useful against weaker targets, and occasionally useful against stronger ones, there are potentially more effective methods for maintaining and

increasing political power, especially in liberal democratic states with relatively accessible institutions such as representative bodies.

As has been seen, both Cosa Nostra and the PIRA make use of such institutions either directly, through running members as candidates, or indirectly by entering into relationships with non-member representatives. These processes, of course, can still depend upon the violent capacity of these organizations, but in such cases the targets are much weaker: voters, isolated members of councils and legislatures, and so forth. By targeting these officials – or, again, entering into mutually beneficial relationships with them – a direct attack on the state, a more powerful adversary, is avoided, the organization can then benefit from the very legitimacy with which state institutions are endowed. In this sense, these organizations, beyond characterized by the centrality of violence, can also be seen as what Tilly has called ‘political entrepreneurs’ (Tilly 2003:36), especially so given that the legitimacy and resources gained through economic and social action are channeled by both types of organization into political power, not unlike conventional political parties.

It is important to note that this opportunity for political action itself separates both mafia and paramilitary organizations from violent organizations in areas where there is either no state apparatus at all, or where there the state does exist but takes an authoritarian form without representative bodies. In such cases similar avenues for the use of conventional politics remain closed, and there is a likelihood of higher levels of violence, as other avenues for extending political power remain unavailable. In states with representative political systems, however, the system itself can act to strengthen violent rivals of the state.

As economic, social and political actors, paramilitary and mafia organizations – but especially the PIRA and Cosa Nostra as the dominant organizations within each constellation – operate in much the same way, and in many cases for similar reasons. These reasons, in turn, can be found in the violent nature of the organizations themselves, and the structure of the states in which they operate. Having attempted to explain these similarities, the final section will explain why Sicily and Northern Ireland, unlike most other regions in Europe, have given rise to such organizations in the first place.

v. Explaining the Presence of Violent Organizations in Sicily and Northern Ireland

If, as has been claimed throughout this analysis, the contemporary European state in general, and the state of the UK and Italy in particular, are indeed both institutionally strong and widely accepted as legitimate, the question that naturally follows is why have they given rise to relatively durable, rival violent organizations in the first place? Generally, such organizations are assumed to be found in situations of widespread state failure and collapse (see, for example, Engelhart 2009; Piazza 2007; Sung 2004), or alternatively in weak states where the capacity of the state, especially as regards monopolizing the means of violence, is low and trust in public institutions is weak. As has been argued, however, neither contemporary Italy nor the United Kingdom meets these conditions, especially when looked at in comparison to states such as Iraq and Afghanistan where violent organization have become widespread.

While weak and failed states have garnered much attention for their tendency to produce violent organizations,⁵³ however, this may reflect a selection bias in choosing cases to study, based in part upon the disciplinary lenses with which the violence is

⁵³ For a critical view on the link between failed states and terrorism, see Newman 2007.

approached. A massive body of American literature in security and terrorism studies has grown up since the end of the Cold War focusing on the problems of terrorist (read violent) organizations in the Middle East, for example, but rarely have the same scholars of terrorism studied the emergence of the many street gangs and other violent organizations that have been a feature of American life arguably since the founding of the country (see Thrasher 1936; White 1981). This observation is not meant to be a dig at American scholars, but merely to point out that we needn't necessarily look beyond the borders of the modern, industrialized (or post-industrial, depending upon one's view) if we wish to study groups and organizations characterized by violence and areas of state failure and sometimes virtual collapse – many American and inner-cities, for example, are characterized by exactly these conditions (Kennedy 2006).

How is this relevant to the emergence of violent organizations in Northern Ireland and Sicily? First, it demonstrates that perhaps the macro-view of state failure, focusing on entire countries as a whole, doesn't pay sufficient attention to the fact that the state can fail in small geographic pockets – the republican and loyalist ghettos of Belfast, Derry, and border areas; or the city of Palermo and the western hinterland of Sicily – while in other areas remaining stable. As such, this means that the relevant question is one of scale. Naturally, when discussing state failure there is a tendency to focus on the cases like Iraq and Afghanistan, or the Soviet Union at its collapse, and often for good reason. The downside of such focus, however, is that it often obscures the fact that the such large scale state failures are more exception than norm. Far more frequent are the instance where, due to a confluence of numerous social, political, economic and cultural factors, the state breaks down only partially, perhaps in an area so small and marginal to

mainstream attention that it goes largely unnoticed in the mainstream media or by certain sections of the academic community – again, European and American inner cities spring to mind, many of which have likely never been the subject of wider academic study outside of the disciplines which generally study such areas.

Sicily and Northern Ireland fit somewhere in between these extremes. In terms of scale of both state failure and levels of violence, again, neither can be compared with states such as Afghanistan and Iraq. But on the other hand, both have experienced the emergence of violent organizations with a wider geographic and temporal scope than many other areas in contemporary Europe. Why this is the case can be better understood in light of what has been said about the scale of state failure.

The deep historical roots of both paramilitary and mafia organizations in Northern Ireland and Sicily has already been discussed. Over this extended period, however, both types of organization have seen varying fortunes, sometimes attaining extensive power, at others being brought virtually to the point of extinction. For Cosa Nostra and the IRA in particular, the 1940s and 1960s were just such periods – massive repression by the Fascist state 1924 led the organization to disband and go underground, many of its members sentenced to long prison terms (Reece 1973:269); the IRA, in the wake of its Border Campaign which proved a dismal failure, almost followed a similar course, many members of the organization retiring quietly, having abandoned all faith in the sustainability of the organization (Coogan 1995:299-329).

So why did both organizations reemerge? The answer for this can be found not in state collapse, as such, but in what might be more appropriately termed a hiatus in the capacity of the state. In Northern Ireland this hiatus occurred in the late 1960s and early

1970s. Already extensively described by historians and political scientists alike, the focus here will be on examining the broader processes at work during this period. From 1963 the new Prime Minister Terence O'Neill attempted a reform of Northern Ireland's economic and foreign policies, as well as raising hopes among the Catholic population of reforms in areas of concern such as local elections and housing (Patterson 2007:191-193). The unintended effects of these policies, however, were an increasing alienation of the traditional support base of the state, the unionist population, some of whom began forming organizations with a coercive capacity – violent organizations (O'Callaghan & O'Donnell 2006). When the government's promises fell short of Catholic expectations, however, under the banner of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA), protests against government policy began to increase, simultaneously increasing tension between the two communities. The state's response to this, however, through the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) was characterized by 'weakness and ineffectuality' (Patterson 2007:217), and tension between the two communities continued to increase, with neither side any longer having confidence in the state – the point at which an hiatus in state power began. In order to attempt to regain control of the situation, in 1969 the new Prime Minister James Chichester-Clark requests the deployment of British troops to help maintain order. Though initially well received among the Catholic population (Coogan 1995:342), a number of ill-conceived policies, including a British Army imposed curfew in a largely republican area of Belfast in 1970, the internment without trial of suspected IRA members (many of whom were not) in 1971, and the shooting to death of 13 Catholic protesters in Bloody Sunday further alienates the Catholic population, drastically increasing support for the newly emerged PIRA (Coogan 1995:342). Working

class loyalists, however, were similarly alienated by the heavy-handed response of the British Army, being the first community to experience an army intervention during rioting in the Protestant Shankill Road in which two people were shot dead and over sixty injured (Patterson 2007:217).

In 1972, the incapacity of the Northern Irish state was formally recognized with the imposition of direct rule from Britain, at which point state capacity began to be restored, as evidenced in the progressive decline in violence (as measured in conflict related deaths) after 1973, marking the end of the hiatus in state capacity. During this hiatus, however, the levels of cross-community and institutional distrust among a large segment of the population were sufficient to allow the resurgence of the PIRA, as well as the strengthening of the UVF and the creation of the UDA, each of which was able to fill the role, necessary at the time, as both community defenders and agents of social control.

The hiatus in state power came somewhat earlier in Sicily, but similarly facilitated a resurgence of mafia organizations, specifically Cosa Nostra. After 1924, the Fascist government of the country began a heavy crackdown on the mafia in Sicily, jailing large numbers of members and suspected members initially, and later using deportations and executions (Lupo 1997:22-23). This was facilitated by the forcefulness with which the Fascist government enforced its monopoly on violence over the island which had historically been characterized by the use of mafia groups as proxies for state authorities in the enforcement of law and order. In 1943, however, with the dismissal of Mussolini and the Allied invasion of Sicily, the Fascist government collapsed, with Allied forces subsequently establishing a temporary military administration of the island. While the Allied military government was rather benign compared to the British presence in

Northern Ireland after 1970 (see, for example, Buchanan 2008:223), however, it was in many ways similarly ineffective, on its own at least, in reestablishing order. In part the causes for this ineffectiveness were the poor state of intelligence on the part of American and British military planners of local social and political conditions (Lupo 1997:24), but of greater importance were the nature of these conditions themselves.

With the collapse of the Fascist order, political and economic grievances that had been largely held in check by the authoritarian regime since the early 1920s again came to the fore. Most salient of these (as in other parts of Southern Italy) was the issue of redistribution of large landed estates – the *latifundia* – to the peasantry who worked this land under extremely unfavorable economic conditions (Ginsborg 1984), an issue that despite being the subject of political efforts since the 19th century, had eluded solution. The lack of a solution of this problem led, ultimately, to widespread peasant revolts and the occupation of uncultivated land throughout the island (Ginsborg 1990; Ginsborg 1984:127). While the government aimed to remedy this unrest by the introduction of agrarian reform plans for southern regions of the country, their inadequate implementation and the resistance of the landed elite in Sicily proved insufficient to stem the growth of unrest, which was increasingly supported by a reinvigorated Communist party (Schneider & Schneider 2003:53). Adding to these wider social problems was the persistence of banditry throughout Western Sicily which increased the demand for security which the state, as yet, remained unable to provide (Lupo 1997:23).

This temporary hiatus in effective state power, much like that which occurred in Northern Ireland the late 1960s and early 1970s, proved auspicious for the resurgence of the mafia. Benefiting from the lack of local knowledge of the Allied forces, many mafia

members were able to gain positions within the AMGOT administration, giving them an important source of influence through access to British and American supplied sources of aid (Schneider & Schneider 2003:50-51). More importantly, however, having retained both the capacity and willingness to use violence, even with a weakened collective structure, the mafia also offered its services in addressing the pressing problems of peasant agitation for agrarian reform – desired by the landed elite – as well as that of widespread banditry – desired by the state (Fulvetti 2004:67). In some cases this involved using the latter to attack the former, as in the infamous massacre at Portella delle Ginestre in May 1947 when at the behest of Cosa Nostra, the village May Day celebrations were attacked by the bandit Salvatore Giuliano in order to terrorize the peasant population into abandoning their demands for reform (Bonanno 1988:137-138; Chandler 1988).

While the state would eventually regain control of the situation with crackdowns on the mafia beginning in the 1950s, the immediate post-war period hiatus of effective state power resulting from the collapse of Fascism and the ineffective governance of the Allied forces in the wake of the Sicilian invasion was sufficient for Cosa Nostra to once again gain a foothold in Sicilian society.

While there are certainly differences between Northern Ireland in the 1960s and 1970s, and Sicily in the 1940s, there are also important structural similarities. Both regions prior to these periods had been characterized by the presence of non-state violent organizations with comparatively long histories and reputations within local society. As such, the presence of these organizations, while perhaps not always supported by large sections of society, was at least a feature of the political reality known to both the local societies themselves and the metropolitan powers (Rome and London) which would

eventually be forced to intervene to enforce their monopoly on violence against the challenge posed by violent rivals. Though weakened by the strength of the states within which they existed, in both Sicily and Northern Ireland, these violent organizations were able to make use of the temporary breakdown of these states, making use of their own capacity for violence to fill the legitimate need for security among certain segments of the local population.

It should not be surprising, however, that neither mafia nor paramilitary organizations disappeared when the state recovered its capacity to impose order, and to reestablish the legitimacy of institutions for the wider polity. The reason for this, as has been seen, is that even the limited window in which both types of organizations reemerged was sufficient to allow them to move into fields of action, social, economic, and political, through which they could entrench themselves among certain supportive (or at least tacitly acquiescent) segments of the population; in Northern Ireland, among the working-class ghettos and insular rural communities, both loyalist and republican, or similar neighbourhoods and communes in Sicily, where the state's authority had always been rather tenuous. From these bases, both types of organization would forge links both within the community and, directly or indirectly, with the state, entrenching themselves in the political reality of both Sicily and Northern Ireland.

Conclusion

Interest in terrorism and organized crime has increased dramatically since the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, and more recently in the similarities and differences between these two phenomena. Detailed, critical study that goes beyond theoretical debates, however, has been hampered by the continued use of conceptual categories that often obscure the organizations and groups being studied. Concepts such as terrorist organization and organized crime group, for example, often skew the study of particular groups when applied, insofar as these categories come laden with assumptions about motivations, goals, and organizational structures. These assumptions, in turn, serve to drive analysis into focusing on differences in goals and motivations in defence of the concepts employed, rather than allowing the concepts themselves to be proven or disproven against what is known about the organizations to which they are applied.

The aim of this thesis has been to compare two specific constellations of organizations that are generally discussed within the concepts of terrorism and organized crime respectively. In order to do this, however, rather than adopting these concepts as accurate classifications for either type of group, a different approach to comparison, one based upon the concept of violent organizations, has been employed. The rationale for the choice of this concept has been to attempt to move beyond concepts that easily lend themselves to ideological definition towards something more 'objective,' or at least more amenable to empirical verification.

As has been presented in the first chapter, this thesis maintains that Sicilian mafia and Northern Irish paramilitary organizations can be classified as violent organizations, and on this basis can be compared more fruitfully than by approaching them as particular

instances of wholly different phenomena, that is, as terrorist or criminal organizations. Through the application of this concept to these particular sets of organizations the intent has not been to erase all differences between them, but rather to focus on those elements that are common to both, in the hope that a greater understanding of both might emerge. In the comparative analysis made possible by the application of this concept, numerous parallels between these organizations have thus emerged.

Insofar as both mafia and paramilitary organizations are violent organizations, they are subject to a number of similar dynamics in both the tensions which develop within each organization, and those which develop between them, but these dynamics are in turn influenced by the fact that both types of organizations coexist within the same geographic space as is claimed by modern and comparatively effective states, which also claim to hold the legitimate monopolization over violence. The basis of these dynamics can be explained in a fairly simple proposition: because mafia and paramilitary organizations make use of violence, they are criminalized by the state, and this criminalization in turn leads to the adoption of secrecy as an essential principle of these organizations. The claim to use violence is thus the essential feature common to both types of organizations, and has similar effects in both cases.

These effects consist of the difficulty, even where previously established, of maintaining formal structures, and the tendency for the organizations to fragment with some degree of regularity, as well as to lose members through defection to the state. Despite these pressures, however, both types of organization, because of their significant ability to deploy the means of violence relative to most actors other than the state, are able to perpetuate themselves by filling economic and social roles not adequately filled

by the state, as well as making use of the state's own institutions to access both power and a greater degree of legitimacy. In order for this to occur at all, however, the existence of a functioning state capable of guaranteeing a certain level of order is necessary – otherwise, many of the functions fulfilled by paramilitary and mafia groups would not be possible.

Because this thesis has followed the model of a comparative, qualitative case study, there are important limits to which its conclusions can be generalized. Both Sicily and Northern Ireland, for example, have been chosen not only because of the presence of violent organizations within each region but also on the assumption that being peripheral areas of Europe, and hence sharing certain features in general historical political development, these violent organizations would display more similarities than differences. As such, it cannot be assumed that violent organizations in other regions will necessarily follow a similar pattern, for example, with constellations of violent organizations being composed of a single dominant, highly formalized organization and several smaller, less formalized organizations. In regions where the state is merely one violent organization among many rivals and controls only a limited amount of the national territory, for example, depending upon the level of competition there may be numerous formalized organizations. Likewise, violent conflict among such organizations may be more intense as no monopoly power exists to limit the level of violence between them. It might also be expected that the forms of political activity in which they engage should be different, given the absence of state institutions.

On the other hand, in the case of other regions with states that are generally functional, similarities may potentially be found through further comparative research.

Many areas of Europe, for example, have at one time or another seen the rise of what could be classified as violent organizations. These include the Basque ETA in Spain, the Unione Corse in Corsica, the Baader-Meinhoff Gang in Germany, and the Red Brigades, 'Ndrangeta and Camorra in Italy to name only a few. Comparative analyses of some of these organizations may better illustrate whether the similarities between mafia and paramilitary organizations presented in this thesis are unique to these two constellations of organizations, or are indicative of broader similarities between violent organizations across Europe.

Finally, the concept of violent organizations employed as the theoretical starting point for this analysis, despite the limits to generalization of the present study, offers a potentially useful starting point for other research into many of the organizations generally assumed under the categories of 'terrorist' or 'organized crime', primarily because it facilitates a common reference point that those categories preclude. As this thesis has attempted to demonstrate, in at least the case of the two constellations of organizations which have been examined, there are numerous and significant similarities and parallels in the social, economic and political roles that these organizations fill. An approach which starts from the binary categories of 'terrorism' and 'organized crime', with the attendant motivational assumptions of these categories, however, is incapable of accurately capturing or explaining these similarities. This is merely to say that, while there may be differences between a particular organization widely defined as 'terrorist', and one widely defined as 'organized crime', these cannot simply be assumed, but must rather be demonstrated. Fundamentally, applying such an approach has been the main task of this thesis, and it is hoped that by adopting this approach in conjunction with a

detailed case study, the debate on organized crime and terrorism has been advanced, if only in a small way.

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