Using Sports Against the Italian Mafia: Policies and Challenges on the Path of Cultural Renewal

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This study addresses the role and policies of Libera Sport, an Italian nongovernmental civil society organization that fights against the Italian mafia groups through sports. On the one hand, this article reinterprets and applies the cultural hegemony theory of Antonio Gramsci both to the Mafia and Libera Sport. On the other hand, habitus and cultural capital notions of Pierre Bourdieu are used to express the struggle between the Mafia and Libera Sport. This study demonstrates how the Mafia and anti-Mafia movement intersect in the "accumulation of actions" and create the "clash of habitus". I argue that *Libera Sport* can realize its goals only if the clash of habitus is terminated by demolishing the institutionalized cultural capital of the Mafia and constituting its own cultural capital, which has not yet been institutionalized. During this reformative process, sports become a significant complementary anti-Mafia policy tool.

Cette étude examine le rôle et les politiques de Libera Sport, une organisation italienne non-gouvernementale qui lutte contre les groupes mafieux par l'intermédiaire du sport. Dans un premier temps, cet article réinterprète et applique la théorie de l'hégémonie culturelle d'Antonio Gramsci à la fois à la Mafia et à Libera Sport. Dans un deuxième temps, les notions d'habitus et de capital culturel de Pierre Bourdieu sont utilisées pour illustrer la lutte entre la Mafia et Libera Sport. Cette étude démontre comment la Mafia et le mouvement antimafia se croisent dans « l'accumulation d'actions » et créent « l'affrontement de l'habitus ». Je suggère que Libera Sport peut atteindre ses objectifs uniquement si l'affrontement de l'habitus s'achève par la démolition du capital culturel institutionnalisé de la Mafia et la constitution de son propre capital culturel qui n'a pas encore été institutionnalisé. Durant ce processus de réforme, le sport devient un moyen de lutte contre la Mafia complémentaire et important.

The phenomenon of the Mafia[1] in Italy cannot be understood without taking into account the political history of the country, socioeconomic differences among the regions, the lack of central authority in the Southern regions, and the culturally closed social structure of the *mezzogiorno*[2], in which the notion of trust—among

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individuals and toward the state—was destroyed (Romano, 1966; Blok, 1974; Servadio, 1976; Gambetta, 1993). Unsurprisingly, all these features offer an appropriate atmosphere to make the mafia groups powerful historically as uncontested agencies. It is argued that the anti-Mafia struggle should be facilitated by the commitment of every social and cultural sphere in society, including sports, politics, cultural education, and activities in the schools (Schneider and Schneider, 2003). Volunteerism and sports have been closely linked and coordinated to realize a social change (Green and Chalip, 2010). However, encouraging volunteerism through the attempts of a civil society organization that fights against the Mafia and uses sports as a tool has not yet been neither fully elaborated nor investigated. This paper is an attempt to fill this lacuna and demonstrate the role of sports in replacing Mafiosi culture with a culture of lawfulness, rule of law, discipline, personal development, and the virtues of active and responsible citizenship, taking *Libera Sport* as a case study. Thus, this article brings the attempts of an Italian civil society institution to the fore with a deep analysis of the role of sports to open new sociological vistas in the examination of the hardest social problem of the country: the Mafia and its culture.

In the wake of the hopeless situation that prevailed until the early 1990s, Libera, the largest anti-Mafia and not-for-profit organization in Italy, was established in 1995. The principle aim of Libera is to activate a counterculture to fight against the Mafiosi culture. The foundation of Libera in the mid-1990s was not a highly improbable outcome in Italy. Indeed, the tense era in the 1990s yielded persistent social and political upheavals, which fostered the establishment of Libera and many other grassroots movements to lead a social change in the country with a high degree of moral sensitivity and idealism. It is pertinent to commence with the change in traditional party system, which was in the ideological orbit of Christian Democrats and Italian Communist Party (PCI), until the early 1990s. Christian Democrats (DC) was the largest party since the declaration of the Republic with a certain support from Vatican, the USA and its social networks in the mafias. The political dominance of the DC was terminated with notorious political corruption that came out with the Mani Pulite—clean hands—operation in the early 1990s. The DC was dissolved due to a deep political crisis in the winter of 1994 when enormous governmental debt, insuperable level of corruption, profound influence of the mafia groups in social and political spheres of the nation sent the Italian society into a state of shock (Cotta and Verzichelli, 2007). The political-criminal nexus between the DC and different mafia groups was widespread (Stille, 1995). Even the communists collaborated with the Mafiosi, however it was not as extensive as the DC, the relationship of the politicians from Rifondazione Comunista (RC) in the municipality of Marano, a small town close to Naples, and the Napoli based mafia group Camorra was only one of the established political-criminal nexus (Behan, 2001). The abrupt social change was unpredictable in the late 1980s for not only the DC and its supporters but also for the PCI, which lost cultural and strategic ammunitions with the collapse of the Soviet regimen in 1991 and was dissolved in the same year. A new phase ushered in Italy with the establishment of many small parties both from the right and from left in the early 1990s. In the last two decades, the Berlusconi governments, the Olive Tree governments of the center-left coalition, and the recent technocrat government of Mario Monti proved that the mafias could not be defeated solely by the politicians. Conversely, a bottom-up social resistance is a requisite to defy the Mafia.

Different from Italy's poor, dysfunctional political legacy and failed political system, the Italian civil society has taken a different road in renewing both political and cultural landscapes of the country. Andrews (2005) aptly describes this fact by giving examples from high level of civic resistance movements and protests in Italian society, which has come to the fore more intensively in the last decades. Some of these civic resistance movements and social protests are Slow Food movement, uprisings against the 2001 G8 summit in Genoa and girotondi movement, which was established in 2001 as a popular social resistance to protest illegality and ask for the establishment of the rule of law. Similarly, civil societies against the Mafia were established one by one in the early 1990s in the face of the sea change in political spectrum, low levels of trust in politicians and the Mafia's irrepressible violence, which reached its peak level with the assassination of two anti-Mafia magistrates—Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino—in the summer of 1992. However, as noted above, it bears emphasis that such a civic resistance against the Mafia did not occur in a couple of years. We must revisit the entire second half of the 20th century through personal stances against the Mafia like the resistance of Peppino Impastato, many courageous anti-Mafia magistrates, limited but significant attempts of the local politicians. Further, civic consciousness has been developed at the organizational level with the contribution of the social movements like the Palermo Spring, Committee of the Sheets, Addiopizzo, and Libera (Santino, 2000; Jamieson, 2000; Schneider and Schneider, 2003; Andews, 2005). Italy is a country of paradoxes. Perhaps, the Mafia phenomenon is the most appropriate term to explicate such a dichotomy through the relationship between the mafias' traditional entrenchment in Southern Italy and the resistance against the Mafia that has been mobilized by individual and collective attempts in the prominent regions of Southern Italy, from Sicily to Campania and from Apulia to Calabria. Thus, the consolidation of the anti-Mafia movement was intensified after the 1990s thanks to the struggle of grass root movements. Most importantly, strenuous efforts of Libera, the biggest anti-Mafia organization and its extensive network throughout Italy, from the South to North, continue to offer significant contribution to the fight against the Mafia.

Turning to our case study, Libera Sport is one of five sectors of the organization that uses sports to fight the Mafiosi culture and all its components. Self-actualization, self-awareness, discipline, responsible citizenship, the rule of law, values and norms to attain social justice are the fabrics of the projected society that Libera Sport imposes on its activists. Libera Sport endeavors to renew the society through crating new social, political and cultural identities. In doing so, the social bond between the individual and society is established to ward off the Mafiosi culture. Indeed, these are the basic concepts through which American criminologist Hirschi (1969) constructed his renowned social control theory. The emergence of social control theory and its development were mainly discussed in the circles of North American social life and situational crime prevention methods. Particularly, social control theory has focused on the criminals and applied other social control variables like family control, punishment, awards and authority as deterrence tools to decrease the risks in committing crime. If we consider the existence of the Mafia and evolution of the Mafiosi culture spanning in a history over 150 years, the social control approach of Libera Sport cannot be separated from cultural sociology of the nation. Therefore, the social control instruments of

Libera Sport hover between two cultural poles: Mafiosi culture and the culture of lawfulness. This is the reason why this study incites and deploys cultural hegemony as a theorizing tool. The social control method of Libera Sport and its opposition against the mafias' territorial control and Mafiosi culture elicit critical locus for two cultural competitions. The present cultural hegemonic power is absolutely the Mafiosi culture; however, its abundant and sustainable social and cultural resources diminish through the efforts of the anti-Mafia movement, Libera Sport. This article examines the cultural dichotomies in the country through elucidating the establishment process of a new hegemonic cultural order by Libera Sport with the efforts to demolish the Mafia's present hegemonic culture. Nevertheless, Libera Sport's unyielding struggle to establish its cultural hegemony is totally different from the Mafiosi culture as its social norms gear toward attaining a progressive, just, and transparent society. Two cultural poles, Libera Sport and Mafiosi culture are converging in the same habitus—public spaces—to practice their own ideals. Bearing this in mind, Gramsci's cultural hegemony understanding and Bourdieu's habitus notion are interwoven to construct the theoretical intervention, the "clash of habitus".

Three main points are argued in this paper. First, although the sport, as a social space, is open to criminalization through the illegal operations of the mafias and the Mafia-sports nexus, it can rehabilitate the criminalized public culture through ethically evolved policy of civil societies like Libera Sport. Second, such a cultural renewal can be activated by the sports only if diverse policy methods are applied to complement the sports activities. For instance, Libera Sports uses complementary policies such as education, protest, and information. Finally, I claim that Libera Sport fights for its own values and mores to establish its cultural capital while demolishing the institutionalized cultural capital of the Mafia. This struggle has created a "clash of habitus" as Libera Sport entered into a long and thorny path to attain its goals. However, ethnographically evolved social-intervention polices of Libera Sport foster consistency in its endeavors. Their struggle culminates in breaking the clash of habitus in the future. In doing so, Libera Sport may attain more capital to break the institutionalized cultural capital of the Mafia as well.

The article is divided into five sections. First, the method is introduced. Second, the social control approach of Libera Sport and territorial control of the mafias are explored. Third, the relationship between sports and crime is analyzed. Fourth, the findings are introduced by exemplifying sports as an anti-Mafia policy tool and discussing the role of diverse policies of Libera Sport. Finally, the theoretical inquiries, namely the clash of habitus, of this study are constructed through cultural hegemony theory of Antonio Gramsci and habitus and cultural capital notions of Pierre Bourdieu.

Method

Three instruments were used to guide the method and data collection, generate the findings, and formulate the arguments. First, the interviews were conducted with the president of Libera Sport, Roberto De Benedittis, to elicit the position of Libera Sport in four areas: (1) the perception of sports, their values, goals, and ideals; (2) the relationship between the Mafia and sports; (3) fostering of sports to combat the Mafia; and (4) the relationship between cultural hegemony and sports.

The transcribed text from the interview was analyzed for the distribution of words using the computer programs QDA Miner and Sim Stat. Second, because Libera Sport has not classified its activities to date, a deep analysis was conducted to categorize each policy, event, seminar, and sports activity that was organized by Libera Sport in the previous five years. After sifting out the list of activities through document analysis, public records and media entries, video and visual resources of the organization, four main types of activities were found, which I categorized as follows: (1) sports activities, (2) education, (3) protest, and (4) information. I further classified each of these activities according to the three regions of Italy, Northern, Central, and Southern Italy, where each activity was accomplished. In addition, young people and students are important parts of the target population for Libera, so I investigated which activities had specific target groups, such as a certain age group like secondary school, high school, and university students, and which activities encompassed the entire population. Finally, I categorized the primary goal of each type of activities deductively, determined by the needs of cultural hegemony theory of Antonio Gramsci: beliefs, explanations, perception, values, and mores. Hence, it was found that there are four main policy goals for each activity: (1) constructing a belief system, (3) explaining constructed beliefs by remembering the victims, (2) changing perceptions about the Mafia, and (4) creating a set of values and mores. Third, I used the quantitative results of the last Italian statistical report about sports participation frequency in Italy for each of the three geographic regions: Northern, Central, and Southern Italy. This paper is the first study in the literature that offers a broad sociological perspective and analysis about the organization so it is limited with the policy analysis. This limitation of the method can be overcome by future research that is mainly based on interviews with the activists of the organization and a regular participant observation of the organization's events.

Social Control Approach of Libera Sport Versus Territorial Control of the Mafias

This section briefly describes the mafia groups' current territorial power in the region, its domination through social networks, the subordination and social behaviors of the local people that affect their resistance against the Mafiosi culture. Next, social control approach of Libera Sport analyzes how its policies can be a response to diminish the mafias' territorial power.

Explaining the Mafia's power, which is operative in Southern and Northern Italy with certain differences between these two regions, may help greatly to grasp the significance and predilection of Mafia groups' territorial control. There are three main distinctions; (1) the emergence of the first mafia group in Sicily due to historical and social reasons, (2) the political-criminal nexus along with the impact of the Mafia's image on local people, and (3) the absence of strong civic traditions and civic community in Southern Italy. First, the impotence of the Italian state organs in establishing the rule of law after Italy's unification in 1861 created a social, economic, and cultural sphere that structured and empowered the Mafia, first at the organizational level by offering a sense of institutionalization and then at the personal level by glorifying the identity of the mafioso. Historically, Southern Italy, especially Sicily is a notorious region because of its fertile atmosphere that

fosters crime, and the Mafia, the Cosa Nostra, arose there during the second half of nineteenth century. Unsurprisingly, Southern Italy has awakened the interest of the world, especially after exporting its mafia families to the USA at end of the nineteenth century, an emigration that grew exponentially into the midtwentieth century. The Mafioso first appeared in Sicily because, the region was politically decentralized and the large lands were possessed by the aristocrat class, baron and baroness, rather than the low social class, local people. The control of the lands was managed extensively by the gabellotto, who was a rural entrepreneur and leased or governed the farmland on behalf of its aristocrat owner. The Mafioso was a local person who played an arbiter role between the land owner/gabellotto and local people. In many cases, the Mafioso and gabellotto could have been the same person. Thus, the strong entrenchment in the territory where the first mafia group, Cosa Nostra in Sicily, emerged is strategically indispensable in the organized crime activities (Gambetta, 1993). Such a historical and socioeconomic background offered the necessary and legitimate conditions to the Mafioso to be an institutionalized agency and to gain insuperable social character. Since the unification of Italy, certain efforts were made to hamper the mafias, either through harsh violence, like during fascism, or through legal measures, like those put in force during the first and second Republic periods (Duggan, 1989; Lupo, 2011). Despite all these late and half-functional efforts, the mafia syndicates have survived.

The Mafia's remarkable endurance brings us to the second leitmotiv distinctions in Mafia's powers, which are its political-criminal nexus and the perceptions of the local people concerning the Mafia. The resolution of many city councils due to mafias' infiltration demystify the fact that why the Mafia is more powerful in Southern Italy. Numerous city councils were disbanded during the 1990s in Italy when a tense era started in the fight against the mafia groups by state and nonstate (civil society) forces. Recently, five towns in Southern Italy were dissolved because of the mafias' infiltration on 6 April 2012, two of which are located in Calabria and three in Campania ("Five town councils," 2012). Furthermore, recent mafia-infiltration news has reported the domination and power of the mafia groups in the region. For instance, Italian prosecutors asked to bring the Sicilian governor, Raffaele Lombardo, and his brother to trial on April 5, 2012 because of their collaboration with the Mafia, Cosa Nostra ("Prosecutors request," 2012). Moreover, the mafia groups' solid links with the politicians give the signal to the local people that the line between the Mafia and State appears nebulous and two actors, the Mafia and State, can be interchangeable in certain cases. This strong political and social image of the Mafia stimulates its concerted actions to subjugate the local people. Today, most of the shopkeepers in Southern Italy, particularly in Sicily, Campania, and Calabria continue to pay *pizzo*, extortion money, to the mafia syndicates, demonstrating the continuing power of the mafias in the region (Forno, 2011). Extortion-population ratio in Southern Italy is significantly higher than any major city in the North. Thereby, extortion money paid to the mafia functions to strengthen the attachment of the Mafiosi to its own territory while effectively dominating the local people (Paoli, 2003). Thus, the strong attachment of the mafias to the local community led the mafia groups to acquire certain logistics, information, obedience, and code of silence, which are the principle elements of their social system and can be provided largely by the local people. The mafia groups show no mercy to the ones who would like to break their social network systems so the threats

function as a significant deterrence tool for the ones who reject cooperating with the Mafiosi or opposing them. Recently, Maria Carmela Lanzetta, the mayor of Monasterace, a small town in Calabria, Southern Italy, was forced to resign after receiving multiple threats from the mafia ("Calabrian Mayor," 2012). This dramatic example aptly abridges the social and territorial control mechanism of the mafia groups and its impact on the local people.

Finally, there is a strong correlation between the Mafia's power and the absence of civic community, which has spurred the mafia syndicates to infringe upon the state bodies in Southern Italy more than the Northern part of the country. More notably, "civic tradition" and "civic community" notions of Putnam provided significant lenses to understand why democracy functions better in Northern Italy. Particularly, it was argued that the social capital, which is accumulated by dense secondary social associations, trust, norms and values, plays the major role in the performance of the governments. Thus, the political capacity, which has coupled with economic development, promotes the consolidation of democracy like in the case of Northern Italy (Putnam et al., 1993). The sense of civic community in the North has partially played an important role in Mafia's predilection for establishing its basement in Southern Italy until the last decades. Nevertheless, it has started to be more crystallized in each single year that Northern Italy has become a new land to be discovered and exploited by the mafia groups. Particularly, the mafiosi achieved to transplant in Northern Italy, where there is a high civic community structure, as it occurred in the case of 'Ndrangheta's, Calabrian Mafia, infiltration into the municipality of Bardonecchia, a small town close to Turin, in 1995 (Varese, 2011). Thereof, as Varese puts it deftly, even if Putnam's theoretical framework provides a significant ground to elucidate the difference between Southern and Northern Italy, his theoretical intervention is not valid under every condition as the mafias could even emanate from more civic municipalities of Northern Italy. Perhaps, more importantly, this deteriorated situation rings the alarm bells for Italy even more strongly than before because the mafia groups seek to conquer new territories from Southern Italy to the North and intensify their attacks to infiltrate effectively into the social and political life of Italy.

For those reasons that were noted above, the mafia groups prefer to maintain strong roots in their territories by using various tools, such as violence, threats, pressure on the local people, governing the market through cartels in their territories, distribution of jobs (either half-legal or illegal) to the unemployed, using any illegal method to promote their supporters, and their social networks, especially the ones that have been established among the politicians and local bureaucrats in the city councils. Even if the mafiosi have to leave its original territories, extending its power in the emigrated region highly depends on their local contacts even in a municipality of a small town or the social networks among local people of that town or commune (Varese, 2011).

Up to this point, I have stressed the social and territorial control of the mafias. Turning to the social control approach of Libera Sport, the very fundamental goal is hampering the mafias' social, economic, and cultural domination through breaking its social networks, which are influential in establishing a solid political-criminal nexus, subordinating the local people, and infringing upon the state bodies. In this sense, the question remains how to guarantee development of "responsible citizens"—or "honorable citizens" as stated by anti-Mafia magistrate Giovane

Falcone, the "responsible citizens"—or "honorable citizens" terms are indispensable anti-Mafia tools. An honorable citizen must not cooperate with the Mafiosi; more importantly, he or she must show resistance against the Mafia, even if such resistance costs his or her life (Falcone and Padovani, 1992). The question of whether using sports is an effective anti-Mafia policy tool to assist in developing such honorable citizens remains to be determined. In the case of anti-Mafia movement, raison d'être for the mobilization of the participants seems to stem from a desire of cultural renewal to resist the mafia's domination at the first sight. However, such a cultural resistance includes economic and political motivations in itself because of the mafia's notorious power in the political life of Italy and its considerable harm to the economy.

If the issue is a socially complex phenomenon like the Mafia, we cannot draw a quick concluding that pushes us to pick up only one of four motives, which induces resistance—(1) reformation of political landscapes, (2) economic exploitation, (3) dissents of the reformative social class or (4) the demands for a cultural renewal. Conversely, we must embrace an interdisciplinary and deductive approach to decipher the very essence of the Mafia and anti-Mafia movement. Thus, it is clear in hindsight that anti-Mafia movement is a bottom-up and strategic public intervention, which has been under the influence of diverse reasons of motivation. Equally important, one motive must not take precedence over the other. Indeed, this is a case in which "political identity" echoes in the actions of the volunteers of Libera Sport when they protest the political-criminal nexus, "economic exploitation" comes to the fore in the chanting of the young unemployed/dissenting Italian youth, sport activities of the volunteers ethnographically impose a creation of a "reformative social class" and the desire for a cultural renewal influences and structures each step of the mobilization, which fosters a new "cultural identity" at the same time. The activists of Libera Sport perform cultural practices by using the sport and convey a political message simultaneously so sport plays a dual role by turning to a cultural repertoire in politics and demonstrating a political attitude in the culture. Morgan (2006) stresses how sport is morally significant and powerful to embark changes in social, political and moral life of the society. In addition, morality cannot be examined in the exclusion of identity, because "identity has become an important site for both self-actualization and for political struggles" (Carrington, 2007, p. 50). Thus, anti-Mafia movement, Libera Sport, offers a moral reformation through its interaction with diverse identities. Hence, Libera Sport is beyond the sharply drawn sociological boundaries because its cultural identity envisages a new political, social and economic identity for the whole society through which all diverse aforementioned identities are harmonized in the transformative force of sport. It bears emphasis that the main principle of social control echoes in the combination of political, economic and cultural factors to attain a new cultural identity, namely culture of lawfulness, to break the power of the mafias on the local territories through sport.

The social bond theory of Hirschi has found a high correlation between the absence of social attachment and proliferation of violence and crime especially among the youth. Hirschi (1969: 17) stated that "the more weakened the groups to which (the individual) belongs, the less he depends on them, the more he depends on them, the more he consequently depends only on himself and recognizes no other rules of conduct then what are formed on his private interest." Further, Hirschi

(1969) highlighted that four basic factors are crucial to establish and consolidate social bond between the individual and society. These four factors are attachment, commitment, involvement and belief. The relationship between the sports and its utilizing force as a social control tool has widely been neglected. From this broad perspective, using sport against the Mafia has a central place in social control theory as the organization has exclusively applied four basic elements of social bonding. Nevertheless, the four elements of social bonding have a sequence in the case of Libera Sport. First, the activist must *involve* in Libera Sport by attending its activities. Second, the *commitment* of the activist starts enhancing through the practice of each activity of Libera Sport. Third, the commitment fosters the *attachment* of the activist to the ideals of the organization. Finally the attachment of the activist to the organizational structure and mission of Libera Sport is consolidated to shape and empower the *belief* system of the organization.

Different from the basic structural features of social control theory, the social interactions and confrontation occur between two organizational and nonstate actors, the Mafia and Libera Sport, rather than between an individual and societal/state actor. However, the individuals, both in the social circle of the Mafia and Libera Sport, aim to consolidate solidarity and attachment in their organizations through involvement and commitment of each member. The main contradiction among the members of the mafias and anti-Mafia movement over the ideals for which they are striving creates "culture wars" between two poles. This brings us to the next argument that if a cultural renewal and/or a social change infuses the instruments and goals in the application of social control, the outcome of the struggle takes a longer time and needs to devise a cultural response since demolishing the current culture of the hegemonic power and dominant delinquent culture, which is Mafiosi culture in our case, is more challenging than prevention of delinquent individuals. In line with our argument, Coakley (2002) criticized "defensive", "protective", tendencies and "deficit-reduction dream" of social control theory due to its youth approach, which perceives the youth as potential risk producers and crime machines. Overall, what Libera Sport offers is not simply prevention of crime in the short run but also setting a new culture so its social control approach embraces primarily a cultural change and reformation rather than reducing the risk of committing crime. This necessity actually is a response to the mafia's territorial power, which is influential over social, political and economic life in small towns and communes. In doing so, the Mafiosi culture comes to the fore as a hegemonic power and such a serious danger alerts Libera Sport to integrate a strong cultural perspective to its social control approach. In investigating the role of sports as an anti-Mafia tool, we must first describe the poisonous relationship between the Mafia and sports to comprehend the complexity and challenges in resisting the Mafia through sports.

The Mafia and Sports: A Poisonous Relationship

The relationship between sportsmen/women and criminals is a two-faced coin in which two social roles, sportsman/women and criminal, are exercised by the same person. Crime committed by professional sportsmen is only one part of the story. More alarming is the strategic collaborator roles of the sportsmen and women in fixing and corruption in a sport. Managers of the teams, players and referees seem to be pramie facie of the sport-fixing scandals as they are in the center of these

scandalous events that occur in diverse countries, which are socioeconomically and culturally different from each other. Thus, sports-fixing and corruption in a sport include common moral deprivations from developing to developed countries around the world.[3]

Ronald K. Noble, Secretary General of Interpol, has taken note of the "organized criminals who frequently engage in loan sharking and use intimidation and violence to collect debts." He added, "If that doesn't work, they force their desperate, indebted victims into drug smuggling and into prostitution" (Hughes, 2012). In addition, organized crime groups have benefited from the internationalization of sports and the global flow of money without tough controls. For this reason, sports has been a good market for money laundering, especially making investments in soccer and other teams in foreign countries. Particularly, Hill (2008) takes attention to the internationalization of gambling in sports and match fixing by showing the influence of Asian organized crime groups in European sports and successful infiltration of many diverse mafia groups even into the top sport tournaments in the world. For instance, suspicions about the Mafia-sports nexus were confirmed when a Russian group acquired the Italian cycling team Roslotto in 1996–1997, and Abromovich's huge payment to purchase Chelsea FC made newspaper headlines (Andreff, 2008). The mafiosi culture and its poisonous relationship with sports was stressed by the president of Libera Sport, De Benedittis, by identifying doping as an act focusing on the ends, as the mafias do, rather than the means of sports:

> There are short but illegal paths in daily life, such as corruption in government or bureaucracy, which make reach the goal by taking the easier way. This is also true for sports when you use doping . . . . Similar to doping, which is an unfair way, the mafia applies violence and omertà in order to dominate the markets . . . and they create black markets illicitly.[4]

If the issue is organized crime and sports, Italy must be examined as having some of the most corrupt and match-fixing scandals (Foot, 2007). Even though, these scandals were fundamentally related with match-fixing rather than the Mafia-sports nexus, the outburst of corruption in sports caught the eye of the mafia groups, which aimed to benefit from it through taking its part in the big picture of scandalous sport events. The Totonero match-fixing scandal was not connected to the Mafia even though some links were found with the Camorra, Naples based mafia group, the whole scandal was a corrupt story of the footballers. Yet, it shook the nation severely in 1980 during the last period of the "Years of Lead," when the country was being devastated by the far-right and far-left terror. Dozens of footballers were convicted; seven teams from Serie A and 5 teams from Serie B were investigated and punished. The second notorious match-fixing scandal in Italy occurred in 2006 after over 100,000 telephone calls were collected as evidence. Five Italian soccer clubs—Juventus, Milan, Fiorentina, Lazio, and Reggina—were penalized for "selecting favorable referees to officiate their games". Juventus was the most punished team with 9-point deductions (Lawton, 2007). In addition, a recent Juventus doping case placed the referees, football players, managers, and Neapolitan Mafia in the same circle (Martin, 2011, p. 232). One of the recent attempts at match fixing in Italy occurred in 2011. In *Calcio scommesse*, dozens of clubs and nineteen footballers, including famous former Italian players like Giuseppe Signori, Mauro Bressan, and Stefano Battarini, were convicted (Piccioni, 2011; Ceniti and Ercoli, 2011).

The Italian football federation approved the penalties for various teams resulting from the last match-fixing scandal on June 18, 2012. The Pescara football team is one that will start playing the next season with a two-point deduction, with four players of the team eliminated from playing football for five years ("Italian FA announces match-fixing," 2012). Not only is match fixing in Italy a problem in the South, but the mafia syndicates actively seek new markets in Northern Italy because sport clubs have become an attractive arena for the mafiosi across the country. Accordingly, Cremona, a town located in Northern Italy, made the newspaper headlines with a match-fixing scandal in the last days of May 2012, just before the European championship tournament. Stefano Mauiri, the captain of Lazio, was arrested with 13 other people who played roles in this scandal ("Italy raided," 2012). The Camorra and 'Ndrangheta Mafia syndicates were also actively involved in match fixing (Ambivero, 2010). It is argued that at least 30 mafia clans in Italy infiltrated football teams and other sports and used match fixing for money laundering (Poto, 2010). It is much easier to penetrate the soccer clubs in Serie B or C rather than a club in Serie A, as lower clubs may suffer from financial difficulties and the players could be more prone to collaborate with the mafiosi. Anti-Mafia magistrate Piero Grosso states: "Above all, it is the need for local consensus which attracts them to football, because it gives them power, which in turn becomes useful at election time." In addition, Grosso gave an example of the relationship that was between the Calabrian Mafia and a local club. He claims: "It turns out that one member of the Pesce clan from Rosarno was signed by Cittanova…At that point, who would have the nerve to tell him to sit on the bench for a game? On the contrary, this guy ended as both captain and owner of the team. A few months ago, however, the club was closed down because of [infiltration by the Calabrian Mafia]" (Agnew, 2011).

The robust interaction between the sports and crime has common features and similarities in terms of its method/practice and goal of the planned act in the national and international games. However, I argue that Italian case is different from the other countries and examples of Mafia-sports nexus. First, the Italian mafia groups have institutionalized and created its own social and political networks, which are influential to control the certain territories in the country. Admittedly, the other organized crime groups are active in match-fixing from Russia to China and from Mexico to Columbia. However, their territorial power is not as strong as the Italian mafia groups, which are intensely entrenched in their own territories. Most centrally, the reason behind such intervention of the organized crime groups in those countries stems from the incentives for money laundering or increasing its profit margin. These are the motives that lure the Italian mafia groups as well. However, different from other organized crime groups and match-fixing reasons, Italian mafiosi seek to purchase local teams because this is a less profitable method of investment. Nevertheless, this strategic decision opens new channels to attain more power for the Mafioso because, in doing so, the Mafioso publicizes his name as a significant figure in that small commune/town. Furthermore, the Mafioso gains a high social status as a patron of the local sports team. All these efforts help him to send the signal to the local people that he ratifies his existence on that territory as a grandiose and uncontested image. Hill (2008) presents a more optimistic picture for the amateur teams, which are less highly targeted by organized crime groups, in his famous book on sport fixing and organized crime. Unfortunately, different from Hill, Italian mafia groups' infringement upon the local and amateur sports teams dampens our optimism.

The interests of the Italian mafia syndicates in their territories make sports an ideal venue for concealing illicit activities and increasing its power. This power gains more importance when the Mafioso is visible in the public through infiltrating sports or purchasing sport clubs. Don Luigi Ciotti, the president of Libera, remarked that the mafia bosses choose to invest primarily in small teams that play in Serie B or Serie C because they consider this investment a type of prestige and power in the eyes of the local people. Above all, the intervention of the Mafioso in local sports demonstrates his desire to control the territory as a recognized person in those small towns (Picitto, 2010). Furthermore, Ciotti continues that, today, around twenty percent of Italian sports have been surrounded and infiltrated by the Mafia. More to the point, such infiltration by the mafiosi into the sports in small Italian towns increases its public visibility (Foti, 2010). Hence, the public visibility of the mafiosi forces the local people to obey the code of silence and not to collaborate with the state simultaneously. Furthermore, investment in sports by the mafia groups ensures a certain prestige to the mafiosi while making profits from the sports at the same time. As delineated above, if we read the Putnam's theoretical codes from the perspective of Mafia, purchasing sport clubs seem to be a "civic method" that accumulates the social capital of the mafia groups and increase its entrenchment in wider society enormously. The anti-Mafia prosecutor, Antonio Ingroia, reports that the whole football business is under the threat of mafia infiltration in Italy (Donovan and Rotondi, 2012), and the soccer fixing market draws attention to the mafia groups because of its annual $90 billion value in the world, according to the World Lottery Association (Hughes, 2012). On May 28, 2012, the Italian prosecutor from Cremona, Roberto Di Martino, claimed that each player who helped the match fixing received 600,000 euros in the soccer match between Lecce and Lazio played in May 2012. He stated further, "The next day, Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti confessed dramatically that he sometimes wished Italian professional soccer games were banned for a few years over repeated cases of corruption, match fixing and fan violence. 'That could benefit the maturation of us Italian citizens'" (Donovan and Rotondi, 2012). Therefore, the Mafioso's acquiescence has been forced upon the local people by asking for obedience to the code of silence, payment of extortion money, collaboration with the Mafiosi, which maintain the social order of the Mafia. In essence, the mafia groups benefit from the sport's power and so achieves to be influential over the majority. Thereof, the Mafia-sports nexus facilitates the accumulation of code of silence and paves the way for other illicit activities such as drug trafficking and extortion, which bring more profits to the mafias.

Two prominent scholars on the history of sports in modern Italy, Foot (2006) and Martin (2011), both note a peculiar relationship between sports and politics from the Mussolini era to Berlusconi, so much so that sports means more than a game in Italy. Hence, the power struggle, political ideology, business, and corruption have always found a milieu in Italian sports as the culture blended with nepotism makes Italy an appropriate country where *"raccomandazione"* (recommendation) counts and individuals ask often essential help (Martin, 2011, p. 232). Furthermore, Vialli and Marcotti (2007) stress the peculiarity of Italian football and how it differs from English football, taking into account the cultural and political context, with the former being like a "job" while the latter is more like a "game". However, it is worth noting that organized crime infiltration of sports in England is not a secret, even if it is less prevalent than in Italy (Johnson, 2006). Historically, sports in Italian

society have a brooding atmosphere, along with violence, match fixing, corruption, and money laundering that defy the moral codes of sports to attain a better society. Finally, we must address the flexibility of the mafia groups in adapting to new markets and political and social changes easily. Italian anti-Mafia prosecutor Ingoria underscored this fact dramatically: "When organized crime becomes so important to markets, it often becomes easier to adapt to it instead of chasing it. That happens for soccer, politics, tax evasion—it's part of our country's nature" (Donovan and Rotondi, 2012). Thus, using sports as a tool to fight the Mafia, the hardest problem of the country, becomes more complicated if not unfeasible.

All in all, sports offer multifunctional economic, social and cultural spheres for the mafias to ensure its market stability, to extend its power and disable counter public culture. Put another way, infiltration to the sports is a strategic decision as its perpetual benefits greatly outweigh less risky costs. Nevertheless, other organized crime groups, match-fixing and corruption cases have common point of profit making with the Italian mafia groups. The case of the Italian mafias preserves its unique statue in the sociology of sport and crime because there is no other (criminal) organization that has so much attached to its local territory and use sports as its backyard to gain a social prestige by becoming the patron of the local soccer clubs and increase its illicit economic activities in more profitable sectors. This dual role of sports demystifies another fact that the power of the Italian mafia groups is based on its territorial roots and local authority, which has a strong power in shaping the Mafiosi culture.

Using Sports Against the Mafia

In this section, I discuss examples that use sports as crime-prevention policy and present the findings of the policy analysis concerning Libera Sport activities in Italy. Sports have been widely used as a policy tool in crime prevention. For instance, Carmichael (2008) shows how sports acts as a complementary tool for crime prevention in midnight basketball programs for African American Youth in Kansas City, Missouri, and running programs in Alexandria, Virginia, for young women. These programs helped to decrease crime by "keeping young people busy and out of trouble, increasing feeling of connectedness, self-esteem, developing cognitive competencies and decision making skills, providing positive role models and employment opportunities." Particularly, involvement of nontraditional stakeholders, such as local police, municipal social service department, housing agencies, in the design and implementation of these programs are highly suggested. In the line of similar missions, Midnight basketball leagues aimed to reduce crime by organizing basketball sports during the nights and early mornings across the USA when the crime rate was quite high. The program has achieved a certain level of success especially by addressing "poor inner-city youth and young men of color" so the program took the attention of the media and public with its low cost but influential impact on reducing crime. However, it was criticized that the attention of the participants to the educational or political discussions during the breaks was relatively low and the effectiveness of the programs must be questioned, as it is an "immediate, practical response to a perceived social problem" (Hartmann, 2001, p. 353).

Similar results in crime reduction because of midnight basketball programs were found by Hartmann (2001). Prominent scholars on positivist criminology,

Hirschi (1969), Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990), and Gottfredson (2001), stressed the importance of social cohesion. Sports' social role in ensuring crime reduction makes leisure and sports activities as significant crime prevention tools (Schafer, 1969). This argument was echoed in other studies on the power of sports in decreasing delinquency. For instance, the panel data set for 20 regions in Italy between 1997 and 2003 indicated the relationship between crime and sports participation. It was found that "(i) there is a robust negative association between sport participation and property crime; (ii) there is a robust negative association between sport participation and juvenile crime; and (iii) there is a positive association between sport participation and violent crime, but it is only weakly significant" (Caruso, 2010, p. 1). However, Coalter (1988) and Utting (1996) claimed that sports is not always a sphere, which fosters social order and a healthy social behavior, especially among young people, because sport increases tension and violence among youth. Furthermore, Robins (1990) argued that there is no solid evidence concerning sports' effect on increasing juvenile delinquency. In addition, the work of Hartmann and Mossoglia (2007) demonstrated that sports do not always help to prevent all types of crimes. Specifically, the researchers found that "shoplifting decreases with sports participation, while drunken driving increases" (485). Thus, Hartmann and Mossoglia (2007) argued that, if a sport is to be used for crime prevention, the type of crime must be determined when selecting the sport.

Sports wield enormous power through either giving an impetus for deviant social behaviors or providing a public sphere to prevent the crime. In this respect, sport bestows a certain level of socialization. More to the point, if the sport is used effectively, it serves to realize the goal of the one who practices it or intervenes in sports. Eventually, the sport offers lucrative opportunities to commit crime and increase illicit profit as it occurs in the Mafia-sports nexus or, conversely, the sport imbibes a strong civic consciousness and leads to the changes in social behavior of the individuals to fight the crime. Libera Sport took the second road by benefiting from the power of sports to erase the Mafiosi culture. In this respect, the crucial question is concerning the categorization of the sport types that are used by Libera Sport. First, we must explain the perception of the organization in relation to what they mean by sports and sport activities to devise a sufficient response to this question. Libera Sport uses sport as an impactful anti-Mafia tool and even changes the rules of a game to maximize the advantage of sports to create the desired personal trait. In this sense, the competitive team and popular sports, such as football or basketball, are particularly used by Libera Sport as these sport types are more practiced in the country. Further, competitive team and popular sports help increasing a positive socialization, discarding former undesired behavior patterns and reflexes, developing the attitude of respect for the rival, defying egoism and gaining the values that outweigh losing a game with dignity rather than winning it without dignity. This is the reason that the sport types that are individually practiced like surfing, shooting or golf are not primarily listed in sport programs of Libera Sport as it is more challenging to transfer the values that are important to Libera Sport by practicing those individual sports. However, Libera Sports rarely practices an individual sport if only it is practiced as a group to increase the collectivity and sense of social integrity of their community and to develop positive socialization. For instance, Libera Sports organizes jogging or walking activities, which are practiced only as a group. Using sports against it's another facet that provides

abundant and sustainable resources for committing crime does not automatically prevent the crime or Mafiosi culture but makes a significant contribution to this ideal. Analyzing the findings of this contribution will deepen my arguments, which will be presented hereafter in this section.

Sport is operative in four primary types of activities of Libera Sport. The first activity is sports in which different type of activities are organized from football to basketball and jogging to running as groups but the rules are different from the usual games with making a foul possibly resulting in disqualification from the game or playing in a fair manner may result in extra points. The second activity is education. Libera Sport organizes events to educate people about the importance of sports both physically, in having healthy bodies, and ethically, in developing the moral codes included in the nature of sports, such as self-discipline, responsibility, self-control, a rule of law, and goal setting. The third activity is protest, in which victims of the mafias are memorialized by protesting and remembering the victims either by gathering in the street or organizing musical events after the sport activities. The last activity is disseminating information. Libera Sport informs the public when they organize visits to the cities and small towns concerning the mafia's infiltration into the local sport teams and its power in other sectors of those places. The information is spread through seminars that are open to the public and the posters on the city walls help to increase the public visibility of Libera Sport. Dissemination of the information gives the signals to the local people that they are not alone against the mafiosi.

Our findings are divided as follows. The first part focuses on geographic distribution of Libera Sport activities, the second part examines the target population of Libera Sport, and the last part investigates the types of policies that are applies to achieve the goals of the organization. For the first part, most of the activities (43,99%) of Libera Sport were conducted in Central Italy, with Northern and Southern Italy following at 29,32% and 26,65%, respectively. This distribution demonstrates that the partners and collaborators of Libera Sport in Central Italy are more active. Another striking finding is concerning the most used activity, which was the "information", at 36,66% (see Table 1). Finally, the four main types of activities in Southern Italy were distributed relatively evenly, as opposed to those in the Central and Northern regions. Thus, sports activities, education, protest, and information are all used in the South without one type of activity favored over the others. This equal distribution of activities in Southern Italy is important in terms of the recent report of *Italian Statistical Abstracts* (2011), which indicates a dramatic disinterest in the Southern part of Italy concerning sports, in comparison with both Central and Northern Italy. The people who participate in sports consistently over the age of 3 represent only 15,2% in the South, whereas they comprise 26,6% in the North. More alarmingly, 53,1% have never practiced sports in Southern Italy, and this level is lower in Northern Italy at 29,4% (Figure 1).

Even though, as I noted above, Southern Italy is the most notorious region concerning the traditional entrenchment of the Mafia, I found that the policies of Libera Sport occur mostly in Central Italy. There are three main reasons behind this outcome. The headquarter of Libera Sport is located in Rome, Central Italy. The close proximity of the headquarter to its branches in the same region, prominently in Lazio and Umbria, offers flexible coordination of the events and provides frequent cooperation with the headquarter to organize many events in Rome. The second

Table 1   Activities of Libera Sport According to Geographic Location, Target Group, and Goals.

		Activities of Libera Sport			
		Sports activities	Education	Protest	Information
Location	Northern Italy 29,32%	5,33%	10,66%	1,33%	12%
	Central Italy 43,99%	9,33%	14,66%	4%	16%
	Southern Italy 26,65%	9,33%	6,66%	4%	8,66%
Target group	Secondary, high school and university students 30,52%	5,33%	12,55%	1,65%	10,99%
	The whole population 69,42%	18,66%	19,43%	7,66%	23,67%
The goal of activities	Constructing a belief system 33,99%	6,33%	14,33%	1,33%	12%
	Explanation of constructed beliefs by remembering the victims 18,66%	4%	3,33%	3,33%	8%
	Changing perceptions about the mafia 24,66%	5,33%	8%	3%	8,33%
	Creating a set of values and mores 22,65%	8,33%	6,33%	1,66%	6,33%

reason is that the branches of Libera Sport in Central Italy and the people who work in those branches are relatively more active than the Southern and Northern Italian regions so this increases the number of the activities that are organized by the branches of Libera Sport, which located in Central Italy. Finally, the municipality of Rome is more prone to provide logistic support and financial resources than the other municipalities. As a result, it leads to the increase in the number of activities of Libera Sport in Central Italy. These reasons signify that the main reasons in focusing on Central Italy stem from organizational, financial, and logistic reasons rather than the differentiation of the Mafias' power among three regions or the civic engagement capacity of the regions. This study categorizes the activities of Libera Sport for each region so the facts about the distribution of those activities

North ☐ (green)   Center ☐   Mezzogiorno/ South and islands ☐ (red)
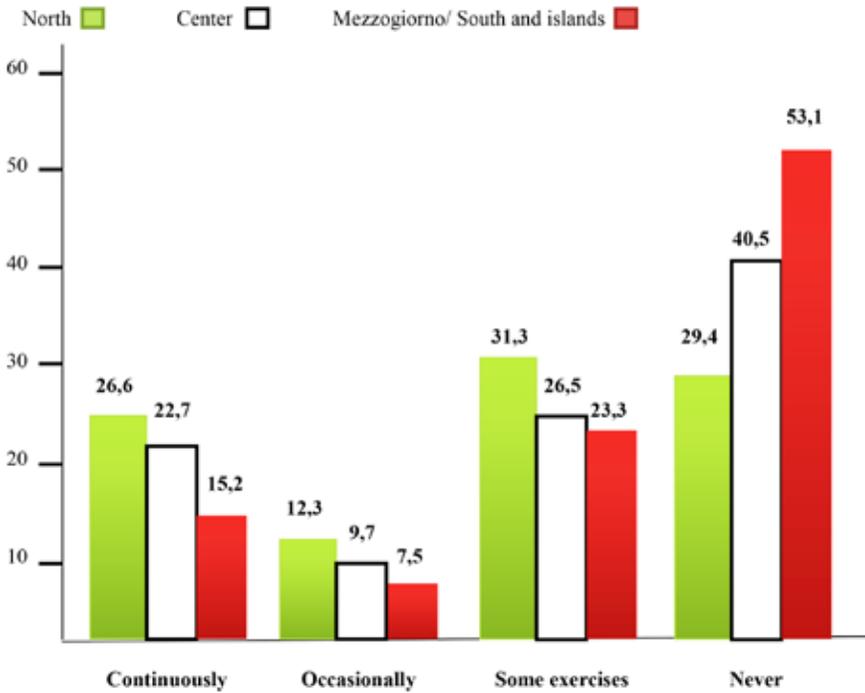
Note. The data were derived from the *Italian Statistical Abstract* 2011, 176.

Figure 1 — People aged 3 and over by sport practice and geographic area. *Note.* The data were derived from the *Italian Statistical Abstract* 2011, 176.

are not known by Libera Sport. As the findings suggest, the intensification of the activities in Southern Italy must be fostered by Libera Sport. Moreover, the state based policies must be applied to increase the participation in sports while communicating the benefits of sports as the participation in sports in Southern regions shows a dramatic low number when it is compared with Central and Southern Italy.

Furthermore, 30,53% of the policies were used specifically for secondary, high school, and university students, with education and information having the highest ratio at 12,55% and 10,99%, respectively. This result confirms that educating students and informing them about the mafia constitute significant parts of the policies (see Table 1). In doing so, the activities of Libera Sport aim not only to practice sports but also to establish the anti-Mafia culture through educating and training students. For instance, Libera Sport seeks to collaborate with state institutions to reach students from four different regions of the country: one region in the North (Piedmont), two in the South (Apuglia and Sicily), and one in the center (Lazio). Physical activities have an effect on political memory as well (Thorpe, 2010). These activities of Libera Sport bring students together to construct their own futures by remembering the tragic past of the Mafia and practicing sports at

the same time. Beutler (2008, p. 368) writes of the significance of collaboration among stakeholders to combat social problems and attain goals through sports. Such collaboration between Libera Sport and the state extends the applicability of its projects and enables to reach more students. As De Benedittis says:

> We organize together with the Corpo Forestale dello Stato, which is in charge of protecting the environment. They have very good sports groups, so we decided to collaborate with them. Students from four regions in Italy joined: Piedmont, Apuglia, Sicilia, and Lazio. We arranged educational activities and running competition and cross-boarding. We hold these competitions on confiscated goods—lands—because it is a very strong sign that we demonstrate they are running and stumping on the land. Once upon a time those lands were the illegal properties of the organized crimes but not anymore.[5]

This statement reveals how sports are used to cope with the tragic history of the country through concrete actions taken by young people and students who are the next generations and struggling to practice sports on the confiscated lands that once belonged to the mafia groups.

Finally, when each of the four activities was categorized according to prioritized goals, it was found that constructing a belief system against the Mafia has the largest percentage at 33,99%, and this goal is attained by education (14,33%). Constructing a belief system is the foundation for the other three goals: explaining the constructed belief system through remembering victims, changing the perception of the Mafia, and creating a set of values and mores. Thus, a belief system with training activities addressing the ethics of sport, discipline, active citizenship, and a culture of lawfulness becomes the most significant part of the work of Libera Sport (see Table 1).

Alt (1983) argues that "Sport, in its dramatisation of cultural values and norms, is both a cause and effect of the symbolic language of individual motivation and social justice. This model of sport can be developed through the concepts of ritual and public" (p. 93). In addition to the importance of developing rituals and public, Hartmann (2003) stresses the importance of sports-based intervention programs and its functionality if those programs are coupled with nonsport policies to attain the goal of social intervention. The quest for a culture of lawfulness by Libera Sport includes transitions from the Mafia's dominance to the rule of law and requires social intervention as well as ethnographically evolved policies that use sports to develop rituals and the public as a primary complementary anti-Mafia tool, in addition to educating, protesting, and informing activities. The activities and policies of Libera Sport are based on ethnographic works not neglecting the local situation of the regions and towns where the events or activities occur. In this sense, two main examples need to be examined for this kind of social intervention. The first example is from Scampia, a small town close to Naples. Libera Sport takes radical initiatives by demonstrating in small towns in Southern Italy. Scampia is infamous in the media with the power of the Di Laura clan and the mafia wars. Libera Sport and its volunteers came from other cities of Italy and organized a football tournament in the center of the town on June, 1–3 2012.

Especially in Southern Italy, acquiring a Mafioso-type character for a child starts at school where, instead of merit, the recommendation culture and "friends of friends" mentality foster a Mafioso character that pushes young people to participate

in a mafia family. The report of the Sos Impresa (2010, p. 2) highlights the danger faced by the parents of these children in being auxiliary forces by supporting the Mafiosi culture to enable materialistic benefits for their sons or daughters and to give them a safer future by ignoring any ethical principles. At first glance, the materialist benefits, which are provided by the Mafiosi to its members, could be grasped as positive side effects of the mafia. However, its long-term harms absolutely outweigh the short-term benefits. The relationship between the Mafia and its members is like a catastrophic bond between heroin and its victims who are addicted to it; first, its benefits help you relax and relieve your stress. But, in the long term, its harms deteriorate your life, which is totally subjugated by heroin. This allegory actually reflects the power of the mafia, which is totalitarian by its very nature on the one hand and it leads to demise of the consciousness process of its members on the other. This is the reason that its hegemonic and totalitarian power could only be challenged by another hegemonic power, which must be enough strong to be a pernicious force against the Mafiosi culture and to embrace totally opposite values of the Mafiosi culture at the same time. In this sense, practicing sports gains more importance in defying the Mafioso-type mentality through creating a new hegemonic culture to dominate the social landscapes of the Mafia by its power that are embodied in the rule of law, public ethics, altruism, culture of lawfulness and the belief in the idea of social change from the bottom.

The second example of ethnographically evolved social-intervention policy occurred in Rizzicioni, Calabria, where the Calabrian Mafia 'Ndrangeheta is located. The city council of Rizzicioni was dissolved due to 'Ndrangeheta's infiltration in 2001. The land of the Crea Mafia clan was confiscated to reuse the land as a soccer field, which was opened two times in 2003 and 2007. However, the local people never attempted to use the field due to intimidation and retaliation by the local mafiosi. The president of Libera, Don Luigi Ciotti, had to make a strong attack to eliminate the Mafia fear, so he decided to call the manager of the Italian National Soccer team, Cesare Prandelli, to convince him that such a fear can be destroyed easily if the use of the land was inaugurated by having the Italian National Football team work out in the soccer field. Prandelli immediately accepted the proposal and, after five months, on November 13, 2011, the Italian National Soccer team arrived in Rizzicioni to work out (Ceniti, 2012). This remarkable date was a strong signal not only to the mafiosi but also to the local people as it conveyed that the local people were not left alone at the hands of the mafiosi. The famous goalkeeper of the team, Buffon, claimed on the same day, "What took to the pitch were the values of freedom: I think the key to fighting crime in these situations is to know the history of each town or city, in order to manage to stir the conscience" (Pratesi, 2011).

According to Eurispes (2012), distrust in institutions is very high among 74,6% of young people (25–34 age) in Italy. In line with this information, crime becomes a source of "normalization of pathology" in the subculture where it is committed. In this context, four main policies—sports activities, education, protest, and information—serve to restore the trust of young people and prevent the normalization of pathology by creating a "publicly informative sociology" (Atkinson and Young, 2008, p. 9, 231). Sutton-Smith 1997) asserted that play may symbolize two values: it may be "a mode of cultural origination, humanization, catharsis, socialization" or "power seeking, domination, hegemony, disorder, inversion and resistance" (p. 82).

In this context, Libera Sport plays a significant role in the public space of sports as a cultural reformist by using sports as a "mode of cultural origination, humanization, catharsis and socialization". However, in terms of Sutton-Simith's argument, part of the second value has been addressed by Libera Sport as well. These values of "power seeking, domination, hegemony and resistance" function like tools to establish the first type of values. I argue that, if a sports activity or organization seeks a sea-change to establish a new social order by fighting against its antagonist, the power, domination, and hegemony become the goals of the organization rather than the values that must be attained, as in the case of Libera Sport.

Establishing a New Cultural Hegemony in the Clash of Habitus

On the one hand, the cultural hegemony concept of Antonio Gramsci sheds light on the Mafia's dominance and the resistance of the anti-Mafia movement, Libera Sport. On the other hand, Pierre Bourdieu's habitus frame demonstrates how two cultural hegemony lines of Gramsci concerning the Mafia and anti-Mafia movement create a clash of habitus. One of the most renowned Italian communists and political and cultural theorists of the twentieth century, Gramsci has restructured the theory of Marx by examining why the communist ideology of Marx failed at the beginning of the twentieth century. His new perspective was under the great influence of culture, which teased out the relationship between power and society by putting culture in the center of this discussion. Gramsci argued that multiple and diverse cultures in the society can be manipulated and controlled under one dominant culture, a hegemonic culture, through imposing the *beliefs*, *explanations*, *perceptions*, *values*, and *mores* of that hegemonic culture and social class. The hegemonic power applies these tools to establish its own rule in society by gaining the consent of the people (Gramsci, 1971). Gramsci's hegemonic culture creates an illusory atmosphere in society through various methods, creating a belief system, explaining those beliefs, and constructing perceptions, values, and mores to establish its social and cultural model and preserve its status quo.

The appearance of the mafiosi culture was not so different from the story of the emergence and consolidation of cultural hegemony of the capitalist system in terms of its multilayered evolution process. At this point, it is important to note that the survival of the Mafia depends on the structure of its cultural hegemony. As Gramsci pointed out, the structure is dependent on the (1) beliefs, (2) explanations, (3) perceptions, (4) values, and (5) mores of its system, which have provided the environment in which the mafiosi construct its social and hierarchical system (loose or strict) or reconstructs it when it is damaged. First, the mafiosi have created a belief system by determining certain rules and codes. Second, the mafias explained and emphasized its benefits for the local people with whom they live in the same territories. The explanation of its belief system has come in many guises, such as lending money, punishing the ones who violate the code of silence, and creating a set of values that cause one to be called "man of honor". Third, during this process in the late nineteenth century, the social and economic situation in Southern Italy was such that the corruption of politicians, disinterest of the state in the region and inexistence of a rule of law, which determined the perception of the mafiosi as the *primus inter pares* at most, and the visible sole authority at least. Thus, constructing

the values and mores has not been difficult for the mafiosi. Their values and mores have much been transformed and coupled with a culture of egoism, violence, vendetta, illegality, nepotism and patronage, threat, and injustice. All these features have structured the cultural hegemony of the Mafia and have evolved throughout its history by creating a fallacious myth.

Gramsci underlines the struggle of political forces to conserve the existing system, just as the efforts of the mafia groups and their collaborators to establish a political-criminal nexus. Gramsci (1971) adds that "these incessant and persistent efforts form the terrain of the 'conjunctural' and it is upon this terrain that the forces of opposition organise" (189). Thanks to the efforts of the Italian civil society, it managed to be an intense force of opposition against the mafias beginning in the 1990s. In our case study, Libera Sport passionately fights against the cultural hegemony of the mafias through its various events, which are categorized as (1) sports activities, (2) education, (3) protest, and (4) information. I argue that the aim of Libera Sport is to create a countercultural hegemony to oppose the Mafia's cultural hegemony by using sports as a policy tool. Specifically, the countercultural hegemony of Libera Sport hinges on creating a belief system, explaining it through policies and activities, changing perceptions about the Mafia, and finally, seeding a new set of values and mores echoed in a culture of lawfulness, responsible and active citizenship, meritocracy, honesty, discipline, and resistance. The struggle of Libera Sport falls within the scope of the Gramscian ideal society, which rises on the shoulders of an "intellectualized" civil society activated from the bottom to attain a "state without state", an "ethical state" and a "regulated society" (Adamson, 1980, p. 164–168). However, this approach of Gramsci was found too "elitist" (Harris, 1992, p. 198). In fact, I argue that the activists of Libera Sport demonstrate a high civic and elite manner without being elitist to intellectualize Italian society with their efforts through sports. Contrary to Harris' argument, the major part of the activists at Libera Sport is middle or lower class participants. A huge number of the activists are even the students and young people.

This particularity of the social class division alerts us to examine the social class factor and its relation with anti-Mafia movement. The focus of class conflicts in the works of Karl Marx influenced many scholars in the sociology of sport to bring new contributions to this field. Bourdieu (1978; 1984) established a strong relationship between social class and high culture as two phenomena complement each other in their harmonious social environment supported by dominant class and its cultural repertoire. Loy et al. (1976), Jarvie and Maguire (1994), Eitzen (1996), Coakley (1998) and Gruneau (1999) highlighted similar arguments that a high social class is the most advantageous one in society as its social domination is widespread and overwhelmingly unchallenging. Accordingly, Wilson (2002) contributed to the social class and sport involvement relationship by showing that cultural capital is more determinative than economic capital as the former one is not interested in "prole sports". Erickson (1996) added that cultural varieties must be taken in account along with the impact of social networks and personal relationships before making certain arguments concerning the social class and culture. These studies have structured and bridged social class framework and sociology of sport but more importantly have reconstructed symbols and meanings in the sociology of sport to understand the stable and functional fabrics of the society, which were simultaneously the leitmotivs of Parsons' studies (1969; 1978).

Socioeconomic background, education level, age and gender are popular variables in the categorization of the social class. Conversely, these variables lose its significance for Libera Sport for its target population. Nevertheless, Libera Sport organizes particular sportive events for the young generation, what is at issue for the organization is the participation of the citizens to the lines of Libera Sport to the utmost degree without considering the participants' social class background. Based on my observations, I claim that there are two different types of classifications concerning the social background of the participants. First, majority of the participants come from either middle or lower social class. Second, excluding social class factor, all participants have a certain level of self-consciousness, moral insight and desire for a social struggle against the Mafia even if they belong to a high social class. Such a peculiar feature brings us to the relations between class consciousness and power. It can serve well to argue that social class factor has less significance than (moral) consciousness factor to Libera Sport because the latter precipitates the participants to take action against the Mafia by registering as a member of a civil society that has committed itself to defeat the Mafia and to eliminate the Mafiosi culture. Put simply, moral consciousness plays the determinant role in deciding to be a volunteer and participant of Libera Sport so if a person comes from a middle or lower social class, this does not signify that the same person will take action against the Mafia per se. However, this must not repel us to isolate neither the social class factor of Marx nor the significance of Gramsci's cultural approach from anti-Mafia movement. Perhaps even more notably, if we take in account sociological endeavors and cultural struggle of Libera Sport, social class has a less apparent but more crucial role because this is the social class division and current social order that empower the Mafia and alter it to an uncontested and dominant agency in society. Thereby, the mafias attain more power through sports in the rural areas and in its own territorial basement as established hegemonic cooperation of the political class.

These two sides of the social class analyses take us to the next argument that social class division is not the main reason to be an activist against the Mafia, but it is the key impelling factor, which both empowers the Mafia at the institutional level and activates the mechanism of moral consciousness to resist and take action against the Mafia. An activist who has a middle or low social class background is more vulnerable to the risks posed by the Mafia and its perilous impact. Yet, this is not enough to participate to the lines of the anti-Mafia movement as the majority of the middle or low social class Italian fellows have not participated in the anti-Mafia movement. What is more, there is a need to embrace a civic and social consciousness, a belief based on the moral concerns of Catholicism or a secular commitment with the values of Humanism. All these different motives are functionalized to make the same public and cultural idealism come true with the contribution of diverse activists under the umbrella of anti-Mafia movement. Therefore, a social class factor turns to be an "impelling factor" by constituting the materialist basement of the activists who construe and give a meaning to their participation against the Mafia through taking actions with a civic and social consciousness, the principles of morality and ethics originated from Catholicism or from the Humanist illumination of the secularism. McDonald (2009) raises an intriguing remark, by arguing that the unchangeable system of capitalism must be challenged through revolutionary attempts of sports. Shifting from this overemphasized call for a revolution, I embrace a less idealistic but more realistic argument by claiming that the society benefits more if the sport

is used against the current capital system and social order and its side effects like the mafia. However, we must seek reformation of the system rather than a revolution to maximize the benefits of sport. Yet, we must not undermine the potential role of sports in creating new political, social and cultural spectrums, which are indispensable necessities to determine the power line of the social system and to defy its hegemony. Thus, if I return to the concept of Gramsci, Libera Sport and its activists endeavor to attain an ethical state and a regulated society in which the social class factor influences the moral consciousness to be an activist and so become conducive to construct the belief system of the organization.

If we turn to Pierre Bourdieu's approach to sports and its relation to the public, it serves well to argue that his analyses are both critical and utilitarian. Bourdieu (1998) discusses the danger of commercialization in sports in terms of a Trojan horse undermining a sport's role as a public service and civic education while he attributes certain positive values to sports. As I delineated above, there is a poisonous relationship between sports and the Mafia; however, Libera Sports stands as an example of how society can benefit from sports in a country where crime and a culture of illegality are normalized as pathological phenomena. In this sense, after examining the cultural hegemony of Gramsci, integrating the habitus notion of Bourdieu into sports offers a new perspective to our discussion.

The habitus notion of Bourdieu presents a sociocultural spectrum in observing the interaction of symbols, cultural and economic perceptions, and interaction of the diverse social forces. Bourdieu argues that "collective mobilization cannot succeed without a minimum of concordance between the habitus of mobilizing agents (e.g., prophet, party leader, etc.)" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 80). Moreover, Bourdieu claims that "one of the functions of habitus is to account for style unity, which unites both the practices and goods of a singular agent and a class of agents" (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 15). Therefore, the unity and functionality of the habitus are significant resources for succeeding in collective mobilization and attaining goals. Habitus not only offers a type of unity but also differentiates between the social and cultural poles structured by the perceptions of different agents. "Habitus makes different differences. They implement distinctions between what is good and bad, between what is right and wrong. Thus, the same behavior even the same good can appear distinguished to one person, pretentious to someone else, and cheap or showy to yet another" (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 17). The habitus notion certainly applies in this discussion in terms of two different poles and antagonists taking their positions, each in their own habitus formulated through the determinants of the cultural hegemony of each agent: the beliefs, explanations, perceptions, values, and mores of both the Mafia and anti-Mafia movement, Libera Sport.

I use the habitus framework and divide it into four parts. (1) *Nonidentified and nonshared habitus*, (2) *identified and nonshared habitus*, (3) *shared and noninteractive habitus*, (4) *shared and interactive habitus*. After the fourth step, the clash of habitus occurs and soars. Private and family life is the main habitus in the first and second habitus so there is no shared habitus in the first step. However, different from the first step, there is an identification process in the second habitus where both the Mafiosi and their supporters on the one side and the members of the anti-Mafia movement on the other identify themselves in line with their perceptions about the Mafia either positively or negatively. Hence, this identification offers them a limited interaction around their own social environment. After each of the agencies

has certain perceptions concerning the Mafia, they may come together in the same public spheres so they share the same habitus per se such as the school, hospital, bar, restaurant, stadium, terrain or piazza (town square). However, both the members of the Mafia and anti-Mafia movement do not identify themselves regarding their positions about the Mafia phenomena at the third habitus so there is no interaction between two social poles at the public level. In other words, the existence of two antagonists in the same public is not sufficient for the clash of habitus, which is called *shared and noninteractive habitus*. In this vein, the emergence of clash of habitus depends on the direct interactions of the adversarial powers and with the completion of the identification process. Finally, before the last step, the clash of habitus, there is shared and interactive habitus where both the Mafia and anti-Mafia movement starts to take their positions explicitly in the same public sphere, habitus. For instance, a person from the anti-Mafia campaign may protest the Mafia publicly while the members of the Mafia in the same habitus observe such a protest but do not enter into direct interaction with the members of the anti-Mafia movement. There are concrete actions of the each agency in this step. Yet, there is a public interaction but not a direct interaction between two adverse powers that belong to these two social poles. If those actions of the adverse powers are accumulated at the same time span and public spaces, the direct interaction between the Mafia and anti-Mafia movement agencies starts through which the clash of habitus is established. In parallel with increasing contrary actions in the same-shared habitus, the level of tension accelerates. This is the sphere and critical moment when the clash of habitus soars (see Figure 2).The implicit social class impact over the anti-Mafia movement embarks a transition from orthodox definition to an idealized version of "community".

The important work of Ingham and McDonald (2003) theorized the building of "community/communitas" in which the influence of symbols—representations— were presented as a source of social bonding that induces interactions, rituals, celebration and identity recognition. In this sense, Libera Sport is a sui generis case study in the sociology of sport because it comes in various guises either as a "community" of moral entrepreneur or as a cultural reformer so its fight against the Mafia reshapes our knowledge in political identity, resistance/hegemony dichotomy, social transformation and cultural studies. Tellingly, Libera Sport offers a political identity to its members by remaining apolitical as an institution. The organization deems important to demonstrate resistance against the Mafia explicitly in the public spaces through sports. Thus, all sport organizations, social protests and the events of Libera Sport aim to lead a social transformation in the society while reproducing new symbols, values, rituals and meanings in each of its activity. Correspondingly, this is the point that explains how and when the clash of habitus, the last step, between two communities, the Mafia and anti-Mafia movement, occurs, triggers the moments of conflict and prompts the evolution of a social change.

More to the point, after establishing a set of beliefs and reifying and elaborating those beliefs with explanations, two antagonists—the Mafia and anti-Mafia movement—enter an area of dominance and struggling to establish its own habitus over the other when the accumulation of actions, which I argue are the "clash of habitus," emerges and soars during this process. The clash of habitus creates hybrid public spaces where two adverse powers are struggling on the same habitus and at the same time to deconstruct the values of the Other without mediation. The clash of habitus is at issue, especially when each agent's actions occur, starting after the
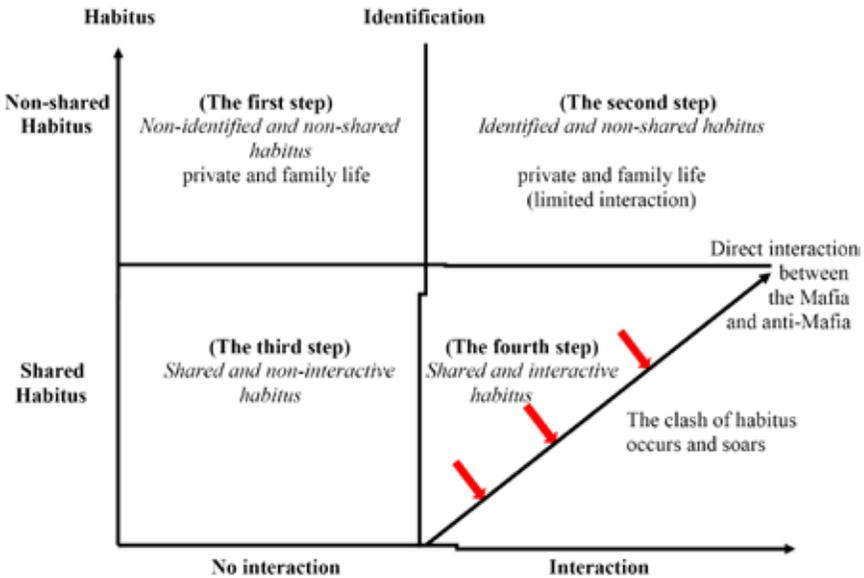
Figure 2 — The evolution of the clash of habitus in four steps through using the variables of habitus, identification and interaction for classification.

"explanations" level; continues to be active during the "perceptions" level; and finalizes before the values and mores of the victorious agent are established in the cultural hegemony line of Gramsci. In other words, we observe the fight—and the clash of habitus—in the actions of the agents that occur at the same time and its acceleration in the same-shared habitus (see Figure 3). For instance, while Libera Sport plays football on the confiscated mafia land in Rizzicioni, the mafiosi use violence or demand *pizzo* from the shopkeepers of Rizzicioni. Thus, maintaining the clash of habitus depends on the consistent and increasing actions -policies- of Libera Sport, which must be persisted continuously.

If I substantiate the argument, the clash of habitus emerges when an activist of Libera Sport puts up an anti-Mafia poster on the wall next to a shop whose owner pays extortion money to the mafia regularly. What is more, if the same activist enters that shop and distributes a campaign card to alert the shopkeeper not to pay extortion money to the mafia and invites him or her to Libera Sport, then the clash of habitus is established and in the case that direct interaction between the Mafia and anti-Mafia movement the level of tension at the clash of habitus starts increasing. The fruitful outcome against the Mafia can be attained in the inclusion of the shopkeeper to the lines of Libera Sport, which will simultaneously accumulate the cultural capital of Libera Sport. In contrast, if the shopkeeper rejects the cooperation with the activist and shares such information with the local mafiosi, then the conflict between the activist and mafiosi sharpens so eventually the clash of habitus expands with a decrease in the cultural capital of Libera Sports and an increase in the Mafia's cultural capital.
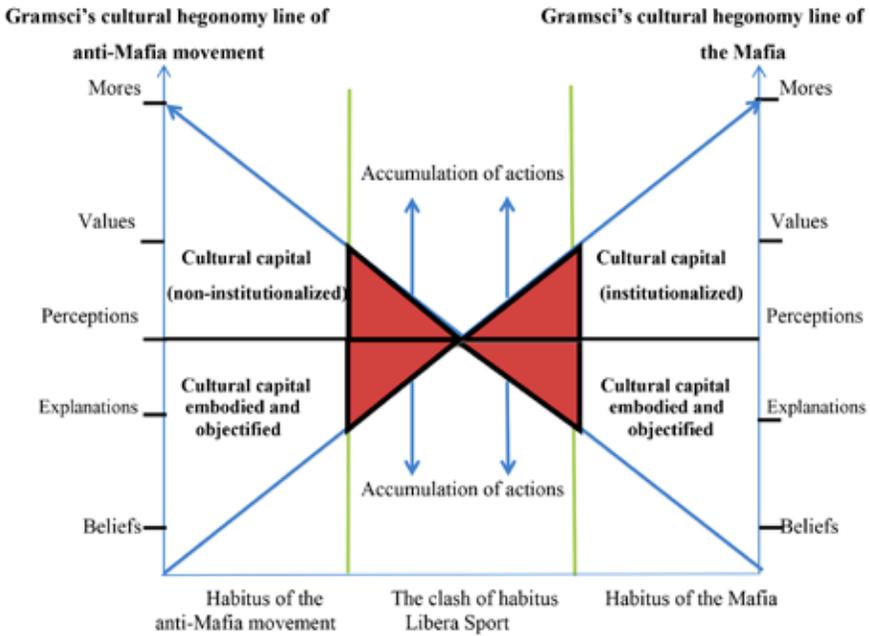
Figure 3 — Application of the cultural hegemony theory of Gramsci and the habitus and cultural capital notions of Bourdieu to the interactions between the Mafia and the anti-Mafia movement, Libera Sport.

Bourdieu (1986) shaped his cultural capital theory during research on educational abilities and success of the children from different social classes. There are three type cultural capital: (1) *embodied cultural capital* is comprised of a person's skills and competences that are valued highly in his or her social environment; (2) *objectified cultural capital* stems from the functions of the objects that allow the person to hone the skills and competences, such as a book; (3) finally, *institutionalized capital culture* lies in the perception of society, such as attaining a formal degree from the schools. The last level, recognition of the institution by obeying its rules and struggling to attain a degree from the school serves to institutionalize the capital culture. If the case discussed here, embodied and objectified cultural capital were already activated by both the Mafia and the anti-Mafia movement, Libera Sport. Both the Mafia and the anti-Mafia movement show their existence in the region through their belief systems, explanations, and perceptions, which are embodied in the cultural capital.

Moreover, contradictory and adverse policies of the Mafia and Libera Sport pave the way for the objectified cultural capital for both the Mafia and the anti-Mafia movement. Well accepted perceptions in the regions where the mafia groups flourish coerce people into obeying the code of silence of the Mafia and transferring its value system to the next generation. In doing so the mafiosi culture acquires an institutionalized capital culture that empowers its status quo. Conversely, Libera

Sport activities and policies have not attained a mass participation level in the regions where the mafia is an absolute authority, so Libera Sport has not yet institutionalized its cultural capital. Finally, I argue that the clash of habitus can be terminated only if the values of the agent are institutionalized in the public sphere and culture during the struggle. Because the Mafia has a long historical pedigree in the region and, thus, its own values and mores and its cultural capital has naturally institutionalized as well. On the other hand, the anti-Mafia movement, Libera Sport, is struggling to unseat the institutionalized cultural capital of the Mafia to establish its own values and mores. Hence, its cultural capital has the potential to be institutionalized if such a struggle consistently and passionately continues (see Figure 2). With hindsight, it is clear that accumulation of anti-Mafia actions will increase the cultural capital of Libera Sport, which may hopefully end the Mafia's established cultural capital in the future thanks to the reformative and action oriented praxis of Libera Sport. However, if we take into consideration the mafias' dominance in the region for more than a century, Libera Sport remains a very young organization, but the passion of their activists does not allow dampening of optimism in the long cultural reconstruction Libera Sports is undertaking.

Conclusion

The political-criminal nexus and sociocultural history of Italy are conducive to continued empowering of the cultural hegemony of the Mafia. However, this hegemony is not undefeatable and can be destroyed by the resistance of people who are brought up with a sense of the values and structure of responsible citizenship and a culture of lawfulness, as delineated in our case study of Libera Sport. A bottom-up initiative is necessary to lead such a social change fostered by the desires of the people to ensure a long-term social and cultural regimen of the oppressed. The Mafia is the dark side of the society, which benefits the most from dysfunctional governance system, current social order, corruption, social injustice, and its peaceful cooperation with the politicians. These deficiencies of the social system, political economy and governance increase the gaps between the social classes. More importantly, the participants who have a certain level of moral consciousness and from a middle or low social class lend their voices to this uprising through sport. This study is the first sociological investigation to analyze the role of sports to fight the Mafia. The clash of habitus theoretical framework, the Mafia-sports nexus and civil society-sports relationship have been elucidated. However, there are limitations of this research because the current study could not completely rationalize the motivation reasons of the participants to take their stances against the Mafia by playing sports. Especially, my social class analysis needs to be investigated in a detailed way by the future studies as the influence of Church, personal motives or the other variables of social and economic background may play greater roles in the participation of the activists and volunteers to the lines of Libera Sport. On one side, Libera Sport exploits its sociological model of action through various policies by using sports for value transfer to the young generation, first, and then the whole society. On other side, the policies of Libera Sport to extract and examine the harms of sports are focused on hampering the illusory atmosphere created by the mafia groups. Thus, the "invaded and criminalized public spaces", which are dominated by the mafia groups, turn into "rescued and liberated public spaces" by

the ethnographic endeavors of Libera Sport. A cultural renewal is rising in Italy through sports, and the activists and volunteers of this struggle are the persons who believe passionately that sport is more than a game. As in the case of Libera Sport, if sports are used by people who comprehend the true nature of sports, then sports become an elixir to rejuvenate the social and cultural atmosphere of the country by erasing the mafiosi culture and establishing the structure of a culture of lawfulness to renew Italy. Nevertheless, their struggle through sports has not been the Mafia's ultimate defeat. However, the passion of Libera Sport in their belief will realize their goals and be a countervailing force to lead a social change, which makes Libera Sport a peculiar example in the sociology of sport and community development. By the same token, the sociological work of Libera Sport triggers optimism about the role of sports in creating new social values in Italian society to replace the values of the Mafiosi culture.

Notes

1.   The Mafia was used to refer to four organized crime groups in Italy which are Cosa Nostra, Camorra, 'Ndrangheta and Sacra Corona Unita. The Mafia and Mafiosi culture were also used in the text to refer to the culture that was created by these four main organized crime groups. The Mafia historically signifies the Sicilian Mafia, in other words Cosa Nostra, which is the first mafia group in Italy. However, if the Mafia is used with a capital letter, I mean either a proper name or I underline its cultural meaning as an institution.

2.   Mezzogiorno has been used to indicate Southern Italy since the eighteenth century.

3.   See the example of Bayman Erkinbaev, a famous wrestler from Kyrgyzstan and a notorious drug baron at the same time (Kupatadze, 2008, p. 183). Many other examples prove the grim realities of bond between the sports and crime in different sport types around the world. Some of these examples are traditional Japanese sport Sumo wrestling (Duggan and Levitt, 2002), Indian popular sport cricket, (Sport Fixing, 2012), Turkey's football match fixing ((Turkish Football Guilty, 2012), Britain's scandalous corruption in horse riding, the referees' functional role in game ripping in Germany's football league Bundesliga and in NBA (Humphreys, 2011, p. 106), and badminton in recent Summer Olympic Games (Cole, 2012).

4.   Personal communication.

5.   Personal communication.

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