The Anthropology of Crime and Criminalization

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Abstract

The ambiguity of the concept of crime is evident in the two strands of anthropological research covered in this review. One strand, the anthropology of criminalization, explores how state authorities, media, and citizen discourse define particular groups and practices as criminal, with prejudicial consequences. Examples are drawn from research on peasant rebellion, colonialism, youth, and racially or ethnically marked urban poor. The other strand traces ethnographic work on more or less organized illegal and predatory activity: banditry, rustling, trafficking, street gangs, and mafias. Although a criminalizing perspective tends to conflate these diverse forms of "organized" crime, in particular erasing the boundary between street gangs and drug trafficking, the forms have discrete histories and motivations. Their particularities, as well as their historical interactions, illuminate everyday responses to crime and suggest ways to put in perspective the "crime talk" of today, which borders on apocalyptic.

INTRODUCTION

Amidst the powerful transformations of industrial capitalism and imperialism in nineteenth-century Europe, the word "crime," already burdened by an uneasy mix of moral and legal implications, became the focus of the new science of criminology. Criminological discourse linked criminal activity—defined as a violation of public law and/or harm to public welfare—mainly to the "dangerous classes," whose uprooting, dispossession, congregation in cities, and potential for rebellion threatened the forming bourgeois, and colonial, social order (Beirne 1993). The resulting close association between criminality and marginalized elements of society was reinforced by the pioneering urban ethnographies of the Chicago School of sociology in the 1930s, creating a conceptual challenge that is difficult to overcome. Tending to criminalize powerless groups, above all their "deviant" male youth, such a construction inflates the significance of property crimes committed by have-nots while bracketing off other relevant phenomena for separate consideration, the following in particular: entrepreneurially creative, more-or-less professionalized white collar and organized crime (Braithwaite 1985, Reynolds 1995); crimes of state and capitalist enterprise whose harm can be horrific (Mattei & Nader 2008, Nordstrom 2007); illegal activities inexorably flowing from coercive or prohibitionist legal orders, possibly paving the way for normative change (Durkheim 1933, Naylor 2002); and the sneaky thrills of transgression that, although subject to cultural and spatial constraints, do not bear the stamp of any group and may have little to do with material acquisition (Hayward 2004).

Anthropologist editors of recent collections on crime have confronted these effects of power through a comparative and historical perspective. For Heyman & Smart (1999), "state-illegality relations," understood as interactive and changeable over time, underscore how states, "claiming to act in the name of collective opinion" (Greenhouse 2003, p. 276), selectively ignore or sponsor some illegal activities while vigorously prosecuting others that many consider licit or morally just. For Parnell (2003), crime and law, both social constructs, are created as people differentially experience wrenching historical processes. Produced along somewhat separate lines, the two interconnect in complex ways. For Comaroff & Comaroff (2006), the post–Cold War expansion of democratic governance and privatization of economic resources have generated a "dialectic" of law and disorder in which "crime and politics . . . endlessly redefine each other" (p. 11). Although pertaining to first world countries, and quite markedly to the second world of the former Soviet Bloc, the interplay manifests itself most intensely in the third world's post-colonies, whose histories include having experienced the law as a cover for colonial predation.

Here, we pursue two lines of anthropological inquiry, both also informed by a sense of comparative history. One is the study of criminalization: the processes by which states, media, and fearful citizens define particular groups and practices as "criminal," evoking a threatening criminal imaginary. The other is ethnographic attention to forms of illegal predation—banditry, rustling, theft, racketeering, and trafficking—whose specific trajectories are entangled with the destabilizing effects of state-legitimated political economies. Taken together, these themes enable us to provide a concluding reflection on global crime, experienced as increasingly virulent and dangerous in many parts of our contemporary world and an issue that urgently awaits anthropology's contribution. (For want of space, we only touch on adjacent anthropological literatures on law, violence, racism, human rights, borders, prisons, policing, corruption, informal economies, youth, poverty and prostitution.)

PARADIGMS OF CRIMINOLOGY

The founding text of Western criminology, Beccaria's 1764 *Essay on Crimes and Punishments*, had, as its central purpose, disaggregating crime as "harm to society" from sin as "offense to God" and establishing a system of punishment that eschewed crowd-pleasing

bodily pain and torture (Beirne 1993, pp. 22–26). Influenced by the Enlightenment idea of a social contract between sovereign and populace, the latter conceptualized as an aggregate of self-seeking individuals moved by material and sensual passions, Beccaria proposed that violators of the contract were equally responsible and deserved equal punishment proportionate to their crimes. Along with this prescription for punitive reform, he hinted at a "pre-sociological" theory of crime, interpreting theft as an outgrowth of the "misery and desperation" of the propertyless and warning about the "murky and mysterious rapture" of "turbulent mobs" (pp. 45–46).

Over the course of the nineteenth century, as European states began to collect statistics on their subjects, it became apparent that persons prosecuted for crimes came disproportionately from certain classes and regions. With his 1876 publication of *L'Uomo Delinquente* (*Criminal Man*), Italian army psychiatrist and self-styled anthropologist Cesare Lombroso, a leading advocate of positivist methods, introduced an hypothesis that would be debated in international congresses of criminal anthropology throughout the 1880s. For Lombroso and his followers the specific challenge was to explain the higher rate of crime in southern compared with northern Italy. They were aware of the miserable condition of the South's landless laborers and were prepared to explore every imaginable cause of their law-breaking, from climate to religion. Under the influence of the late Victorian social Darwinist hegemony, however, and alarmed by the growing immigrant communities in Italy's industrializing northern cities, they settled on a genetic factor. Like all of the "savage races," who "regard homicide as a mere incident, and as glorious in case it is the outcome of revenge," southern Italian men were said to harbor a congenital "Latin" weakness for fury, vengeance, carnal love, and drunkenness, making them, in effect, "born criminals" (quoted in Baker 1998, p. 58; see also Gibson 1998; Jones 1986, pp. 82–105; Rafter & Gibson 2004; Taylor et al. 1973).

Positivist criminology is not necessarily racist; criticized by contemporaries in France and Italy, Lombroso himself demoted the significance of biology in subsequent research (Beirne 1993, p. 154). Twentieth-century practitioners endlessly tested relations between deprivation and delinquent behavior. In the 1970s, however, Foucault's influential *Discipline and Punish* (1977) folded into a single trajectory even the "softest" variants, including a Marxist criminological tradition. Beccaria had begot Bentham, whose utopian prison design, the Panopticon, was a metaphor for the modern disciplinary society, in which ideas of prisoner rehabilitation coexisted with ideas of draconian punishment. Criminals could be monstrous or juridical subjects, possibly even exonerated by underlying circumstances. Either way, the crime rate did not diminish. Himself a prison reformer, Foucault detailed how the surveillance, categorizing, and labeling practices of the French penal authorities produced crime and made recidivism inevitable.

The civil rights and anticolonial movements of the 1960s and 1970s, so important to Foucault's thinking, underwrote a new, "critical criminology." Birmingham School researchers, for example, explored how "moral entrepreneurs," using the press and media, engineered public responses to youth delinquency that were vastly disproportionate to any "actual" danger, creating a politically resonant "moral panic" (Cohen 1972, Goode & Ben-Yehuda 1994, Hall et al. 1978; see also Scheingold 1991). The dynamics of fear, the effects of labeling, and the perspectives of incriminated persons entered research design (e.g., Chancer 2005). Notwithstanding this paradigm shift, however, the "modern" criminal justice systems of Western capitalist societies maintained an overall coherence in which abnormal psychology, theories of anomie and relative deprivation, "subculture theory," and the theory of labeling jockeyed for position within a broader set of arguments about whether to locate responsibility for crime with defective persons and families or with morbid social conditions (see Garland 2001). Either way, the crime problem involved the lower classes.

Displacing critical criminology is what Garland calls a "crime complex," emerging since the 1970s from the risks and insecurities of neoliberal capitalism and welfare state decline. In both the United States and England, which he compares, the rehabilitative ideal has given way to "expressive justice," evident in a populist language of condemnation and punishment. Criminologists place new emphasis on the symbolism of penal sanctions, while philosophers create rationales for retribution—the more so as an angry public, righteously demanding strong punishments, routinely evokes the figure of the victim and the victim's kin (Garland 2001, pp. 9–13). Simon, in *Governing through Crime* (2007), examines the implications of these changes for the United States, where the frayed safety net has left individuals ever more responsible for their own stability amid dramatic economic and demographic change. Criminals are those who refuse to "responsibilize" themselves, threatening national and local security. The effects have been devastating for poor, minority, and immigrant communities, but it is Simon's argument that all classes and groups are affected by the fear of crime—as targets of criminal justice, as "eager consumers" of public and private mechanisms for lowering risk, and as subjects of a government allowed to become more authoritarian. Wacquant (1999, 2002) draws similar conclusions for France.

CRIMINOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Lombroso's scientific study of the "body, mind and habits" of the "born" criminal rested on the premise, familiar to early evolutionist anthropology, that crime among the "civilized races" was an "atavistic" throwback to "savage custom" (see Stocking 1987, p. 223). His *Criminal Woman* was translated into English in 1895; in 1911 Gina Lombroso, his daughter, made *Criminal Man* accessible through a compilation of its main ideas. Together these texts bestowed scientific authority on U.S. "criminal anthropologists" who, like Frederick Starr in 1897 and E.A. Hooten in 1927, explained the dispropor-

tionate incarceration of Blacks compared with native-born and foreign-born Whites in terms of Blacks' "natural" predisposition to criminal activity (Baker 1998, pp. 58–59; Jones 1986, pp. 108–25). This tawdry genealogy aside, until the 1950s, anthropological research was oriented toward small-scale societies in which deviance had a moral rather than legal status, and violators of norms were shamed, ridiculed, held up for retribution, or punished as witches or sorcerers. Such a framework seemed, at the time, to be an archaic inheritance from the past, destined to be superseded by modern criminal jurisprudence (e.g., Malinowski 1926; but see Comaroff & Comaroff 2004).

Much of what early ethnographers documented under the rubric of witchcraft and sorcery resonates with the crimes most feared today: assault, theft, burglary, and the perverse dissemination of addictive substances and pleasures. This is because predatory takings and seductions are not isomorphic with modern relations of property and markets but assume myriad forms, including the occult removal of bodily fluids and stores of food that underpin health and well-being, skills and harvests, trusting relationships and viable offspring—in short, good fortune itself (Favret-Saada 1980). Victims feel violated in their person, home, circle of dependents, and sense of security, regardless of the content of the loss or its cause. Underscoring this resonance is the parallel between criminologists' debates over criminal responsibility and Evans-Pritchard's (1937) classic effort to distinguish witchcraft from sorcery: Witches derive their power from an inherent condition they cannot control, whereas sorcerers' acts are deliberate.

More to the point is Geschiere's argument in *The Modernity of Witchcraft* (1997), that indigenous concepts of occult takings and seductions, far from residues of premodern "tradition," have developed with the dynamics of capital accumulation and political competition under postcolonial conditions. We see, below, that property crime may be justified in the name of equity, as a brake on sudden accumulations of wealth that appear to come from

nowhere and taunt those whose fortunes are in decline. Conversely, it may be justified as clever enterpreneurship. Interpretations of the covert, magical depletion of another's vitality and vital relationships similarly reference moral criticisms of both (accumulative) greed and (leveling) envy and are a suitably ambiguous clue to rapidly transforming social hierarchies (e.g., Kelly 1994, Knauft 1985). With the expansion of neoliberal capitalism, the world has seen a coincident spike in both crime rates and accusations of witchcraft and sorcery, including a "spectacular rise" of "witch burnings" and "zombie conjurings" (Comaroff & Comaroff 1999, 2000).

ANTHROPOLOGY AND CRIMINALIZATION

In the 1960s and 1970s, as sociologists explored the dynamics of labeling and moral panic, anthropologists became engaged with peasant studies, a field influenced by Marxist social history. A key text at the time was Eric Hobsbawm's *Primitive Rebels* (1959), in which he introduced "social bandits": persons defined by the state as criminals who, however, spring from, represent, and are protected by peasant communities beset by crises of livelihood and oppression. Blurring the line between crime and rebellion, bandits were sheltered by villagers who identified with their defiance. In a controversial move, Hobsbawm described them as "prepolitical," driven by inchoate rage.

The social bandit concept, although developed primarily in relation to nineteenth-century agrarian struggles in the Mediterranean and Latin America, was soon applied to anticolonial resistance movements in Africa and Asia. Contributors to a volume edited by Crummey on African rebellion (1986) recount the careers of "heroic criminals" whose exploits were entangled with social protest but who were pejoratively labeled "bandits" by the authorities. In his chapter on early-twentieth-century Namibia, Gordon (1986), for example, reconstructs how the word "Bushman" arose as a criminalizing, blame-the-victim designation

for people who, having lost land to, and been compelled to work for, German settler farmers, absconded with these farmers' cattle and goats into "the bush."

Also widely read was E. P. Thompson's *Whigs and Hunters*, which blamed the intensification of poaching in eighteenth-century England on stiffened game law enforcement that favored landlords' claims to deer and ambition to enclose their estates. Crime, Thompson insisted, is problematic "when we simply take over the definitions of those who own property, control the state, and pass the laws which 'name' what shall be crimes" (1975, pp. 193–94). Linebaugh, Thompson's student, subsequently analyzed the records of persons taken to the hangman at Tyburn in London between 1750 and 1776. New overkill legislation had defined as theft punishable by death the customary artisanal and outworker practice of gleaning leftover materials from the shop floor (1991).

Like Hobsbawm, Thompson and his students inspired new ways of approaching crime in Europe's colonies and former colonies. One example is Colin Sumner (1982), a comparative criminologist of "underdevelopment" who considered *Whigs and Hunters* to be "possibly the best historical study of crime and justice in a metropolitan country." Sumner praised Thompson above all for demonstrating the "dwarfed" significance of poaching when compared with Britain's legally sanctioned slaving and military imperialism of the same epoch (p. 9). Africa's newly independent nations, he feared, were making criminality synonymous with poor youth gangs, conveniently overlooking what Ugandan criminologist Mashanga summarized as the "mass murders, massacres, genocide and general brutality and terrorism against civilians by those in power" (quoted on p. 2).

Guha, a pioneer of subaltern studies, criticized Hobsbawm for rendering banditry as "prepolitical." His 1983 book on peasant insurgency in Bengal does, however, respect both his and Thompson's insights into criminalization processes, presenting crime and rebellion as two contrasting "codes" for defining the same

phenomenon. To peasants the dacoit Lodhas of western Bengal were mythic champions of justice who kidnapped or stole from greedy moneylenders, officials, and landlords; conversely, persons with property and power described the dacoits as terrifying threats to public order. In a similar vein, Martin (2003) traces how the elites and press of Morelos used Lombrosian criminal anthropology to construct Emiliano Zapata as an animalistic criminal rather than a leader of the Mexican revolution.

Thompson's (1967) "Time, Work Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism" informs Merry's (1998) overview of European colonizers' attempts to criminalize the everyday practices of their colonial subjects, applying the unfamiliar legal framework of "harm to society" as distinct from harm to specific others punishable through compensation. Ordinances typically interdicted gambling, drinking, and dancing; festivals; sexuality; and a "vagrant" lack of industrial discipline. In addition to synthesizing a range of case studies (e.g., Chanock 1985, Cole & Chaikin 1990, Cooper 1987, Gordon & Meggitt 1985, Roberts & Mann 1991, Snyder & Hay 1987), Merry uses Hawaiian court records to document a shift from the criminalization of "vice" to the severe interdiction of "work violations" as British and U.S. planters set up the sugar economy (Merry 1998, pp. 33–34). Several anthropologists of colonialism note a comparable stance toward the "dangerous classes" in the metropolitan societies from which the colonists hailed. Everywhere, it seemed, authorities were rattled by "outlaws" who hovered at the edges of protest; who disappeared into unfamiliar territory, including taverns and gambling halls; who, cloaked in disguises, evaded recognition; or who, as "vagrants," slipped across political jurisdictions, embarrassing the quest for orderly rule and labor productivity (e.g., Arnold 1985, Freitag 1985, Rafael 1999, Stoler 1985, Tolen 1991).

Like studies of peasants and colonial "others," anthropological research on contemporary youth flags the construction of criminality. Studies of hang-around or hooligan youth, and youth incivility in Europe, for example,

highlight the role of media in stigmatizing "naughty areas" where young people congregate and make note of older people's anger with the police for their seeming lack of urgency when called upon to intervene (Bailleau 1998, pp. 99–100; Girling et al. 1998, pp. 316–17; Martineau 2006; Pearson 1983). Recent essays on African youth (e.g., Cole 2004, Mains 2007, Walsh 2003, Weiss 2002) illustrate how such attitudes preclude understanding of "late modern" youth entrapment: the condition of having no work (or respected work), being unable to marry according to community expectations, and wallowing in unstructured time while surrounded by images of glittering consumer emporia. These conditions, not criminal intent, explain why so many young people hold polite society ransom to a "riotous return of the repressed" (Comaroff & Comaroff 2000, pp. 306–9).

Criminalizing processes are a familiar theme in literature on the United States, whose "war on drugs" has exposed pervasive racism. Rather than attempting to understand the crack "epidemic" of the 1980s in the context of economic restructuring and associated collapse of government services, the public and the authorities preferred to blame Black crack users and incarcerate them at rates 100 times higher than the more affluent (mostly White) users of powder cocaine—an approach that contributed not only to the tripling of the U.S. prison population since the 1970s, but also to the staggering, recent statistic that 1 in every 9 African American men between the ages of 20 and 34 is behind bars (see Bourgois 1995, 1997; Feldman 1994; Mauer 1999; Mullings 2003; Reinarman & Levine 1997; Tonry 1995). Today, images of methamphetamine fuel criminalizing sentiments against Mexican immigrants (Garriott 2008, Pine 2007), compounding what Inda (2006) discovered: that media and policy initiatives constructing Mexicans as illegal have elevated their risk of death in border crossings.

Caldeira's (2000) ethnography of crime and insecurity in São Paulo, Brazil, around 1990 highlights criminalization processes that shade into vigilantism. Coincident with the

liberalization of the Brazilian economy, shift to democratic rule, and spread of drug use and trafficking, the city charted an increase in muggings, robberies, car-jackings, and kidnappings, but "crime talk" functioned mainly to stereotype poor *favela* dwellers, recent immigrants from the Northeast, youth, and women of dark complexion. Fear propelled a reshaping of the urban landscape, evident in aggressive slum clearance, the multiplication of "restricted enclaves" (see also Low 2001), and the view that human rights should bow before extra-legal violence on the part of the police or private security guards. Taussig, a witness to the 2001 paramilitary *limpieza* or cleansing of "criminals" from the lawless Cuaca Valley of Colombia, documents a similar contempt for the penal code and populist support for free-lance murder and brutality (2003, pp. 22–47).

As a criminalization process, vigilantism is ambiguous. For Linger (2003), the extrajudicial executions of democratic Brazil reenact the "wild power" of the now defunct military dictatorship, effective for instilling terror even when actual assaults are only sporadic. Scheper-Hughes (2006, p. 157), researching the phenomenon in a market town of Brazil's Northeast, cites the "complicity of the middle classes" in unleashing death squads to "sweep the streets of . . . social garbage." But the lower classes were collusive, too, illustrating what Caldeira calls "one of the most perverse ironies"—that supporters of police who kill "come from the same social group as the victims of the police: the poor residents of the neighborhoods in the peripheries" (2006, p. 109). According to Goldstein (2005), who studied "flexible self-help justice" in Cochabamba, the angry residents who episodically gather to lynch suspected criminals, tying them up for beatings or stonings, generally belong to the poorest barrios, are of indigenous origin, and have suffered mightily from Bolivia's neoliberal restructuring.

BANDITS AND RUSTLERS

Analyses of criminalization are at times constructionist—crime is a "danger on the borders . . . how we explain it and whom we blame are highly symptomatic of who we are and how we organize our relations with others" (Girling et al. 1998, p. 305)—at times exonerative: Criminal acts occur, but they are rooted in poverty and marginalization and thus overlap with legitimate resistance. Neither of these logics precludes the possibility that criminalization may respond to "actual" predations by more or less organized groups whose affiliates include rogue entrepreneurs, variously "crazy," cunning, swashbuckling, picaresque, violent. This approach to crime as an entrepreneurial force complicates the moral and political clarity of a straightforward criminalization paradigm and can be traced, in anthropology, to Blok's "The Peasant and the Brigand; Social Banditry Reconsidered" (1972).

Based on the archival and ethnographic research underlying his *The Mafia of a Sicilian Village* (1974), Blok challenged Hobsbawm's romanticism for obscuring how "social" bandits also prey on peasants, become landlords' retainers, and depend on landlords and corrupt officials for protection, all the while proferring a Robin Hood myth as ideology. [Hobsbawm, in response (1972, p. 504), claimed never to have generalized about all bandits, and to have always insisted that ambiguity was "the crucial fact of the bandit's social situation."] Following Blok, Vanderwood characterized Mexican bandits as "self interested individuals . . . who found themselves excluded from the possibilities and opportunities, not to mention the benefits, of society at large, and who promoted disorder as a lever to enter a system reserved for a few." In his account, bandits morphed into policemen and vice versa, both being "highly motivated opportunists . . . colorful, deadly, and interchangeable" (Vanderwood 1992, p. xvi; see also Gilbert 1990 and, for late 1800s Java, Nordholt & van Till 1999). Having interviewed road bandits along the multiple national borders of the Chad Basin, Roitman (2006) also eschews romantic imagery. The characters in question engaged in economic activities—smuggling, counterfeiting, cattle rustling, theft—that, although illegal,

had redistributive effects and were widely considered "licit." Yet they did not think of themselves as Robin Hoods, agents of social justice or rebel proponents of an oppositional moral universe. Financed by local businessmen and protected by government agents, including impersonator-agents in counterfeit uniforms, they merely participated "in recognized modes of governing the economy," simultaneously feared and revered (p. 259).

Herzfeld's *The Poetics of Manhood* (1985), about a "nexus" of animal raiders in the highlands of Crete around 1980, belongs to this discussion. Throughout Crete's Turkish occupation (1669–1913), highlanders had descended to the plains to rustle the invaders' livestock; in addition, they stole from patron-landowners on whom they depended for grazing rights. But rivalry among rustlers further led to reciprocal raiding within the cluster of villages that constituted the nexus. Through narrating these close-to-home incidents, shepherds established a reputation for ferociously protecting their own property, at the same time recruiting allies and deflecting future raids. Significantly, during Herzfeld's fieldwork, some thieves acquired trucks for transporting stolen livestock to cities. The government in Athens had earlier tolerated Crete's "brigands," wary of otherwise delivering them to the Communist Party. Now, as it attempted to suppress this commerce, a handful of politicians subverted the effort, no doubt because they benefited from the proceeds (1985, pp. 33, 266–68).

Sant Cassia (1993), finding the Hobsbawm-Blok debate too narrow, raises a question about the kinds of rural structure that encourage a "psychology and sociology of terror" (p. 773). In nineteenth-century Cyprus, the site of his case study, the pastoral sector produced bandits when cultivators, backed by Ottoman power, put pressure on grazing land. Neither "primitive rebels," nor individual opportunists—nor, as Blok would have it, the henchmen of rural potentates—the outlaws in question moved between these tendencies, at the same time engaging in "an aggressive form of . . . adventurist capital accumulation" (p. 793). Regions whose histories embraced large estates, impoverished smallholder peasants, and pastoralist intermediaries were, Sant Cassia proposed, historically ripe for this dynamic, a suggestion supported by Poole's (1988, 1994) analysis of southern Peru's high provinces where, still today, "folkloric traditions, songs, legends, and spectacles . . . celebrate the livestock, horses, arms and masculine bravado"—in short, the performative violence—that constituted nineteenth-century local power (1994, pp. 18–19).

Sidel (1999) reiterates the myths surrounding a famed Filipino bandit of the 1950s and 1960s whose powers were believed to derive from magical amulets and Masonic charms. That this colorful personage respected local taboos against stealing peasants' draft animals, raping their women, and poisoning fish ponds was also in his favor. Ironically, however, he relied on the police and politicians for franchises and protection, as do today's car thieves, cattle rustlers, illegal loggers, lottery operators, bank robbers, kidnappers, and distributors of arms and drugs. Sidel characterizes the bandits (and gangsters) of the Philippines as close to mafiosi, defined, following Blok (1974), as "entrepreneurs who use private, formally unlicensed violence as a means of social control and economic accumulation" (Sidel 1999, pp. 71–72).

This reference to "mafia" points to the potential for everyday forms of rural banditry to scale up into organized crime formations of some historical consequence, even if the institutional scope and capacity of the Sicilian Mafia, considered below, is unusual. In a pioneering study of policing in newly independent Uganda, Tanner laid out the "complicated organization of the cattle raid," which required spies, persons to hide and feed the rustlers, others to perform religious rituals, and rear guards to protect the getaway. Raids conducted by 100+ men were not uncommon (1970, p. 54; see also Roitman 2006, p. 252). Such leaps of scale seem often to have involved increased competition for grazing land; expanding urban markets for wool, hides, or meat; and state-making processes that relied, locally, on the fire power or muscle of

clientelistic factions. Fleisher's (2000) study of Kuria cattle raiders in northern Tanzania near Kenya adds the additional elements of available arms and porous national borders. Banditry, it seems, is consistently energized when states decommission their armies after wars.

Taken together, the writings on banditry support Gallant's (1999) argument regarding the interplay of "brigandage, piracy, capitalism and state formation." Brigands and pirates flourish in challenging geographies (rugged mountains and deserts, the high seas, remote borders, and now the Internet). Such difficult-to-police spaces are promising environments for outlaws, just as great river systems and fertile plains are congenial to state-makers. In addition to geography, large-scale processes of accumulation and enclosure undertaken by states, corporations, or other bodies that enjoy the cover of state-enforced law generate organized thievery. To the extent that whole populations are destabilized by these (often colonial) mega-takings—Mattei & Nader (2008) refer to them as "plunder"—emergent bandits find ready audiences for the claim that theft is licit if not entirely just. One does not need the social bandit concept to appreciate the social as well as physical resources that shore up the infrastructures—the webs of protected routes and locales, tolerant neighbors, and corruptible officials—so important to "stealing back." According to Gallant (1999), this does not mean that pirates, bandits, and military adventurers are "fighting a rearguard action against the encroachment of the modern world"; like the pirates who became the privateers of empire, they belong to that world and are useful to it (p. 25). Taking the same long view, Tilly places "banditry, piracy, gangland rivalry, policing, and war-making . . . on the same continuum," defining states as "quintessential protection rackets with the advantage of legitimacy" (1985, p 169).

TRAFFICKERS AND GANGSTERS

Although borders render a state real, laws that specify what and who may cross are bound to be broken, as are laws that govern internal cir-

culation. This is partly because such interdictions invite transgression. Depending on the relations in play, border guards (or their mimics) either bend to bribery and intimidation or intimidate and extort for a piece of the smugglers' action (see McMurray 2003; Roitman 2006, p. 254; Taussig 2003, p. 197). When particular interdictions enjoy a substantial moral consensus, possibly garnered through social and religious movements, or the activism of moral entrepreneurs, smuggling becomes more difficult and costly, although not impossible. What Scheper-Hughes (2000) aptly calls the "rotten trades"—widely condemned traffics in "orphans," sex workers, slaves, body parts, blood diamonds, endangered species, nuclear materials, antiquities, toxic waste—alas persist because of the gravitational pull of specific pockets of demand and the fast money to be made from supplying them.

Prohibitionist legislation is also at times the residue of struggles in which the interests and values of some are imposed on others, leading to restraints that lack consensus and cannot be enforced. Such conflicts of interest and values are obvious in the case of laws curtailing labor migration, a reality that makes people-smuggling inexorable (e.g., Kwong 1997). Similarly, thriving urban markets for affordable meat and music render the suppression of animal rustling and CD piracy quite challenging. Puritanical controls placed on potentially addictive substances and services—alcohol, tobacco, drugs, gambling, prostitution, and pornography—are particularly ineffectual, given the different ways these so-called vices intersect with everyday life. Governments swing between relaxed and extremely prohibitive stances, at times repressing them (as happened in Europe's colonies), but at other times permitting, and taxing, them. (Taxed vices may then become candidates for smuggling, e.g., cigarettes.)

In its most draconian moments (dating to the early twentieth-century), the United States has demonized both alcohol and drugs by associating them with feared or rejected groups, defunding public health approaches to addiction, and promoting prohibitionism

internationally (Booth 1996, 2004; Courtwright 1995; Gootenberg 1999; Kerr 1985; Musto 1999; Musto & Korsmeyer 2002; Nadelmann 2008). Such over-reaching, captured by the expression "war on drugs," inevitably fosters an infrastructure for capital accumulation on the part of trafficking enterprises. It did so during the Prohibition era of the 1920s and is doing so again—in both instances facilitated by the deregulation of financial markets and the lavish availability of improved, and unsecured, firearms following World War I and the Cold War, respectively.

Such conjunctures are the foundation for some astonishingly hypocritical, covert alliances between traffickers and political actors. McCoy (2003) links anticommunist operatives of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and its forerunner, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), to Kuomintang opium traffickers in Southwest China and Burma, to successor traffickers of the Golden Triangle at the time of the Vietnam War, to Afghan warlords following the Soviet invasion, and cocaine smugglers in Central and South America. Rebel insurgents such as the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) in Colombia, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Northern Ireland, and the Taliban in Afghanistan have raised money through trafficking, as have the counterinsurgents who would suppress them. Historians of opium in China and Southeast Asia document how the political manipulation of smuggling networks, dating to the time of the Opium Wars, tainted the British, Dutch, and Japanese, as well as the American, empires with scandal (e.g., Booth 1996; McCoy 2003; Meyer & Parssinen 1998, pp. 192–95; Rush 1990; Trocki 1990).

Reference to the war on drugs conjures the image of the kingpin, mythic figures like Kuhn Sa of Burma and Pablo Escobar of Colombia who own costly transportation assets (light aircraft, landing strips, speed boats, and fast cars) and who have the military capacity, in the form of heavily armed lieutenants and foot soldiers, to protect these assets from confiscation by authorities or hijacking by competitors (see McCoy 1999, Roldan 1999). According to Paoli, however, most couriers and smugglers of illegal drugs are small-scale and transient, leveraged mainly by personalized, kin-based networks, geographically extended through immigration. The enterprises they create, and the entrepreneurs who invest in them, rise and fall in a competitive maelstrom that is no less variegated and unstable than the whole of business history. Rarely does a coherent enterprise control the arc from source to destination (Paoli 2002, pp. 69–71; see also Chu 2000; Naylor 2002; Nordstrom 2007, pp. 139–46). The effects, however, are huge. Border regions, both between and within nation-states, and the rural producers of trafficked goods and services deserve attention (e.g., Morales 1989), as do "mafia syndicates" (see below). Here we consider cities.

Some cities, especially but not exclusively port or border cities, are culturally shaped by the presence of a thriving underworld. Eighteenth-century New Orleans, evolving in the interstices of an ambitious French Empire whose mercantilist edicts were unenforceable, is diagnostic. Dawdy (2008), introducing the concept "rogue colonialism," traces how the city's full-fledged smuggling economy created an atmosphere in which the swagger of lawbreakers was considered romantically anarchic—the dark and thrilling side of personal charisma—while an innuendo of criminal conspiracy enveloped the seats of power. Ethnographic descriptions of late-twentieth-century Hong Kong (Chu 2000), Vladivostok (Holzlehner 2007), Naples (Pardo 1996; Pine 2005), Palermo (Schneider & Schneider 2003), Marseilles (McCoy 2003), Mexico City (Lomnitz 2003), São Paulo (Caldeira 2000), Kingston (Gray 2003, Robotham 2003), and several Colombian cities (Roldan 2003, Taussig 2003) convey similar mysteries and poisons. So do accounts of Chicago in the 1920s and 1930s (Reynolds 1995).

With regard to illegal narcotics, a more general urban effect flows from the by-now-familiar interface between trafficking enterprises and street gangs—phenomena that

are often conflated but have discrete roots and motivations. In a recent overview, Vigil (2003) attributes "urban violence and street gangs" to the multiple marginalizations of poor modern youth—second-generation migrants in first-world cities and, more broadly, victims of neoliberal restructuring. Constrained to live in the ugliest and least serviced of neighborhoods, they lack work and opportunity; their families are in crisis; and they are not reached by schools and other institutions of the wider society. Perhaps 10% of impoverished youth join sodalities of the street; an even smaller percent become the energized "crazy" heroes of these formations. But, from Port Moresby to Paris, gangs of "rascals" and "baddies" are a notable urban presence (see Cole 2004; Comaroff & Comaroff 2000, pp. 306–9; Dinnen 2001; Gigengack 1999, 2000; Gray 2003; Harriott 2003; Hunt et al. 2005; Pitts 2002; Vigil 2007; Weiss 2002).

At the core of many street gangs is a complex interplay of hustling for a livelihood and hanging out. Banter and gossip, their entertainment value raised by drinking beer, smoking dope, sniffing glue, throwing dice—also by consuming the images, music, and dance of transnational celebrity gangstas—create solidarity. So, too, do rites of initiation, enforced rules of loyalty and silence, insider nicknames, and embodied signs of belonging such as gestures, handshakes, tattoos or special clothing. Although girls may participate (Vigil 2003, p. 227), and there are known girl gangs (e.g., Venkatesh 1998), such groupings have usually been both male and masculinist, their members obliged— not unlike the sheep thieves of Crete—to prove themselves capable of defending their turf, attracting allies, and warding off disrespect. Leadership structures are at best incipient and related to age; membership coalesces and dissolves through time. That a sodality exists does, however, mitigate tensions surrounding competition for girlfriends, incursions from other gangs, and the everyday uncertainty of pulling off small-scale heists without being caught.

Transnational drug trafficking enterprises thrive on setting up retail operations in the territories of street gangs. Gang members constitute a pool of malleable labor and entrepreneurial talent (especially accessible if they are coethnics) in neighborhoods that are potential marketplaces. In addition, the erratic policing of gangs renders "their" corners and storefronts commercially suited for drive-by sales that service the narcotics habits of society's other classes. Jensen (2000), a critic of the South African Prevention of Organized Crime Act for eliding the difference between street gangs and traffickers, examines how the two interact in a Greater Capetown neighborhood.

His case begins with the 1990s scaling up of local Cape Flats gangs. Prisons—"universities of crime"—were integral to the process, fostering disciplined drug gangs and bestowing on inmates a network of criminal contacts, useful upon graduation. [In *Monster: The Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member*, Shakur (1994) describes spending prison time poring over *The Godfather* for behavioral models (pp. 207–8)]. Unlike street gang members whose reputations were enhanced by confronting the police, affiliates of drug gangs had the wherewithal to bribe authorities. Regulating the street gangs' unruly quarrels, they ostentatiously donated money to local schools and causes. Venkatesh's (2000) study of a Chicago housing project similarly references "the ideology of the benevolent and socially inclined drug dealer who supports his community" (Jensen 2000, p. 108).

But malign processes are also evident. Cape Flats drug dealers exploited youthful gang members, remunerating them poorly for the risks they took in peddling narcotics to outsiders and breaking their limbs over transactions gone awry. Oriented toward their home territory, the youths lacked the translocal networks of the (somewhat older) dealers, not to mention their firepower. Some of them became addicted and in this condition were less able to defend themselves, their gang-mates, or their turf (Jensen 2000; see also Anderson 2002, Venkatesh 2000). Bourgois's (1997) ethnography of the 1980s circulation of crack cocaine in East Harlem attributes a rising incidence of homicides to unregulated market competition

and distrust among and between dealers and youthful retailers, the latter hungry for the intoxicating allure of danger and opportunity to acquire symbols of opulence that are the rewards of trafficking (pp. 66–67).

Traffickers introduce new resources to the local arena: guns, most noticeably, but also gifts and money. They may, as noted above, self-consciously burnish an image of themselves as Robin Hood. Communities, broken by the ramifying effects of "conjugated" (multiple and overlapping) oppressions (Bourgois 1997), and aware that they are categorically criminalized by the wider society, may lionize these figures in popular culture. But the economic pressures of trafficking at the same time prompt street gang members to become more mercenary and uncaring. We find them burglarizing a relative's apartment when earlier they might have thieved only from outsiders; challenging neighbors' efforts to organize community policing; taking sexual advantage of women addicts desperate for money; and wielding more lethal weapons on their own streets (Anderson 2002; Gigengack 1999, 2000; Jensen 2000; Leeds 1996; Venkatesh 2000; see also Strathern 1992).

MAFIAS

Compared with trafficking enterprises and street gangs, crime syndicates are institutionalized and have deep histories. Yakuza is traceable to itinerant bands of gamblers and peddlers in early-eighteenth-century Japan (Kaplan & Dubro 2003); the Chinese Triads to secret societies that emerged from conditions of rural displacement and landlessness in southern Fujian province in the late eighteenth-century then spread to Guangdong, Taiwan, and abroad through Fujianese migrations (Chu 2000, Murray & Qin 1994). As it became a unified state after 1860, Italy, whose central and northern regions were the historic cradle of capitalism, produced not one but three crime syndicates south of Rome: the Neapolitan Camorra, the Calabrian 'Ndrangheta, and the Sicilian Mafia (Allum 2006, Paoli 2003). Beginning in the 1880s, fugitives from Italian

prosecutors and traffickers in contraband found shelter in the trans-Atlantic pathways of Sicilian immigration. Alcohol prohibition, in effect in the United States by constitutional amendment from 1919 to 1933, gave particular leverage to Sicilian mafiosi, who, competing successfully with Jewish, Irish, and other southern Italian bootleggers, were able to consolidate the Sicilian-American Mafia. Ironically, the famed Chicago School of urban sociology, although it produced numerous monographs on crime and delinquency in the 1920s and 1930s, turned a blind eye to organized crime, as if Al Capone were not a neighbor (Reynolds 1995). But Hollywood and the U.S. media paid close attention, which may be why the word mafia has become a generic for the syndicate form worldwide.

Mafia formation occurs when a group of people, by common accord, engages in a continuing, reproducible, conspiracy to monopolize illegal enterprises and use illegal means to control legal enterprises. Operating without the benefit of state-enforced contracts, those involved generate a durable subculture for creating trust and enforcing rules. Similar to street gangs, the cultural practices in question revolve around localized fraternal sodalities, replete with initiations, a founding myth, and esoteric marks of belonging. The resulting brotherhoods or metaphorical families—as Paoli (2003) shows, the salience of biological kinship varies with the mafia in question—are, however, considerably more structured than street gangs, having two or more leadership ranks, life-long membership, and intergenerational continuity. Leaders coordinate predations on the surrounding economy, distribute the take, regulate the use of violence, and support members and their (biological) families in the event of prosecution and imprisonment. From our experience in Sicily (Schneider & Schneider 2003), seconded by Holzlehner's (2007) description of the mafia in Vladivostok and Chu's of the Triads in Hong Kong (2000), we imagine that leaders also galvanize rounds of extravagant hospitality and transgressive horsing around.

Mafias are not readily accessible to ethnographers. In the 1960s, we, along with Blok, did personally know a few mafiosi in the Sicilian towns we studied. As Tilly wrote in the introduction to Blok's book, however, at the time we believed that "the Mafia supergang is a simplifying fiction, invented by publicists and by Fascist officials charged with eliminating Southern Italian lawlessness.... The sum of [the] actions [of mafiosi] makes up the phenomenon called *mafia*" (Tilly 1974, p. xiv). We were even skeptical that initiation rites existed; to acknowledge them gave too much credence to popular criminalizing models. Subsequent research by historians and journalists, and the recent depositions of justice collaborators, point, rather, to a well-formed fraternity with boundaries, structure, and goals and to a consistently practiced rite of entry, possibly learned from Freemasons in nineteenth-century prisons. In it, novices hold the burning image of a saint while their sponsor pricks their finger and, mixing the blood and ashes, exacts an oath of loyalty and secrecy until death (see Paoli 2003, Schneider & Schneider 2003).

Considering how so coherent an institution could develop, two ingredients—both also central to the histories of other mafias—seem decisive. First are ongoing, reliable flows of (urban as well as rural) revenue. Extortion—the exaction of tribute in exchange for peace—is the bread and butter of mafia syndicates, reflecting their historical connections with bandits or gangsters who threaten unprotected properties and businesses. Other typical enterprises include loan sharking; running, or servicing illegal businesses (prostitution and gambling are especially familiar); poaching the resources of legal businesses; regulating entry to crowded labor markets and other forms of labor racketeering; and brokering contracts for public works and construction.

The second ingredient is a precondition for the first: the collusive participation of the legitimate institutions of society, creating what Italians call "that wicked deal." Political connections, extending into the criminal justice sector, are especially necessary to avert arrests, abort police investigations and trials, and procure licenses to conduct business and carry arms. Although mafia leaders deploy money bribes, they are more likely to ingratiate themselves with political, economic, and religious elites by mediating local elections, inviting officials to their banquets, and policing small-scale troublemakers in the name of peace. During the Cold War, the governments of Japan, Taiwan, France, Italy, and the United States sporadically prosecuted organized crime. Paradoxically, however, pieces of these governments also engaged mafia syndicates in the repression of "communism" and labor militancy, tolerating their criminal activities, including drug trafficking, and giving them a new lease on life (see Blok 1974; Block 1980, 1994; Chubb 1996; Kaplan & Dubro 2003; Maruko 2003; Murray & Qin 1994; Paoli 2003; Schneider & Schneider 2003).

Like secret societies generally, mafia brotherhoods are replicable over wide, transnational geographies without much coordination. Attempts at centralization are, if anything, a predictable source of internecine jealousy and conflict. Clearly, a far-flung network of chapters fostering mutual recognition is an asset for members who involve themselves in trafficking. Even the best capitalized kingpins, although avid cultivators of multisited connections, lack the advantage of instant fraternal support that mafia membership confers (Paoli 2002). Mafiosi, however, may have historically lagged behind well-capitalized businessmen-traffickers when it came to counterfeiting documents and laundering profits (see Chu 2000, pp. 107–21; Paoli 2002).

This distinction between organized crime formations anchored, on the one hand, in local racketeering and, on the other hand, in the globalized commerce of illegal goods and services resonates with Block's categories, applied to the American Mafia, of "power syndicate" and "enterprise syndicate" (1980, 1994), but the contrast should not be overdrawn. Already in the late 1800s, the Sicilian Mafia lived off extortion but simultaneously encouraged individual members to market stolen livestock in

the regional capital and to transport morphine and heroin to the United States. Members of Japanese Yakuza, equally territorial in its historical formation, were also, historically, conduits for trafficked sex workers in much of Asia (Kaplan & Dubro 2003). Both commerce in opium and local racketeering are old and intertwined enterprises in the organized crime traditions of Taiwan, Hong Kong, Fujian Province, and overseas Chinese communities (Chu 2000, Murray & Qin 1994).

In the 1990s, Russia and the former Soviet Republics became sites of attention for "mafiologists." Not only did former Cold Warriors from East and West converge to produce a "mafiya" discourse—what Verdery calls a "conceptual mafia" (1996, p. 219; see also Wedel 2003)—but the abrupt privatization (or "grabitization," pp. 228–29) of state-owned resources in the absence of a supportive institutional matrix created a niche for protection racketeering. Sociologist Diego Gambetta, having developed a market model to account for the Sicilian Mafia—he called it a "private protection industry"—applied the same reasoning to Russia: When the state legislates private property without guaranteeing its integrity, mafiosi will surface to meet the demand for security (1993; see also Chu 2000, Chubb 1996, Varese 2001).

Ries (2002) offers a more complex ethnographic picture for Yaroslavl, northeast of Moscow, where, in the mid-1990s, everyone had a tale of lying, cheating, and swindling going on around them. Many (especially elderly) citizens were barely scraping by, but a minority flaunted sudden wealth. Pyramid schemes, in which a handful of early entrants raked in windfalls at the expense of thousands who lost their life savings, dramatized the unfairness. In such a context, people welcomed the *banditi* who offered a *krysha* or "roof." Businessmen (especially if they engaged in illegal transactions) depended on such "roofs" to collect debts, recover stolen goods, and enforce contractual arrangements; to ordinary citizens, the *banditi* (whose funerals they attended in droves) were providers of social and moral or-

der, the means by which avarice and corruption might be reined in. And yet, Ries suspected, the "demand" for protection was in part created by the protectors: Cut me in or it will be worse for you. Murders, bombings, and assassinations, reported in newspapers with no more fanfare than car accidents, impinged on everyday experience. Strikingly, those who offered "roofs" had a muscular pedigree. Just as in Volkov's (2002) analysis of "violent entrepreneurs in the making of Russian capitalism," a "bandit" Reis befriended belonged to the "sportsmeny," members of boxing clubs whose devotion to pumping iron was already a contribution to criminal enterprise during Soviet times.

Humphrey (1999) rejects interpretations that reduce the phenomenon of protection racketeering to a recent emergency of public order, pointing to another strand of Russian mafia history: the prerevolutionary bandits who, under Bolshevik repression in Siberian prisons, created a full-fledged fraternity, defined by allegiance to a "thieves' law" (see also Rawlingson 1997). Like the competing sportsmeny, the fractious descendants of this tradition display a predatory cultural energy not easily captured by a market model. Holzlehner (2007) encountered both strands in Vladivostok, initially through the larger–than-life etchings of murdered "godfathers" on the tombstones in the local cemetery, and subsequently through discovering how much of the local economy, culture, and politics they controlled.

LIVING WITH IT (OR AGAINST IT)

The varied forms of organized crime, coupled with processes of criminalization, raise the question how people cope when caught between these phenomena. That scaled-up syndicates and trafficking enterprises are entangled with states and legitimate business further ups the ante, adding the element of sponsored criminality. Ethnographic studies have captured an array of adjustments, shaped not only by the local interplay of banditry, gangsterism,

protection racketeering, and trafficking, but also by local cultural practices and specific historical conjunctures.

In Merry's (1981) study of a "crime-ridden" Philadelphia neighborhood in the late 1970s, African American residents, although statistically more vulnerable to robberies and assaults than other groups, displayed the least fear, managing apprehension through "befriending even those they distrust and making sure not to treat them with suspicion and hostility, at least overtly" (p. 140). Reflecting their shared anger over the injustices that create desperate thieves, they even baked cookies for drug addicts whom they dared not invite into their homes. Reciprocally, youthful hustlers were disinclined to steal from people who acknowledged their existence as human beings, showed them respect, and did not "bother" them. As Siegel notes, referring to rural Indonesians of the same period, people know the local thieves, and how to guard against them, just as they know how to guard against ghosts (Siegel 1999, p. 221).

But, theft and assault became more threatening in Indonesia, as in many places, in the 1980s and 1990s. A Javanese lawyer interviewed by Pemberton (1999) referenced the transition this way: In the past, pickpockets and robbers lived by the principle "don't shit in your own room"; today they violently trespass their own rooms with the collaboration of the police. Tellingly, in the early 1980s, the word for thief, *maling*, which encompassed magical talents as well as professional skills, was supplemented by a new, Western-inspired word, *kriminalitas* (Pemberton 1999, pp. 207–8; Siegel 1999, p. 217). Barker (1999) studied the concomitant marginalization of a traditional community policing system in Bandung, the capital of Western Java, and its displacement, not by the state's surveillance apparatus so much as by resort to extralegal protectors. Exacting tribute on local businesses, these figures also engaged in reciprocities with ordinary people who, although deeply ambivalent toward them, wanted a "good relationship"; it was as if they owned the territory and everyone else paid rent (Barker 1999, p. 121).

Intimidated by both lawless youth and the police, and criminalized by outsiders, residents of the *favelas* studied by Caldeira (2000; see also Scheper-Hughes 2006) similarly turned to *justiceires*—thuggish allies of gangs and drug dealers, redefined as heroes. Such "devil's bargains," in which the strongest medicine is harvested from the sickest source, are grist for the mill of protection rackets, as suggested by the *banditi* of Yaroslavl. In their desire to harness hidden powers and deflect revenge, the people who negotiate them also evoke the ethnography of witchcraft and sorcery.

Pardo's (1996) study of the *popolino* of Naples describes a set of guideposts for "managing existence," given that the Camorra is an entrenched institution in the Neapolitan region, thoroughly entwined with business and politics. People should exercise caution in relation to the vast illegal, and sometimes violent, "informal economy." In negotiating the gray areas of tax evasion, off-the-books lotteries, unwanted services, and informal usury, they should not proceed lightly, or in defiance of their wider moral framework of favors and reciprocities. Most important, they should mind their own business (Pardo 1996). These prescriptions, also applicable in Sicily, are captured by the famed code of *omertà*, whose meaning goes beyond "silence before the law," or refusal to snitch. At its core, *omertà* valorizes keeping to one's own affairs and ignoring, or pretending to ignore, the *embrogli*—the complicities and disputes—of others, in part out of fear of coming to know too much (Blok 1974; Pine 2005, 2008). This psychologically demanding practice of not knowing is particularly hard on women who, as the arbiters of family reputation, depend on evaluative gossip, especially with other women. Turning a blind eye, feigning ignorance, offers an escape from the twisted threads of responsibility, but it can be an awkward impediment to candid conversation (Schneider 2006, Siebert 1996).

From the late 1970s through the early 1990s, as Sicilian mafiosi became heavily involved in heroin refining and international drug trafficking, and in the midst of a bloody internecine war among mafia factions for control

of that traffic, a broad-based antimafia social movement coalesced, whose main thrust was to insulate honest police and prosecutors from the wicked deal of corrupt criminal justice. Palermo and Naples, centers of this mobilization, witnessed the "turning" of many mafiosi into justice collaborators, rupturing *omertà*. A series of "maxi" trials, although controversial, convicted a number of powerful bosses without seriously violating the due process guarantees of Italy's democratic constitution or resorting to populist, criminalizing vigilantism (Jacquemet 1996, Jameison 2000, Paoli 2003, Schneider & Schneider 2003, Siebert 2003, Stille 1995). Incipient antimafia processes are evident in other cities similarly whipsawed by trafficking and violence, for example Kingston, as described by Johnson & Soeters (2008).

OUR TIMES: APOCALYPTIC CRIME TALK

To many observers, the nation-state system, losing its integrity in the face of neoliberal pressures and awash in errant AK-47s since the collapse of the Soviet Union, will soon be inundated by crime; Rapley (2006) calls this "remedievalization." Garland, citing increased rates of property crime, violent crime, and drug offences since the 1980s, characterizes late modern societies as "crime prone" (2001, pp. 90–93). Several recent books suggest a powerful new synergism of supply and demand for illegal commodities, including enslaved or commodified human beings: for example, journalist Glenny's investigation of trafficked women from Eastern Europe since the fall of Communism reported in *McMafia: Crime without Frontiers* (2008); and sociologist Hayward's (2004) analysis of postmodern consumer culture in which the desire for instant gratification, status, and recognition is often expressed through daring illegal adventurism and trophies shown off to peers.

Meanwhile, policy analysts worry about extreme disorder in "weak," postcolonial democracies such as Papua New Guinea (Dinnen 2001, Pitts 2002) and Jamaica (Harriott 2003),

where politicians deploy criminal gangs to get out (or suppress) the vote. Or they sound alarms regarding the Mara Salvatrucha gang, argued to be scaling up in El Salvador as a consequence of the deportation of members from Los Angeles prisons (Arana 2005). The Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College warns that this, and similar "posses," constitute a "new urban insurgency" (Manwaring 2005). Scarier still, since 9/11, the criminal imaginary has exploded with images of traffickers interacting with terrorists (see Garriott 2008).

Nordstrom (2007), having pursued ethnographic research at multiple, specific junctures of outlaw networks, finds it is impossible to answer the question, "who are the criminals of the twenty-first-century?" The trillions of dollars that grease the "extrastate" economy "flow through millions of hands, thousands of institutions, and hundreds of borders," leaving us dangerously in the dark about "a series of power grids that shape the fundamental econo-political dynamics of the world today" (pp. xvi–xvii). And yet crime talk—now taking on an apocalyptic tone—is itself dangerous. Under its cover, governments engage in criminal violence, or authorize criminal proxies to "eradicate crime," using such terrifying methods as killing street children, abducting gang members, leaving the murdered bodies of presumed criminals at large for others to see, and dehumanizing victims of police brutality through media representations (Feldman 1994; Caldeira 2000; Chancer 2005; Inda 2006; Linger 2003; Scheper–Hughes 2006; Siegel 1998, 1999; Taussig 2003; Van der Kroef 1985). An anthropological approach, historically informed and comparative, challenges the paradigm of "governing through crime" in a few specific ways.

First, although mafia syndicates historically developed out of—and trafficking enterprises exploit—lower-level formations such as bands and gangs, these forms are not the same. To conflate them is to obscure the consistent reasons for banditry and gangsterism in the first place: political/demographic economies that wrench people from their accustomed places in

the world, marginalize them in multiple ways, and leave them without a path to a decent existence. As Robotham (2003) argues for Jamaica, governments must again intervene in their societies, supported where possible by supranational institutions, to redress the vast disequilibria that have enriched a few while robbing millions over the past few decades. Second, however, it is problematic to leave our thinking in "primitive rebel" mode; the business history of violent entrepreneurship points equally to the need for states to recruit, train, and professionalize a criminal justice apparatus that is both capable of independent investigations and respectful of human rights.

Third, harmful predation is not new in the world; it has a vibrant past. Nor has it ever been separable from either local communities with all their apprehensions, desires, and jealousies, or the persons and clienteles of politicians, judges, bankers, religious authorities, secret service operatives, and others "above suspicion." In some times and places—the Prohibition era in the United States, the Cold War on several continents—entanglements with power have sabotaged criminal justice, decisively contributing to the virulence of organized crime. Transparency regarding sponsored criminality would seem an essential precondition for reduc-

ing the threats of the present. This is equally true of the kinds of crime to which anthropologists may have little access, but can follow through the courageous reporting of investigative journalists: white collar crime, the crimes of pharmaceutical and mining corporations, the crimes of states.

But fourth, and perhaps most telling, we should recognize something historically new in the war on drugs. This global set of arrangements, promoted by the United States, is not the first attempt to create a worldwide regime of interdictions based on moral as well as political concerns. Others, however—the nineteenth-century conventions against slavery and piracy—mobilized a much wider consensus (although both have undergone troubling reversals since the 1980s). Or, they flatly failed as did the attempt to prohibit alcohol in North America and around the world in the 1920s. That the United States has been able to organize a global prohibitionist regime against addictive narcotics, including marijuana, and in the face of multiple pressures to the contrary, in itself cries out for historical and comparative analysis (see Nadelmann 2008). Similar to the war on terror, the war on drugs is extraordinarily productive of what it is supposed to defeat, namely, criminal enterprise.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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