

<b>Institution:</b> University College London		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 26 Modern Languages and Linguistics		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Contesting misconceptions of organised crime and Italian food to shape law enforcement, commercial enterprise and public understanding of contemporary Italian culture.		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b>		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> 1993-present
John Dickie	Professor of Italian Studies	
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 1 August 2013-31 July 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Professor John Dickie is an expert on two important aspects of Italian culture: mafia crime in Italy and Italian food history. His research on mafia crime in Italy has informed major investments by private enterprise ranging from millions to billions of American dollars; helped establish a legal precedent in Italy to enable prosecution of the Calabrian mafia; informed the training and activities of law enforcement and anti-mafia professionals across Italy and shaped public understanding of the Italian mafia. Dickie's research into Italian food history has shaped understanding of Italian food traditions across 70 countries, whilst boosting the commercial activities of major food brand Barilla.</p>		
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Dickie (full-time researcher in UCL Italian since 1993; Professor of Italian Studies since 2009) has been a leading expert on Italian mafia crime since 2001, detailing how mafias have evolved since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, whilst also examining the development of Italy's food heritage and tradition. Both strands of his work contextualise patterns of local diversity within the broader narrative of Italy's own history, and its place globally. For good or ill, Italy has cultural influence out of all proportion to its size; however with fame comes misunderstanding, notably of the context from which these phenomena emerged and evolve. Dickie's research challenges misconceptions of these two features of Italian culture, that arguably have the greatest global resonances, while being the most widely misunderstood: food and mafia.</p> <p>Dickie's research shows Italian mafias are self-conscious organisations designed to exploit overlaps between economics, politics, and crime, rather than passive by-products of local socio-economic and cultural conditions [R1]. Italy is unique in Europe in that it is plagued by sophisticated c.150-year-old criminal organisations, such as the Cosa Nostra (Sicily), the camorra (Campania), and the comparatively unknown 'ndrangheta (Calabria), thought to control a large proportion of wholesale cocaine importation into the EU. These mafias constitute a major threat to Italy's stability and democracy. Through money-laundering and corruption they reach well beyond Italy; the 'ndrangheta, indeed, has long had colonies of affiliates in N. Europe, Canada and Australia. Dickie's post-2007 work adopts an innovative comparative approach to the history of the three mafias, drawing on documents he unearthed. It led to the publication of <i>Mafia Brotherhoods</i> [R2] and <i>Mafia Republic</i> [R3], a 2-volume history of mafias in Italy, from their origins to the present day. The books blend existing work with new research, often drawing on new sources, to provide overarching syntheses. Dickie's comparative methodology in [R2] and [R3] allowed him to set out new or revised theses on, <i>inter alia</i>: the ability of mafias to survive over the long term; Italian society's vulnerability to mafia infiltration; the influence of mafia misinformation over public discourse in Italy and beyond, and religion's role in providing legitimacy for mafias. The books' 'unitary' approach to the 'ndrangheta—long been believed to be a collection of family gangs rather than a coherent group—was particularly original. As a result, new theses emerged on: the origins of the 'ndrangheta; coordination between its local cells; and the existence from at least the 1920s of a coordinating body, known today as the Crime. In [R4], Dickie applied his comparative approach to the attitudes of the Sicilian and Calabrian mafia to prostitution and contextualised changes in the 'ndrangheta's relationship to kinship, women and prostitution. In [R5] Dickie and Truzzolillo focus on the 'brigand Musolino': a</p>		

figure of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century who is the subject of pernicious legends about a supposedly good 'ndrangheta.

In *Delizia!* [R6], a history amalgamating original research and a survey of existing work, Dickie revealed the highly misleading nature of much public and advertising discourse about Italian food, particularly when it stresses its rural 'peasant' origins. He argued that in fact the urban environment is the motor of the Italian food tradition, showing that cities are where the forces of change and continuity in popular diet and gastronomy have had the most profound effect. These forces include national and international commerce (as evinced by the importance of mass-produced products such as dried pasta, which originated in the Middle Ages), economic and political power (shaping, for example, distribution of food resources), religion (through the imposition of dietary rules and customs), urbanisation (which intersects with shifting gender roles and the place of food in domestic life), and competition for social prestige (particularly in cities where food has become a status symbol). *Delizia!* also demonstrated how regional and international food cultures converged in Italian cities, as hubs for transportation, migration and commerce, and cities also fostered discourses around the Mediterranean diet, which has influenced global food trends.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

**R1** John Dickie, *Cosa Nostra. A History of the Sicilian Mafia*, London, 2003. Submitted to RAE2008.

**R2** John Dickie, *Mafia Brotherhoods*, London, 2011. Submitted to REF2014.

**R3** John Dickie, *Mafia Republic*, London, 2013. Submitted to REF2014.

**R4** John Dickie, 'Mafia and Prostitution in Calabria, c.1880– c.1940', *Past and Present*, 232 (1), 2016. DOI: [10.1093/pastj/gtw012](https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtw012) Submitted to REF2021.

**R5** John Dickie and Fabio Truzzolillo, *Nel regno di Musolino*, Soveria Mannelli, 2016.

**R6** John Dickie, *Delizia!*, London, 2007. Submitted to RAE2008. *Delizia!* won the following accolades: (UK 2007) Special Commendation in the André Simon Food and Drink Book Awards; (France 2009) voted by Lire magazine and RTL as among the best 20 books of the year, and the best in the food category; (Italy 2014) Giovanni Rebora prize for the best work on food history.

**R2** and **R3** emerged from a two-year (2009-2011) Leverhulme Research Fellowship held by Dickie: total value £43,266. On its completion, the Leverhulme committee rated the project '**A — outstandingly successful**' (the highest possible). **R1-4** above have been widely translated (no. of languages in brackets): **R1** (21); **R2** (9); **R3** (5); **R4** (9). Outputs can be supplied on request.

### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

**Advising risk assessment companies and informing investment decisions.** Since 2014, as an expert on the 3 Italian mafias [**R1**, **R2**, **R3**], Dickie has provided advice and research on investments that may be at risk of mafia infiltration to two risk assessment companies. Whilst confidential, Dickie has conducted 10 investigations for investors, compiling evidence from court papers, interviews with law enforcement personnel and sources in civil society, using his expertise to interpret that evidence and relating it to its contemporary and historical context, before drafting an in-depth report for each. Dickie's work influenced investment decisions ranging 'from the low hundred millions [of \$] to \$2 billion' [USD2,000,000,000] [**A**]. Dickie has contributed to the professional development of employees at both risk assessment companies and to client awareness of mafia risk: he gave presentations about evaluating mafia risk to employees of one of the companies in 2015, and to staff and clients of the second in 2016 [**A**]. A Director at both companies confirms that Dickie's research [**R2** and **R3**] has directly informed his advisory practice. 'In instances where our clients approach us with an opportunity in southern Italy, my starting point is to advise them on the role of the three major organised crime families in their respective regions', and [**R2** and **R3**] have 'had a substantial impact on my understanding of the societal role and influence of the Cosa Nostra, 'Ndrangheta and Camorra' [**A**].

**Helping establish a legal precedent and Informing the work of law enforcement.** In 2010 magistrates in Calabria built a case to demonstrate that the 'ndrangheta, rather than being an

archipelago of family gangs, was a single organization which could be prosecuted as a whole under Italy's key 1982 anti-mafia law 416bis. Their case relied on demonstrating that there was an overarching body, known as 'il Crimine' (the Crime) coordinating the organization's activities. Dickie used both [R2] and supplementary documentation communicated personally to the Assistant Chief Prosecutor of Reggio Calabria to demonstrate that the Crimine (or similar) already existed in the 1920s and was perhaps as old as the 'ndrangheta itself. This information was used 'to analyse the results of [police and judicial] investigations and to construct hypotheses based on that evidence which, particularly in relation to the complex project known as Crimine, have so far met with substantial confirmation in the rulings issued by a number of Italian judges in trials that have taken place in both Milan and Reggio Calabria' [prosecutor testimonial, REF 2014]. The judicial process concluded in June 2016 when the Supreme Court established a crucial legal precedent that the 'ndrangheta 'has a unitary structure' [B]. The entire law-enforcement operation against the 'ndrangheta is now predicated on the case. Dickie's work has been used to educate senior law enforcement about its implications. In 2019, at the ISSMI (an Italian selective, senior level police training course) extracts of the documentary The Mafia's Secret Bunkers (see below) and a chapter on Crimine from [R3] were used to explain the influence of Operation Crimine [B]. Magistrates and senior police need to understand Italy's long history of mafias. Law enforcement is 'unanimous' that action by the state alone will not defeat the mafias, and that 'a cultural response is required to undermine the mafia mentality' [B]. For these reasons, Dickie is 'a reference point for all Italy's best magistrates and investigators involved in antimafia work' [B]. Magistrates and senior police also see spreading public understanding of the mafia threat, and its history, as a crucial part of their jobs. By providing a historical perspective to front-line professionals, Dickie has informed the work of anti-mafia law enforcement, as follows: i) use of [R1, R2, R3] in institutes where police and magistrates are trained [B, C]; ii) Use of [R2, R3, R5] by newly appointed commander of Carabinieri in Calabria to familiarize himself with the 'ndrangheta and its territory [C]; iii) the current head of the Direzione Investigativa Antimafia (DIA—Italy's equivalent of the FBI) has used Dickie's work in his lectures to thousands of students at 36 higher education institutions [C]; iv) a Carabinieri officer with 20 years' experience in antimafia work: 'I recommend young colleagues entering the ROS [the specialist antimafia unit of the Carabinieri] that they begin their training by reading John Dickie's books [R1, R2, R3, R5]' [B]. Although awareness of the 'ndrangheta is still low outside Italy, Dickie's research has reached professionals in other countries, such as Inland Security in the USA. In 2015, a member of the Arlington Police department in Texas briefed colleagues in the navy on the 'ndrangheta in Latin America. She used [R2 and R3], calling them 'a real asset' especially in the US context where 'the term mafia is almost exclusively associated with the New York/East Coast-based families rather than those from Italy itself' and 'recommended it to a number of colleagues within federal agencies who specialize in organized crime' [C].

**Informing the work of regulatory enforcement professionals.** In May 2018, in Amsterdam, Dickie was invited to speak to international anti-money laundering professionals gathered under the banner of ACAMs, one of the world's leading providers of education, training and networking for the anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing community (60,000 members worldwide). Dickie's analysis of the 'ndrangheta supported the creation of a real-time financial transaction monitoring system created by Head of Compliance at a global open banking platform, which feeds information to international organizations including the DIA in Italy. 'The insights Professor John Dickie shared into how the Ndrangheta, Mafia and camorra operate mean[s] I can build criminal typologies in order to detect them [...] that allows us to tell the AI tools what to look for and the patterns for machine learning'. For this reason, I have read the books [R2 and R3] written by Professor John Dickie which have influenced me and how I carry out my job when combating financial crime in Italy' [D].

**Informing civil society anti-mafia activists.** The town of Lamezia Terme, Calabria, is an area of deeply-rooted 'ndrangheta presence. The 'Trame' annual anti-mafia literary festival there is run by a local anti-protection racket group to raise public awareness and publicize their stand against the protection rackets, which also runs year-round anti-mafia educational and campaigning initiatives. In 2013 Dickie joined the festival's advisory board, and his contributions

to the festival include: a discussion in 2014 with leading journalist Raffaella Calandra based on [R3]; in 2016 his documentary on the mafia and the church was shown in discussion with a local anti-mafia priest, don Giacomo Panizza, who has been subject to numerous death threats and featured in the film; in 2017 co-ordinated a public debate in the town square attended by several hundred people with the Grand Master of the Grand Orient of Italian Freemasonry about 'ndrangheta infiltration of the Masons. Trame's Director explained: 'His commitment [to the festival] has encouraged the birth of virtuous networks of knowledge and exchange' including with investigative magistrates and law enforcement and 'His books have been read by young school and university students, among them many festival volunteers, thus contributing to energize a more active civic conscience which has strengthened the front-line work of the Lamezia Terme Antiracket Association in fighting extortion.' [E]. Trame has also shown *The Mafia's Secret Bunkers* (aired May 2013 and based on research in [R3]) in 7 Calabrian schools for 3 consecutive years 2016-19 [E]. Children's reactions to the documentary were gathered in a book, which itself has become part of Trame's educational work. Drawing on [5], through Trame Dickie has given lectures to hundreds of children at local secondary schools about the so-called 'brigand Musolino' (a member of the 'ndrangheta) [E]. Dickie's work has also influenced a Calabrian construction entrepreneur who has become a major national campaigner and educator for the anti-mafia cause. They explained that Dickie's books [R2 and R3] and documentary, *Mafia Bunkers*, are 'omnipresent' '[d]uring my public meetings and school visits [about 20 of the latter annually]'. Dickie's research 'meet[s] with enormous interest among my audience, highlighting among very many themes, a comparative approach to the mafias, the view of the 'ndrangheta as a single organization and not just as isolated clans, and its ability to perpetuate itself through the generations by means of dynastic marriages' [F].

**Raising public understanding via TV, radio and news media.** Dickie's research, expertise and contacts were fundamental to the making of two TV documentaries about the mafia. *The Mafia's Secret Bunkers* was reshown on 27 Feb 2018 (BBC 4) [TEXT REDACTED]. The programme has been repeated frequently on Italian television. In the words of a Carabinieri officer, the film helped 'millions of Italians' understand Crimine and the 'ndrangheta, prompting them to follow the trial's development over the next 6 years [B]. *Chiesa Nostra* (The Cross and the Gun), presented and co-written by Dickie and drawing directly on [3] was first shown on History Channel Italia in May 2015 and then shown in >16 countries. The film commanded an investment of EUR250,000 - EUR300,000 from the production company [G]. Dickie regularly provides expert comment for TV or radio news programmes in many countries, and writes for the press. In August 2013, he was interviewed for 9 programmes about the arrest of alleged Sicilian *mafioso* Domenico Rancadore in London (including BBC radio and TV, ITV, and SKY). In November 2017 he provided expert comment on the death of Sicilian mafia boss Totò Riina (several UK and European radio outlets; interviewed by journalists for Reuters, Guardian (x2), Vice (Italy), Telegraph, De Standaard (Belgium); article written for ABC (Spain)). In both instances he provided historical context on the Sicilian mafia and detailed insight on individual cases based on R2 and R3. Dickie is regularly consulted and cited by foreign correspondents of major newspapers who are seeking to understand and contextualize mafia stories [H]. One journalist confirms that 'Professor Dickie's meticulous research [R3] has had a measurable impact on my reporting' and remarks on the importance of his 'ability to synthesize complex main points into pithy, manageable and concise quotes for a general reading public' when providing expert comment, which has fed into reporting on subjects ranging from the rising role of women within Cosa Nostra (Sunday Telegraph, 10 December 2017) (informed by R3 and R6) to the rejection of crime tourism in Palermo and Medellin (Sunday Telegraph, 2 March 2019) [H].

**Italy's food history.** Dickie has also raised public awareness of the mafia influence on Italian food via their infiltration of agriculture, wholesale markets and distribution [R6]. In September 2015 Dickie's research and expertise were fundamental to the creation of an episode of BBC Radio 4 Food Programme about the relation between mafia and agriculture which drew in an international audience of nearly 2,000,000 [G]. Dickie then co-wrote and presented a 6-part TV documentary series on the history of Italian food tradition which was based on [R6]. His expertise was crucial to every stage of the project's development: the President and CEO of the production company GA&A, emphasised how Dickie's 'vast knowledge of the subject, his clear

scholarly approach and the research he undertook, showed even Italians themselves aspects of their own culture that was mostly forgotten or unknown' [G]. *De gustibus (Eating History)*, was 'the first time that a British author and presenter had been chosen to speak to the Italians about the history of Italian cuisine'—a risk for both the production company and the network, and a remarkable fact given the pride Italians invest in their food culture [G]. The series represented a major investment in human and financial resources: filming took eight months and cost over EUR650,000 [G]. Originally shown on Italian TV in 2015, it was also broadcast in over 70 other countries [G] including on Amazon Prime since the autumn of 2020. In Italy, the series registered 1,300,000 unique viewers—one of highest audiences of the year for History Channel Italia [G]. It has frequently been repeated since. Audience feedback to the production company often mentioned such aspects of the ideas contained in [R6] as the impact of religion, foreign domination, and urban life, and showed that obstinate stereotypes (such as the peasant origins of Italian food [R6]) had been tackled [G]. The GA&A CEO also notes that the programme has also been used as a teaching tool by universities in the USA and Italy, because Dickie's 'approach allows a clear understanding of the subject matter in a way that is extremely engaging' [G].

**Barilla: Raising the profile and sales of Italian pasta.** Following on from filming, in September 2017 and October 2018 Dickie was employed by events company Adverteam to be a consultant, co-scriptwriter, compère and simultaneous translator of the Pasta World Championships (PWC), an annual promotional event sponsored by Barilla, the world's biggest and oldest pasta maker. The event is 'one of the company's most important global marketing efforts' involving major investment [I]. Dickie was chosen on the basis of [R6] 'which is held in Barilla's library in Parma [...] and the television series based on it' (*De gustibus*) [I]. PWC is a competition and education event conducted live in front of a globally-recruited audience of social media influencers and food journalists in Milan and Parma. Barilla's objectives included: 'showcasing and raising international consumer awareness of a number of features of our most important and iconic product' including pasta's history, sustainability, and significance within global food culture [I]. Dickie drew on his deep knowledge of contemporary and historical Italian food culture as expressed in [R6] to assist Barilla in meeting these objectives by explaining dishes and choices made by international chefs, and giving short lectures on the history of pasta (such as its origins in Medieval commerce, and the recent scientific origins of the 'Mediterranean diet') to provide social media content. The VP of Global Media Relations and Digital at Barilla, writes that 'Dickie's expertise was central to the success of these two editions of [PWC], which together generated almost 1 billion [1,000,000,000] media impressions' globally. PWC 2018 resulted in a 20% spike in Barilla pasta and sauce sales and was shortlisted for the Italian events industry 'Best Event Awards' in the Educational /Training category [I].

##### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- A. Testimonial from the Director of risk assessment companies.
- B. Evidence of influence on Crimine Supreme Court ruling, including a press source and a testimony from a Carabinieri officer involved in Crimine.
- C. Testimonials from Italian and US law-enforcement professionals, including the Director of the DIA, a Colonel in the Carabinieri in Calabria, and an Officer of Inland Security.
- D. Testimonial from ACAMS organizer and anti-money laundering professional.
- E. Testimonials from anti-mafia literature festival organizers and a volunteer.
- F. Testimonial and reach evidence from civil society anti-mafia campaigner.
- G. Media pack: testimonial from TV producer, TV producer co-writer, Transmission report (audience data) for *Mafia's Secret Bunkers* repeat; Letter from History Channel Italia executive with audience data for TV programmes; Testimonial from BBC Radio 4 Food Programme presenter; Documents from TV producer detailing broadcast countries.
- H. Testimonials from 3 print journalists, Belgian, British and American.
- I. Barilla Pasta World Championships: testimonials from Adverteam and Barilla executives.