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Representations of power: A critical multimodal analysis of U.S. CEOs, the Italian Mafia and government in the media

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1. Introduction

In September 2008, the collapse of the bank Lehman Brothers led to a financial crisis and the worst recession since the Great Depression of the 1930s, threatening the entire global financial system. Some of the effects of the crisis included evictions, foreclosures and high and prolonged unemployment. Despite the fact that bankers and corporate executives are widely known to bear much of the blame for the crisis (“The origins of the financial crisis,” 2013), very few have actually been convicted of any crime. In addition, recent investigations of the relationship between the New York Federal Reserve and banks such as Goldman Sachs have revealed that even the regulators assigned to keep banks in check have become “too risk averse and deferential to the banks it supervised” (Bernstein 2014). Yet, the public has largely “learned to accept the implicit idea that some people have simply more rights than others. Some people go to jail, and others just don’t” (Taibbi 2014, xix).

Similarly, in Italy, there is a large public consensus that many politicians and corporate executives are allies of Mafia groups such as ‘Ndrangheta and Cosa Nostra (who are engaging in activities such as setting up bogus firms in order to receive public subsidies, money laundering, fraudulent real estate schemes, etc.), yet few of them ever end up being prosecuted or serving jail time. In fact, while the government has created numerous task forces to combat Mafia groups, the ‘Ndrangheta has continued to gross billions of euros and has become a global presence, active in countries such as Germany as well as in South America (Conti 2014).

The present paper seeks to understand why these CEOs and Mafia organizations are not often punished for their crimes and why there is little public outcry

about it. We are concerned with one element that plays a crucial role: the lack of connection between their actions and their representation in the media. The representation of social actors in public discourse has always played an important role in how the public perceives them, how they are treated by legal and government entities and what the consequences of their actions are (van Leeuwen 1996). Discourses not only represent what is happening, but also evaluate, justify, highlight or background certain aspects of it (van Leeuwen, 2008, 6). Consequently, this multimodal critical discourse analysis will attempt to reveal less-than-obvious discursive strategies that (re)produce dominant ideologies of criminality and how groups in power, convicted or accused of crimes, are treated in the discourse. To do this, we take a qualitative approach that examines online newspaper articles reporting crimes committed by CEOs in the U.S. and Italian Mafia groups. Our focus is on the metonymic strategies.¹

This critical analysis employs different but overlapping and complementary perspectives, including Social Semiotics (van Leeuwen 2005) and especially multimodality (Machin and Mayr 2012), which is the investigation of diverse semiotic modes of expression (e.g., text, image) and how they interact to make meaning. Another important trend is critical and multimodal work on both metaphor and metonymy. Metaphor can be defined as conceptualizing a source (e.g., life) in terms of a target (e.g., a journey), thus producing metaphors such as POLITICS IS SPORTS. The linguistic realization of this conceptual metaphor can be seen in political discourse such as that of ex-Italian premier Silvio Berlusconi who announced his entrance into the political arena by saying “I will **enter the field** to lead my candidates [...]” (Semino and Masci 1996, 249). Metonymy is also ubiquitous and can be defined as a mapping where a source (e.g., “the White House”) provides access to a target (the President of the U.S. or a spokesperson for the President) because there is a perceived connection or association between them (see Dirven and Pörings 2002; Jakobson 1956), as in “the White House announced today”. In addition, as we will see below, metonymy and metaphor are often combined (Goossens 1990/2002, 349; Mittelberg and Waugh 2009). Critical approaches to metaphor (Charteris-Black 2004, 2005/2011, 2014) and metonymy (Meadows 2007; Catalano and Waugh 2013a, b) involve determining exactly what the metonymies/metaphors reveal and what they obscure, thus showing how these tropes/figures are used in the service of hiding the ideologies that underlie the texts (Charteris-Black 2014). In addition, they “identify both what is implied and the other point of view concealed by the metaphor/metonymy” (Ibid., 203).

1. As will be explained further below, this article is part of a larger study, which also features quantitative analysis – see Catalano 2011; Catalano and Waugh 2013a.

2. The Politics of Media Discourse and Crime

2.1 *Language, politics, crime and media*

We will be analyzing the treatment of crimes of a corporate nature that typically involve respected people with high social/professional status (Gustafson 2006). Research in this area has determined that corporate crime is “endemic in contemporary national and transnational corporations” and has victimization rates that are higher and cause more harm to society than conventional crime (Box 2002, 18, 19). Minkes and Minkes (2010) acknowledge that it is such a widespread problem that it has come to be thought of as a normal part of how our societies operate, particularly capitalist ones. Public awareness of corporate crime has increased in recent years and yet there is still misinformation and mystification about it (Box 2002). This is because corporate crime is largely “rendered invisible” due to its complex nature, weak law-enforcement and prosecution, lenient legal and social sanctions, and the under-reporting of such crimes in media discourse (Ibid 16). Even in cases where corporate crimes are challenged, they are often seen as illegal but not necessarily criminal (Geis 1972). Thus, although corporate crime often causes much more damage to society than other kinds of crime, it is rarely seen as comprising the same kind of societal burden as conventional crime and is often absent from debates about crime issues (Slapper and Tombs, 1999).

Iyengar (1991) posits that it is the type of coverage (more than the lack of coverage) of corporate crime that is the major problem with media discourse in this genre: “time constraints on news programming, commercial realities and norms of journalistic objectivity” have caused T.V. coverage of corporate crime (and political issues in general) to be represented largely in episodic terms (focusing on specific events or cases) as opposed to a thematic framing, which would help us to see connections between government actions and social problems (141). Exposure to episodic news makes people less likely to hold elected officials responsible for these crimes and the portrayal of recurring issues as unrelated events (such as issues of environmental contamination by corporations) prevents the public from “cumulating the evidence toward a logical consequence” (3), which “contributes to erosion of electoral accountability” (143).

While there has been extensive research in other areas related to crime, there has been little study of the language of crime employed in media discourse (but see Machin and Mayr 2012, 2013; Mayr and Machin 2012a, b). As mentioned above, scholars have noticed the (ideologically driven) lack of coverage of corporate crime in the media and attributed it to the complicated nature of these crimes, among other reasons (Mayr and Machin 2012b, 202). Nonetheless, even when these crimes are reported on, the type of coverage they receive is often problematic, Representations of power 793 since the “corporate origins and nature

of corporate crimes are obscured” through the language used both in the media and by corporations themselves (Ibid). While the media does raise the issue of corporate greed and irresponsibility, its “reliance on definitions of official sources and the nature of the institutions themselves are obstacles to these events being reported through the language of crime” (Mayr and Machin 2012a, 80). That is, often the language of crime (e.g. steal, victim) is almost completely absent in reports of corporate crime and generic terms are used that could be interpreted in a number of different ways and give an unclear idea of what the offenders did, and in some cases lead to erroneous interpretations.

Another way in which media discourse of corporate crime is different than for conventional crimes is the representation of agency (Catalano and Waugh 2013a). For example, when corporate offenders are represented in terms of the crime they were accused of, the institution and not the individual is mentioned in the form of ‘X is charged with Y’ (e.g., “Goldman Sachs charged with fraud”, Ibid, 413) or a verb not associated with crime is used in the past tense together with a vague nominalization (e.g. “Fannie and Freddie misrepresented their **exposure** to subprime loans”). “Exposure” hides what they actually did: they sold subprime mortgages to vulnerable individuals without explaining the process and its consequences (Ibid, 414). While the use of such nominalizations might seem like standard practice in media discourse on crime, Catalano and Waugh (2013a) have shown it is not, by illustrating how, in news reports of crimes allegedly committed by Latino migrants in the U.S., the fact that the offender has been charged and not convicted is ignored and the past tense is used to refer to the offender’s actions, while in corporate crimes this does not occur (418). Other differences in how corporate crimes are represented in the media include the absence of the strategy of “monsterisation” typical of those suspected of other kinds of crimes (Jewkes 2011, Tabbert 2015) and the fact that systematic coverage of follow-up events is rare (Machin and Mayr 2012, 78). As a result, each time an article about corporate crime appears, the (sometimes lengthy and complex) details are often not repeated. In conventional crime, criminals are constructed as lawbreakers and are represented as different from us (Minkes and Minkes 2010), whereas the opposite is true in the case of corporate criminals (Catalano and Waugh 2013a). Moreover, being successful in business is often based on an ideology that prioritizes corporate profit and shareholder profits over the interests of workers and the public. Thus, corporate crime is not, in fact, deviant or unusual; in the business world – it has become the norm.

While much research on Italian Mafia groups has been conducted across disciplines, few studies have examined the way in which the groups have been represented in the media. One recent study by Caliendo et al (2014) examined a BBC documentary focusing on the ‘Ndrangheta and investigated the change in discursive strategies employed by Mafia experts (since the 2007 killings of Mafiosi in

Duisburg, Germany) to name, define and popularize the ‘Ndrangheta. In another study, Catalano (2015) examined news reports of Mafia arrests and revealed the use of vague terminology related to the crimes committed by Mafiosi along with a general lack of description of the actual crimes and their consequences for the victims. This same study also found metaphors (i.e. MAFIA IS FAMILY) were used to represent Mafia groups in Italian media and resulted in a positive representation. They were then compared to (negative) metaphors used to represent Roma in crime reports. The author suggested that the use of the same dominant metaphors became “naturalized”, and thus alternative ways of thinking about the Mafia become invisible in the discourse. The media’s take on the issue then promoted and reinforced this consensus through its “access to the public” and its control of the message (Catalano 2015, 44).

3. Method

Some of the data of this paper comes from a larger more quantitative study in which representations of both the powerful (e.g., CEOs in the U.S., the Mafia in Italy) and the powerless (e.g., undocumented immigrants in the U.S., the Roma in Italy) were examined (Catalano 2011). In the present paper, only articles with visual data were selected from the sample, and a new search was conducted to add several more recent articles resulting in a new corpus of 20 online newspaper reports of 200–2000 words with (alleged) crimes by CEOs or Mafia members as the data source. Because the resulting data sample is not representative of the entire body of media discourse on corporate and Mafia crimes and the larger study provides quantitative information about the types of strategies used by the media, this qualitative analysis concentrates on demonstrating in depth how the strategies are used. The CEO texts were published between 2004 and 2014 in prestigious online American newspapers (e.g., the *Wall Street Journal*), and one article in a widely read, lower-tier newspaper, *The New York Daily News*. The Mafia texts were found in well-known and respected Italian papers (e.g. *La Repubblica*), and several local online news sources.²

Once texts were identified, they were combined into one file and uploaded to Antconc 3.2 (qualitative software system) and first analyzed for metonymy, metaphor and their combination (the first author completed the first iteration by hand, the second using AntConc, and the third by hand once again, in order to attend to context). Triangulation occurred after the metonymy and metaphor analysis by the first author, after which the co-authors spent considerable time

2. For a complete list of texts used in the analysis, see Appendix A.

discussing the categorization of each example. During this process, the majority of the categorizations were agreed upon prior to discussion, and differences were usually related to terminology and not type (e.g. INSTITUTION FOR PERSON vs. INSTITUTION FOR AGENT). In such cases we drew on the work of Gibbs 1994, Kövecses 2002, Barcelona 2011, Barcelona et al 2011, Benczes 2011, Bierwaczzonek 2013 and (for terminology for images) van Leeuwen 2008, as well as our own previous work (Catalano and Waugh 2013a). After the metaphor/metonymy analysis, we identified the strategies used, including text-image interactions, which were then coded and searched for in the texts. After this coding and searching, similarities and differences between the U.S. and Italian texts were determined in order to compare their representation in media reports in both countries. The following section describes our findings.

4. Findings

4.1 *Similarities in the texts*

After analysis of both corpora, many similarities (and some important differences, discussed below) surfaced between how the Italian Mafia and U.S. CEOs are represented in crime reports, despite the very different political and cultural environments and types of crimes. Due to the scope of this paper, we will focus only on the most important ones in this discussion.

4.1.1 *Institution/organization for individuals*

The first and most notable similarity is the use of metonymy to represent all groups. We start with a well-known metonymy (in small caps as in the title of this section) and examples from our texts, in which individual **metonyms** are bolded. The reader should note that not all metonyms in these texts are focused on — only the ones being discussed in the section they are part of.

The metonymy of INSTITUTION/ORGANIZATION FOR INDIVIDUALS (Texts 1, 6, and 15) references an institution and thus backgrounds the individual(s) responsible (called “functionalization” by van Leeuwen 1995, 2008).

Text 1.

- *Discussions between **J.P. Morgan, the Justice Department** and other **agencies** were proceeding on Wednesday, although it wasn't clear if all sides would reach an agreement. (e.g., **J.P. Morgan** stands for the individuals hired by that company who were involved in the discussion)*

The above excerpt demonstrates how the media represent people by utilizing metonymy as a shortcut, which is a common use of metonymy in general (Bierwiczak [2013, 56]). More strategically, in our data, this metonymy can be seen as a way of using the institution (e.g., **J.P. Morgan**) in order to represent individuals whose names are not known to the journalist or whom the journalist wants to avoid naming. Whatever the reason, the overall result is that “there is a problem in finding criminality because of the lack of individual agents who can be blamed for their actions” (Machin and Mayr 2012, 80).

Just as CEO reports substitute the names of institutions for individuals responsible for the crimes, Mafia organization names are highlighted in crime reports. The following examples demonstrate the same use of metonyms denoting two of the three crime organizations that we use the umbrella term Mafia for: *Cosa Nostra* and *Camorra*.³

Text 11.

- ...*ma si è organizzata sul modello di **Cosa Nostra** ...* [but it’s an organization modeled after **Cosa Nostra**...]

Text 20.

- **Camorra**, *Casalesi a Roma: 15 arresti gestivano settore videopoker e scommesse* [**Camorra**, the Casalesi’s in Rome: 15 arrested (who) managed the videopoker and betting sectors]

In addition, in Italian crime reports individual officers investigating Mafia crimes are not named, most likely for reasons of protection/fear of retaliation:

Text 15.

- **I carabinieri di Brindisi** *infatti hanno dato esecuzione a 46 ordinanze di custodia* [The **carabinieri [the Italian military police] of Brindisi** have in fact, implemented 46 orders of custody]

It is important to note that the term “Mafia” has typically been associated in Italy with *Cosa Nostra* and the two are often interchangeable, although “mafia”/“Mafia” is often used as an umbrella term for several groups, especially internationally. Each of these groups has a unique history, functions in a different geographic region, and has different fundamental characteristics and structure. Although we can’t discuss this in detail, we need to recognize the semiotic potential for Italians of each of the names, which have been created by in-group members

3. *Ndrangheta* is the third one found in our data, but not in these examples.

for out-group member use, with different names used by in-group members (e.g., the term *Camorra* for the press and “*Il Sistema*” for in-group members) (Catalano 2011: 149).

4.1.2 *Profession/position for person*

This well-known metonymy identifies (see van Leeuwen 1995, 2008) and highlights the current or former high status profession/position of the person being discussed (e.g., Madoff, the **top trader**) and thus represents him favorably.⁴ Other examples are **chief executive**, **captain of the ship** (Text 5); “**entrepreneur of the year**”; “**most admired CEO**” (Text 10), where it is combined with metonymic reference to groups of high status, e.g., **Ernst and Young** and **San Diego Business Journal**; and **person of integrity** (Text 4, in the next section). In some cases, this is contextualized by metonymic mention of their humble origins, a very familiar trope that metonymically conjures up the American Dream of rising above one’s origins (e.g., **former milkman**, **high school coach**, in Text 5):

Text 4.

- Title: **Top Broker Accused of \$50 Billion Fraud** (i.e., **Top Broker** stands for Bernard Madoff)

Text 5.

- *Former WorldCom Inc. chief executive Bernard J. Ebbers, captain of the ship, a former milkman and high school coach*

Text 10.

- *He has been recognized by Ernst and Young as “entrepreneur of the year” and was named “most admired CEO” by the San Diego Business Journal, Entropic said.*

4.1.3 *Abbreviated name or nickname or last name for closeness/ familiarity/intimacy/trust*

Another similarity between the language used for CEOs and Mafiosi is the metonymic abbreviation/shortening of company names: e.g., in Text 6 above, of Goldman Sachs Group, Inc., to **Goldman** or **Goldman Sachs**, and in Text 1 above of J.P. Morgan Chase to **J.P. Morgan**. These are instances of the metonymy, ABBREVIATED NAME FOR CLOSENESS/FAMILIARITY/INTIMACY/TRUST, which creates a sense of familiarity on the part of the journalist (and by metonymy, the

4. Evidence of the systematic occurrence of this type of metonymy in corporate crime reports can be found in Catalano and Waugh(2013a).

reader) with these corporations/institutions, suggesting close ties and positive affect, thereby increasing the level of “intimacy and trust we have” in them (Catalano and Waugh 2013a, 414). In addition, when they are combined with the metonymies INSTITUTION/ORGANIZATION FOR INDIVIDUALS and PROFESSION/POSITION FOR PERSON, this familiarity and trust is metonymically transferred to the hidden individuals/persons.

Similarly, the use of nicknames and last names for CEOs is also related to the metonymy of NICKNAME/LAST NAME FOR CLOSENESS/FAMILIARITY/INTIMACY/ TRUST⁵ (e.g., **Bernie Madoff**, in Text 4 below and for **Bernie Ebbers** in Text 5 below, along with ‘**telecom cowboy**’, and **Madoff**, Text 4). Thus, the casual use of these names to refer to the offenders works against the negative reports of what they did, even though heinous crimes are being reported (such as Bernard Madoff’s theft of close to \$65 billion, thereby bankrupting many of his clients). Our findings related to the use of nicknames are supported in the literature on nicknaming practices. For example, Holland (1990) notes that nicknames have many functions, of which intimacy is most notable; Jacquemet posits that nicknames can be used to “construct identities, mark social inclusion and manage hierarchical relationships” (1992, 5); Zaltzow (1998) argues that nicknames are often used as a sign of endearment. They can also be used in media discourse to construct CEOs as “one of us” – and as a legendary hero (e.g. **telecom cowboy**, for Bernard Ebbers).

Text 4.

- “**Bernie Madoff**’s returns aren’t real...”

Text 5.

- *It was a remarkable comedown for a former billionaire once hailed as the “**telecom cowboy**” for helping lead the telecommunications revolution. ... “It’s a very sad day for **Bernie Ebbers**, but it’s a very good day for Wall Street and investors,”...*

In Mafia organizations such as Cosa Nostra and the Camorra, nicknames are given to nearly every boss and represent an “unequivocally unique, identifying feature. A nickname for a boss is like stigmata for a saint, the mark of membership in the System” (Saviano, 2010, p. 56). Nicknames are also used metonymically for closeness/ familiarity in Italian texts about Mafia criminals, as seen below:

5. The use of last name can be contextualized in different ways and there may be differences in American and British usage, so our claim is related only to the American context.

Text 13.

- ... *Rancadore*, detto “**U profissuri**” [Rancadore, called “**The professor**”] (in dialect).

Text 15.

- *Arrestati anche Cristian Tarantino e Domenico D’Agnano*, detto “**Nerone**” e *Jonni Serra* detto “**Pecora**”. [Also arrested were Cristian Tarantino and Domenico D’Agnano called “**Nerone**” (referring to the infamous Roman emperor Nero) and Jonni Serra called “**Sheep**”].

Text 15.

- ... *aveva come referente Raffaele Renna*, detto “**Puffo**”, *affiliato al boss Francesco Campana*. [His reference was Raffaele Renna, called “**The smurf**”, affiliated with boss Francesco Campana].

Nickname usage by the Italian media has a complex history, which it is important to know about in order to understand its use today. Jacquemet (1992) traced the historical use of nicknames by the Italian Justice Department beginning in 1983, at which time, in the Naples area, it used local nicknames to establish identities of individuals in illegal activities and thus nicknames became a critical factor in defining the criminal identity of a defendant and establishing that he belonged to a criminal organization. However, nicknames were also commonly used at that time (and still are today) in Italian small towns to construct identities and for other functions. As a result, when the justice department made the mistake of labeling nicknames as purely criminal their plan backfired (Ibid, 5). In the case of our data, the above examples show how they are used by the media to construct an element of celebrity and what Penfold-Mounce refers to as a “spectacle” which encourages the interrelation between aesthetic style and dangerous glamour (2009, 31). In addition, nicknames such as **Nerone** instill fear in the audience, make the story more newsworthy and glamorize the offender as deserving of respect, thereby serving affective and interpersonal, as well as denotational, functions. Thus the media use of Mafia nicknames adds to the mystification of Mafia criminals (and their “coolness factor” which we mention in Section 5.2 below). The use of nicknames brings extra news and entertainment value to the articles, especially in the Italian press, but also exhibits the specific strategy of intimacy, “indicating the journalists are part of the inner circle and indexing a familiar relationship, which allows the offenders to be viewed as individuals vs. aggregates” (Catalano 2011,167). Hence, in both CEO and Mafia reports, this use of nicknames works against the negative aspects of the crimes they are associated with.

4.1.4 *Simplified event for complex sub-events (with mitigation)*

Another similarity between the CEOs and the Mafia is the use of vagueness, neutralization, mitigation and downgrading in the reporting of the actual crimes committed. The following examples utilize the metonymy SIMPLIFIED EVENT FOR COMPLEX SUB-EVENTS (Catalano and Waugh 2013a) with mitigation, where, e.g., *unfortunate event* in Text 4 below metonymically refers to the crime(s) and the aftermath.

Text 4.

- “*He is a person of integrity. He intends to fight to get through **this unfortunate event.***”

Text 6.

- *The \$13 billion deal, which could still fall apart over issues like how much **wrongdoing** the bank is willing to acknowledge,*

Text 13.

- *Oliviero, invece, sarebbe stato in rapporti con l'imprenditore Ivano Perego, arrestato per **associazione mafiosa**, e responsabile della Perego Strade . [Oliviero, instead, supposedly had relations with entrepreneur Ivano Perego, the manager of Perego Strade who was arrested for **mafia association**].*

In each of the above cases, metonymical expressions such as **wrongdoing**, **unfortunate event**, and **associazione mafiosa** carry vague descriptions of what actually happened, and, by using neutral or only slightly pejorative terms, result in mitigating the crimes themselves, especially since they are not combined with anything about the victims of the crime. In their study of corporate crime, Sykes and Matza (1957) refer to this strategy as “techniques of neutralization” and more particularly, the specific strategy of “denial of responsibility” because the **unfortunate event** is never acknowledged outwardly to be against the law and thus they are not taking responsibility for violating the law (667). Besides denying responsibility, “techniques of neutralization” can include denying the victim, condemning the condemners or appealing to higher loyalties (e.g., their loyalty to the firm), but they all result in the similar effect of showing a less harsh opinion of the offender and a vague idea of exactly what happened (Machin and Mayr 2012; see also van Leeuwen 2008). Although Sykes and Matza (1957) refer to these techniques in terms of what corporate criminals say when responding to criminal charges, what our data shows is that in their reports, journalists reproduce the same techniques by quoting the responses of CEOs (and their legal representatives) to the charges (such as in Text 4 where the lawyer is speaking on behalf of Bernard Madoff). In other cases, where the

journalist is using this type of language that mitigates the crimes, van Leeuwen's (1995, 2008) and van Leeuwen and Wodak's (1999) terminology of "abstraction" and "generalization" is helpful, such as in the case of **wrongdoing** in the example from Text 6 above.

In the case of Mafia crimes, the metonym **Mafia type association** (**associazione mafiosa**) was highlighted by Jacquemet (1992) as being used as far back as 1983 when 856 people were arrested for "belonging to a mafia-like organization" (p. 3) and it is still found in Italian media reports of Mafia crimes as a standard title for a wide range of crimes. In these cases, the vagueness works together with other factors in service of neutralizing and mitigating the crimes that were committed (van Leeuwen 1995, 2008; van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999).

4.1.5 *Accusation of committing a crime as a result of alleged commission of the crime [A subtype of RESULT FOR ACTION]*

Metonymies of this type were found in both CEO and Mafia reports. The following example demonstrates how it is combined with the strategy of (subtle) downgrading of the agency of the offenders:

Text 9.

- *Mr. Shrem and Mr. Faiella were both **charged with conspiring to launder money**....*

Above, the passive voice (for which the agent is the justice department) is followed by the crime in the gerund form (e.g. **conspiring**). The metonymy accusation of committing a crime as a result of alleged commission of the crime (subtype of RESULT FOR ACTION) occurs when the accusation is given by the main verb of the sentence (**charged with**) and the commission of the crime is downgraded to a gerund, which does not have the force of an assertion. In this example, the CEOs have very weak agency in (allegedly) committing the crime, due to the use of the gerund form instead of the simple past (e.g. the possible use of 'they conspired to launder money'). Below, a similar strategy is used in Italian in the Text 12 example with a past participle.

Text 12.

- ***Accusato di associazione mafiosa, omicidio e detenzione di arma da guerra, era inserito nell'elenco dei 100 latitanti più pericolosi.** [**Accused of mafia association, homicide and detention of weapons of war**, he was inserted in the list of the 100 most dangerous fugitives].*

In Text 14, the past conditional is used to the same effect, casting doubt on whether the offender actually carried out the event or not.

Text 14.

- Scaramuzza **avrebbe affidato** lavori importanti in sub appalto a società controllate dalla famiglia mafiosa. [Scaramuzza **allegedly entrusted** important sub-contracting work to companies controlled by the Mafia (literally, “would have entrusted”).]

To the average reader, this could appear to be a fair presentation since the offenders were accused, not convicted, and thus the language used reflects this. However, when compared to groups not in power such as Latino migrants in the U.S. and Roma in Italy, this distinction is not made in all discourse with the same legal circumstance of accused but not convicted. Below are some examples for the purposes of comparison:

‘This suspect sexually assaulted a young innocent girl and this is yet another example of a violent crime committed by an illegal alien in Maricopa County,’ Sheriff Joe Arpaio said. (Catalano and Waugh 2013a, 418)

In this example, the journalist (and the Sheriff) clearly ignore the fact that the offender is only a **suspect**. In this case, the power of the Sheriff and the access he has to the newspaper means that his certainty that the suspect committed the crime (and his political agenda that ties crime to **illegal** immigration) is voiced, whereas the journalist doesn’t highlight the fact that the suspect was charged with the crime, not convicted of it (nor is there any quotation by the alleged offender).

Below, Roma boys have been accused but not convicted, and their crime is also given in the past tense (with strong agency attributed to the offenders):

(Catalano 2015, 33) Sei ragazze rom hanno rapinato, aggredito e malmenato un tabaccaio di Roma. [Six Roma boys stole from, assaulted and beat a shop owner in Rome].

What is particularly interesting about this example is that a few sentences later in the same article, the shop owner’s actions (and failure to stop the boys) are discussed using the past conditional, as in the Mafia reports. What this demonstrates is that journalists clearly know the proper way that crimes should be reported before a conviction has been made, but they ignore this when referring to the Roma youth:

(Catalano 2015, 33) Secondo quanto ha riferito ai carabinieri, l’uomo avrebbe tentato di fermare le nomadi... [According to what he told the carabinieri, the man supposedly tried to stop the nomads (literally “would have tried”).]

By viewing the examples from media discourse about groups not in power, it is clear that the examples from Texts 12 and 14 illustrate the use of metonymy to

downgrade agency in corporate and Mafia crimes. These findings are supported in Machin and Mayr (2012, 73; see also van Leeuwen 1995, 2008, and Fairclough 1995/2010), in which agency is demonstrated to be elided by the use of certain nouns and nominalizations (which are also metonyms).

4.2 Similarities in image and its relation to the text

In addition to verbal metonymy, another striking similarity in U.S. and Italian reports is the types of metonymies used to represent CEOs and the Mafia positively in image. This is often in contrast with the negative information in the text. The following examples demonstrate the visual metonymy SIZE/CAMERA ANGLE FOR STATUS/POWER in which the place of business of the corporation (Goldman Sachs) and the homes or place of business of Mafia offenders stand for the status and power associated with these organizations, and when combined with the metonymy INSTITUTION/ORGANIZATION FOR INDIVIDUALS, they give status/power to those individuals.

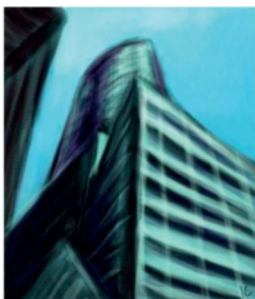


Photo 1: Text 6. *The Goldman Sachs Building in NY*. This drawing is similar to the photograph in the original article. View the original photo at: <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702303491304575187920845670844>

In the case of the photo of the Goldman Sachs building, the underlying message is that metonymically (and metaphorically), Goldman Sachs is on top of the world, demonstrating how “the sign of economic capital may be just as effective as the thing itself” (Thwaites, Davies, and Mule 2002, 198). In these cases, the texts describe the crimes they (allegedly) committed but the photos provide a positive and awe-inspiring visual metonym of the power of the institution and, by metonymy, of the person/s who committed the crime. These photos are a good example of the general category of “extension,” where “two items – one verbal, one visual – provide different, but semantically related information” (van Leeuwen, 2005, 22), and more specifically, the type of extension which is “contrast,” where the “content of the text contrasts with that of the image,” and vice versa (Ibid, 230).



Photo 2: Text 17. *Ndrangheta: 47 arresti tra ‘colletti* Screen shot from video taken by the authors. View the original video at: http://www.repubblica.it/cronaca/2013/11/06/news/ndrangheta_47_arresti_tra_i_colletti_bianchi_-70323241/

This relation between text and image is sometimes called “anchorage” (see Barthes 1977, 38–41) because the assumption is that the image comes first and the text provides a fixed or specific meaning for it. However, we agree with van Leeuwen that the relation between the image and the text is not linear and that “every link is, at least in principle, reversible” (2005, 230) and reciprocal.

Another example of extension/contrast is through the metonymy CLOTHES/OBJECT FOR (high) STATUS, as seen below.



Photo 3: Text 8. *Stewart leaves the courthouse with her attorney, Robert Morvillo (right), after the verdict.* This drawing is similar to the photograph in the original article. View the original photograph at: http://money.cnn.com/2004/03/05/news/companies/martha_verdict/

In Photo 3 (CEO Martha Stewart), her clothing (a fur stole) conveys a message of power and high status, in contrast to the text, which reports on the crimes that

Martha Stewart committed and the fact that she was convicted of those crimes. Below, there is a similar strategy in a text that recounts in fairly neutral terms the terrible crimes that the offenders committed along with images (Photos 7 and 8) that give a favorable impression of Bernard Madoff and Pasquale Manfredi, both of whom are smiling at the viewers (see the discussion in 4.1.3 above of familiarity/ closeness/ intimacy/trust created by nicknames – here they are created by the image). This competing message creates less distance between the subjects and the reader because of the other metonymies used (discussed above): (PHYSICAL) CHARACTERISTIC FOR PERSONALITY in which a pleasant face and a smile represent the character of the person (e.g., friendly, kind), and CLOTHES/OBJECT FOR STATUS (a suit in the case of Madoff; a clean, stylish shirt in the case of Manfredi).



Photo 7: Text 4. *Bernard Madoff*. Copyright *Madoff.com* View the original photograph at: <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB122903010173099377>



Photo 8: Text 12. *Pasquale Manfredi*. Copyright, *La Repubblica* View the original photograph at: <http://www.repubblica.it/cronaca/2010/03/16/news/ndrangheta-manfredi-2685005/>

This contrast between text and image is very different from the crime reports of people without power, where the text is mostly unfavorable and the alleged offenders are usually shown in standard police mug shots with drab clothing (Catalano and Waugh 2013a). In this case, there is extension and the specific type, “similarity” (where “the content of the text is similar to that of the image” – van Leeuwen, 2005, 230), rather than contrast.

In the following photo, extension/contrast is shown through four metonymies in the image in relation to the caption:



Photo 4: Text 6. CEO Lloyd Blankfein has **drawn heat** for Goldman’s **rich pay and profits** in the wake of the tax-payer bailout of the financial system. This drawing is similar to the photograph in the original article. View the original photograph at: <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702303491304575187920845670844>

Here, the interaction between the textual neutralization of the crime (e.g. **rich pay and profits**, SIMPLIFIED EVENT FOR COMPLEX SUB-EVENTS, with mitigation) and the visual focus on well-clothed Lloyd Blankfein (CLOTHES/OBJECT FOR (high) STATUS), the look of grim determination on his face (FACIAL EXPRESSION FOR EMOTION) and his finger pointing to someone out of view (POINTING FINGER FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF HIS ADVERSARY), work against other elements in the article that report the crimes his company is accused of. The photo appears in the context of a court hearing about the case of securities fraud against Goldman Sachs, and therefore we know that government lawyers are on the other side of the pointing finger. Therefore, the covert message in the photo is that a member of the government is (metonymically) to blame, not Blankfein or his company.

In addition, the textual metonymy of **drawn heat** motivates the metaphor ANGER IS FIRE/HEAT, in which the response of the general public against exorbitant bonuses taken by company executives after the financial crisis is compared to the heat coming from an energy source such as fire. Since fire and explosions are

metonymically associated with an attack, such as in a war, this then connects to the metaphor GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATIONS ARE WAR (to be discussed in the next section). These text-image interactions demonstrate that while we assume that the media is speaking on behalf of the public, “they also represent powerful capital interests such as Goldman Sachs” (Catalano and Waugh 2013a, 416), which should not be surprising, given that the source is the *Wall Street Journal*, whose readers include Wall Street brokers, bankers, and corporate executives, and which is owned by the media mogul billionaire Rupert Murdoch.

4.3 Interaction of metonymy and metaphor in text and image

As mentioned above, the texts we looked at also contain the interactions of metonymy and metaphor for various purposes. This is a significant finding that underscores another facet of the importance of the still generally overlooked device of metonymy, especially since the cases we found are further evidence for what Goossens (1990/2002, 85) and Mittelberg and Waugh (2009) refer to as “metaphor from metonymy” and “first metonymy, then metaphor” respectively. Here below are a few more examples and an explanation of how the two work together.

4.3.1 Metaphor: Government investigations/operations are war or natural disasters

Text 2.

- *Now Mr. Dimon’s tenure is **engulfed in turmoil**, the consequence of **fighting a multifront battle** with federal authorities **scrutinizing everything**....*

Above, metonymies such as SIMPLIFIED EVENT FOR COMPLEX SUB-EVENT (**turmoil** and **battle**) hide exactly what is happening, but their semantic value leads eventually to the metaphor of GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATIONS/OPERATIONS ARE WAR, similar to the metaphor discussed above. In this case we can see how the government is portrayed as a powerful opponent and the CEO and his company (J.P. Morgan) as weak victims who are subject to being **scrutinized**. The same is true of the Italian texts, in which almost all of the investigations are referred to (metonymically) as **operations** and they all have catchy names that signify interesting messages as well, as in the following example:

Text 17.

- *E’ uno spaccato inquietante quello svelato all’alba di oggi con l’**operazione “Araba fenice”** che ha portato all’arresto di 47 persone (29 in carcere gli altri ai domiciliari).* (A disturbing break up was revealed at dawn today with

Operation “Arab Phoenix” that brought the arrest of 47 people (29 to prison and others on house arrest).)



Photo 5: Text 20. *Yellow flames* Copyright *La Repubblica* (Roma) View the original photograph at: <http://roma.repubblica.it/cronaca/2013/10/29/news/camorra-da-caserta-ad-acilia-15-arrestati-legati-ai-casalesi-69717581/>



Photo 6: Text 18. Special forces ‘Yellow flames’.⁶ Copyright *Il Giornale* View the original photograph at: <http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/cronache/ndrangheta-retacolletti-bianchi-47-arrestati-e-90-964973.html>

Photos 5 and 6 display the way in which police cars and police car parts function in Italian texts to stand for the actions of the investigation. In Photo 5, the activated blue sirens and headlights of the police cars are metonymic signs of the dynamic, quick and active pursuit of Mafia criminals by the **Fiamme Gialle** [Yellow Flames] of Naples. The name **Yellow Flames** is based on the metonymy POLICE CAR DECORATION FOR (NAME OF) SPECIAL POLICE UNIT/FORCE

6. Photos 4, 6, 7 and 10 do not have captions in the original articles, thus we have given them a caption in order to provide some context. Original captions from other texts are denoted with italics underneath the photos.

(yellow stripes stand for **Yellow Flames**)⁷ and VEHICLE FOR INSTITUTION. The metonymy associated with the name **Yellow Flames** also leads to the metaphor GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATIONS/OPERATIONS ARE NATURAL DISASTERS through which the police force (which is metonymically associated with the government) is metaphorically equated to a bright and rapid fire that will take over and overwhelm the enemy (Mafia offenders). Thus, the use of **Yellow Flames** (i.e. Photos 5 and 6), as well as names of police operations such as **Fire** and **New Fire** (Text 15), are further examples of metonymy/ metaphor interactions between image and text.

4.3.2 Metaphor: CEOs/mafia are family

Examples of the metonymy DEFINING PROPERTY FOR CATEGORY (also referred to as ATTRIBUTE FOR ENTITY by Hart (2011)), in which the family relationship is highlighted, mapping characteristics of family onto CEOs and the Mafia, were also found in the data. These metonymies lead to the metaphor of CEOs/MAFIA ARE FAMILY (found to be a dominant metaphor in discourse about CEO and Mafia crimes in Catalano 2011). Here are a few examples from the texts that work to create a positive image of the subjects by focusing on their family members:

Text 7.

- *Mr. Lay's **family members** huddled around him. Elizabeth Vittor, Mr. Lay's **daughter** and a lawyer who had worked on his defense team, sobbed uncontrollably.*

Text 13.

- *La vita dorata del mafioso Roncadore, ex insegnante di educazione fisica, a Londra, con **moglie**, figlia di un ex console, e **due figli**, era nota da tempo. [The golden life of mobster Roncadore, ex physical education teacher, in London, with [his] **wife**, daughter of an ex-consulate member, and **two sons**, was well known for some time].*

5. Differences between how CEOs and Mafia groups are represented

In addition to the many similarities in how CEOs and Mafia groups are represented, there are also some differences, largely due to the contrasting political, cultural and historical contexts in both countries.

7. Or vice versa, since it's hard to know which came first — the name of the force or the stripes on the car; in any case there is a reciprocal relationship between them.

5.1 *Portrayal of the government and government figures*

The most significant disparity between the two lies in how the government and government figures are portrayed in the discourse. For example, in the CEO crime reports, no U.S. government figures are present in the images and even in Photo 4 they are metonymically (virtually) represented as being on the other side of Lloyd Blankfein's pointing finger. The government is also portrayed covertly in the text in a negative way (Machin and Mayr 2012), such as in the following example (which is ultimately connected to the metaphor GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATIONS/ OPERATIONS ARE WAR):

Text 2.

- *For the Justice Department, often criticized for being soft on big banks, the deal suggests that the Obama administration's crackdown on Wall Street has gained some momentum in recent months.*

The above metonym **deal** also highlights the way, and ease, by which corporate criminals escape punishment through “settlements” and “deals” that the U.S. government makes with them (see Taibbi 2014 for more about this). In addition, nowhere is there any indication of regret or apology to the public for the astonishing fact that while major crimes have been committed “not one individual had to pay a dime of his own money in damages” (Taibbi 2014, 323). Instead, the government is portrayed as being much tougher than they actually are on the CEOs and corporations, which are portrayed as poor victims in the war against them and, as we saw above, are shown in a much more positive, sympathetic light both in text and image.

By contrast, Italian texts and images featured both metonymic over-representation of government officials and elites and over-completion through many seemingly irrelevant metonymic details that are relevant within a more general negative or positive portrayal of a person or group (van Dijk, 1991, 185).

Text 20.

- *I finanzieri del comando provinciale di Roma, a seguito di un'indagine coordinata dai magistrati della Procura della Repubblica di Napoli-Dda hanno eseguito due ordinanze di custodia cautelare in carcere, emesse dal gip del Tribunale di Napoli, nei confronti di 15 persone.* [The financiers of the provincial command of Rome, as a result of a coordinated investigation by magistrates of the public prosecutor of Naples-DDA, performed two orders of remand in custody, issued by the investigating judge of the Court of Naples, against 15 people].

In the images, over-representation was accomplished through a metonymy such as VEHICLE FOR INSTITUTION in which the police car, or part of the car, metonymically stands for Italian law enforcement in general as in the following photograph:



Photo 9: Text 15. No caption Copyright *Il Messaggero* View the original photograph at: http://www.ilmessaggero.it/PRIMOPIANO/CRONACA/brindisi_arresti_mafia_operazione_sacra_corona_unita/notizie/361743.shtml

Hence, the Italian government is shown as being active, working to arrest and pursue Mafia criminals, and it appears that they are making progress, since major arrests are highlighted and (over-)reported. However, in most of the reports we looked at, nothing is said about convictions, and therefore we do not gain an accurate portrayal of how many of these people are actually punished for their crimes.

In addition to the positive portrayal of law enforcement, two texts also represent Mafia individuals positively while two represent them negatively (in a mug shot in Text 12, Photo 8 (above) and handcuffed and standing next to two giant police officers in Text 19, Photo 10).



Photo 10: Text 19. *Lex boss Antonino Lo Giudice* [The ex-boss, Antonino Lo Giudice] View the original photograph at: <http://www.lastampa.it/2013/11/15/italia/cronache/arrestatolex-boss-lo-giudice-era-fuggito-dai-domiciliari-KxVginoxoh-B5o0AFMMKPOJJ/pagina.html>

5.2 Use of English, reference to Hollywood films, ties to youth (popular) culture for “coolness”

A final difference in how the groups are portrayed can be seen in the metonymic USE OF ENGLISH/REFERENCE TO HOLLYWOOD FILMS/TIE TO YOUTH (POPULAR) CULTURE FOR “COOLNESS”. In this metonymy, the use of English is employed for positive representation of both law enforcement and the Mafia. In the following examples from Text 15, law enforcement officials tell the journalist the English names of the operations, which convey a certain tie to youth culture and “coolness”.

Text 15.

- *Si tratta del seguito delle due operazioni “Fire” e “New Fire”, sempre per associazione mafiosa* [This is the result of two operations, “Fire” and “New-Fire”, again for Mafia type association]

Text 15.

- *L’operazione è stata chiamata Game Over.* [The operation was called **Game Over**]

This “coolness” factor is also exemplified in Photo 10 (above) where the sunglasses (and perhaps sheer size) of the police officers denote how cool and calm they are in performing their police duties. The use of references to Hollywood films about the mob also conjures up glamorous and positive images of the role of the police officers and the Mafia offenders. In addition, they increase news values by adding the “Hollywood” element with ‘Scarface’ and “coolness” with Facebook, such as in the following example:

Text 12.

- *Fatale per lui la sua passione per internet. Manfredi, infatti, aveva un profilo su Facebook e si faceva chiamare ‘Scarface’, come il trafficante di cocaina interpretato da Al Pacino nel film diretto da Brian De Palma.* [His passion for the internet was fatal for him. Manfredi, in fact, had a **Facebook** profile in which he called himself ‘**Scarface**’, like the cocaine trafficker portrayed by Al Pacino in the film directed by Brian De Palma].

The above example also illustrates nicely the recursive semiotic process associated with Hollywood films such as “The Godfather”. The Mafia made an impression on Hollywood, which in turn glamorized the Mafia and made them appear almost honorable; then, mobsters like Pasquale Manfredi, recursively envisioned themselves as the “honorable men” portrayed by Hollywood (i.e. his Facebook name

'Scarface'). Research by Penfold-Mounce supports our findings, noting that this tendency of making criminals into celebrities is common, and helps to glamorize and popularize organized crime as a "bit of a laugh" which encourages the public to enjoy, admire and respect crime and criminality (2009, 31).

6. Conclusion

Findings from this study give evidence pertinent to our initial concern as to why powerful groups are often not punished for their crimes: there are numerous potent strategies that represent them positively in the media, especially the use of metonymy and metaphor in both image and text and the interaction between metonymy and metaphor, which covertly leave a positive impression of both groups. In addition, nicknames, vague terminology and other techniques of neutralization and abstraction together with visual and verbal messages that either reinforce or contradict each other are used for both groups, all of which lead to their covert positive representation.

Some differences between the two groups studied include the more positive portrayal of the Italian government in text and image as well as the presence of the Italian government, police vehicles and arrests in reports of Mafia crimes, whereas reports of CEO crimes focused on **deals** (or **pacts**) being made with the government. Additionally, some Italian reports use English, Hollywood references, and Facebook, resulting in a certain "coolness", a tie to youth/popular culture and increased news value, while no evidence of this was found in CEO reports.

Since this study used a small but purposeful sample, we cannot assume that what we found in this analysis is representative of all media reports of both groups. However, we can say that the attention to details in this comparison uncovered striking similarities that point to power as an important factor in how groups are portrayed in the media; we have shown how text and image work together to send messages that are not obvious to the average reader, and how this is accomplished through metonymy as well as the interaction of metonymy and metaphor in text and image. Although we are not accusing Italian and American journalists of being in collaboration with criminal organizations, we can say that the various types of metonymy we've reported on here contribute to the dominant ideology which maintains social inequalities and is consciously or unconsciously (re)produced (and buried) in media texts.

Despite this finding, there is much more work to be done in defining other types of metonymy and exactly how the verbal and non-verbal elements interact and work together multimodally to send sometimes similar, sometimes conflicting messages. We encourage more research in the field of metonymy and metaphor that works with real texts in issues of social justice in order to use this knowledge to unpack and demystify the neutralization of or familiarity with

dangerous people in power through metonymies/metaphors that become “the natural way of viewing the world” (Santa Ana 2002, 42). In addition, we want to emphasize that analyses that fail to include non-verbal data are not complete and don’t capture the entirety of the semiotic messages being sent. Moreover, readers should be aware of the verbal and non-verbal manipulation that occurs in this type of media discourse, and of the political, economic and social consequences through the influencing of policies and laws that can have drastic consequences locally and globally. This message is particularly compelling given the recent rise of right-wing populism world wide. Recognizing and countering these strategies could lead to a greater sensitivity on the part of the public which could “become the catalyst out of which stronger and tougher enforcement programs could blossom” (Box 2002, 52) and lead to more convictions of CEOs, Mafia groups, and their political allies.

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