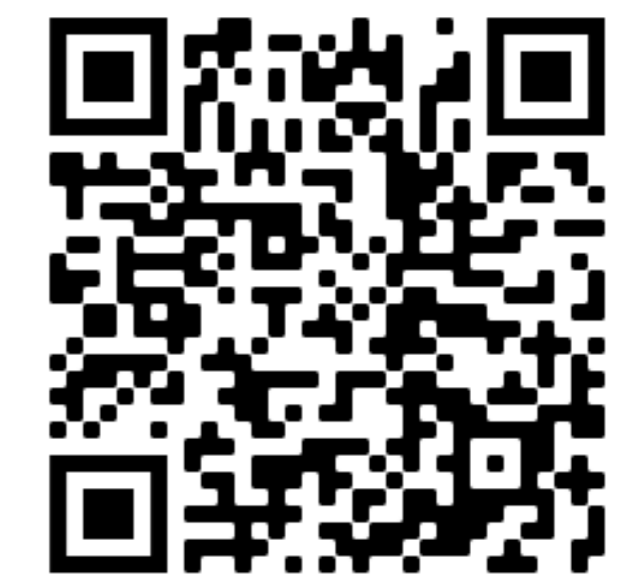


# When Nation Building Goes South: Draft Evasion, Government Repression, and the Origins of the Sicilian Mafia



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## 1. Highlights

- ▶ **Research questions:** 1) Can **coercive nation building** foster **organised crime**? 2) Was the emergence of the **Sicilian mafia** in the 19th century partly due to a coercive nation building policy?
- ▶ **Key historical episodes:**
  - introduction of **conscription** in Sicily in 1861
  - **military repression campaign** ordered by the Italian central government in 1863 to round up Sicilian deserters and draft dodgers
- ▶ **Hypothesis:** exposure to the 1863 repression campaign increased mafia presence across Sicily in the medium term, via decreasing **state legitimacy**
- ▶ **Contribution:**
  - **Nation building:** I focus on the effects of coercive nation building on state legitimacy and organised crime
  - **Early drivers of Sicilian mafia presence:** I explain the early spread of mafia in Sicily as driven by government repression

## 2. Data

- ▶ **Repression campaign in 1863:** daily Sicilian newspapers + military reports written by army general Giuseppe Govone
  - Keywords: “*complaint*”, “*military cordon*”, “*arrest*”
- ▶ **Mafia presence in 1875:** Borsani-Bonfadini parliamentary enquiry conducted between 1874 and 1876 on social conditions in Sicily
- ▶ **Variables of interest** (unit of obs. = town, N = 349):

$$\text{repr1863}_i = \mathbb{1}\{\text{military repression occurred in town } i \text{ in 1863}\}$$

$$\text{mafia1875}_i = \mathbb{1}\{\text{mafia is present in town } i \text{ in 1875}\}$$

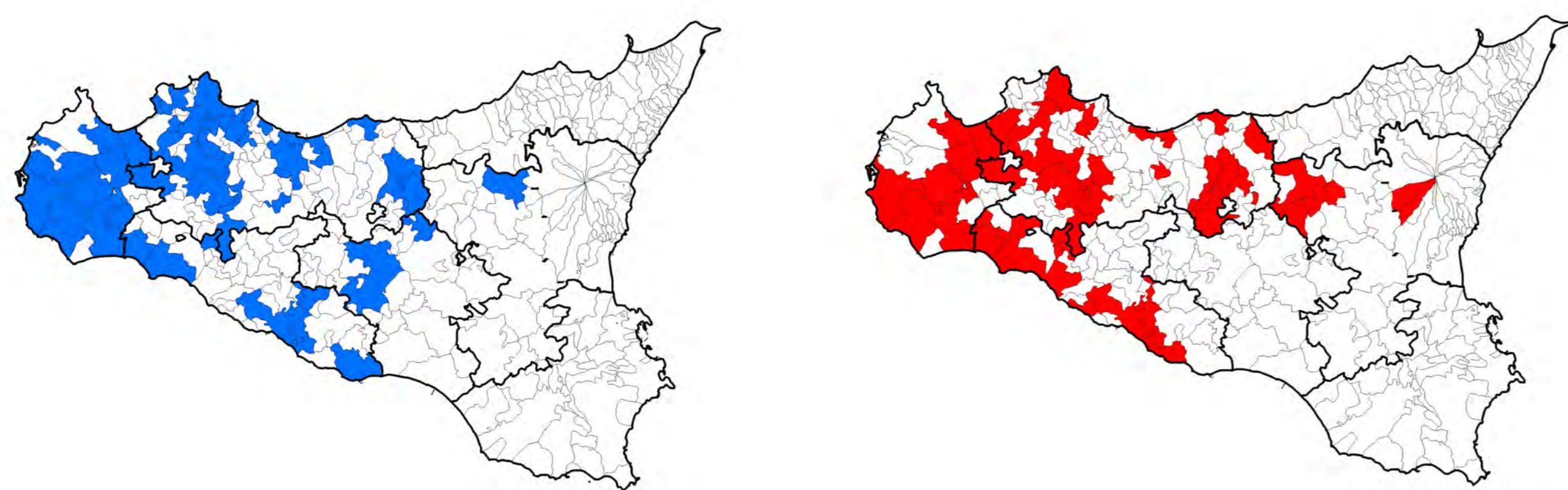


FIGURE 1 (from L to R): Exposure to military repression in 1863 (in blue); mafia presence in 1875 (in red). Province boundaries are in bold.

## 3. Methodology

- ▶ **Identification:** instrumental variables approach based on Govone’s **military plan of attack** (“*hit-and-run*” military strategy)
  - “**Inconsequential places**” approach (Redding and Turner, 2015): instrumenting each town’s exposure to repression with its distance to the **shortest route** that *could* be taken by the soldiers during the 1863 campaign, using the pre-existing (1826) road network
  - Shortest route network connecting **garrison towns** (with pre-existing military barracks) in Central and Western Sicily, conditional on the chronological order in which they were met by the troops

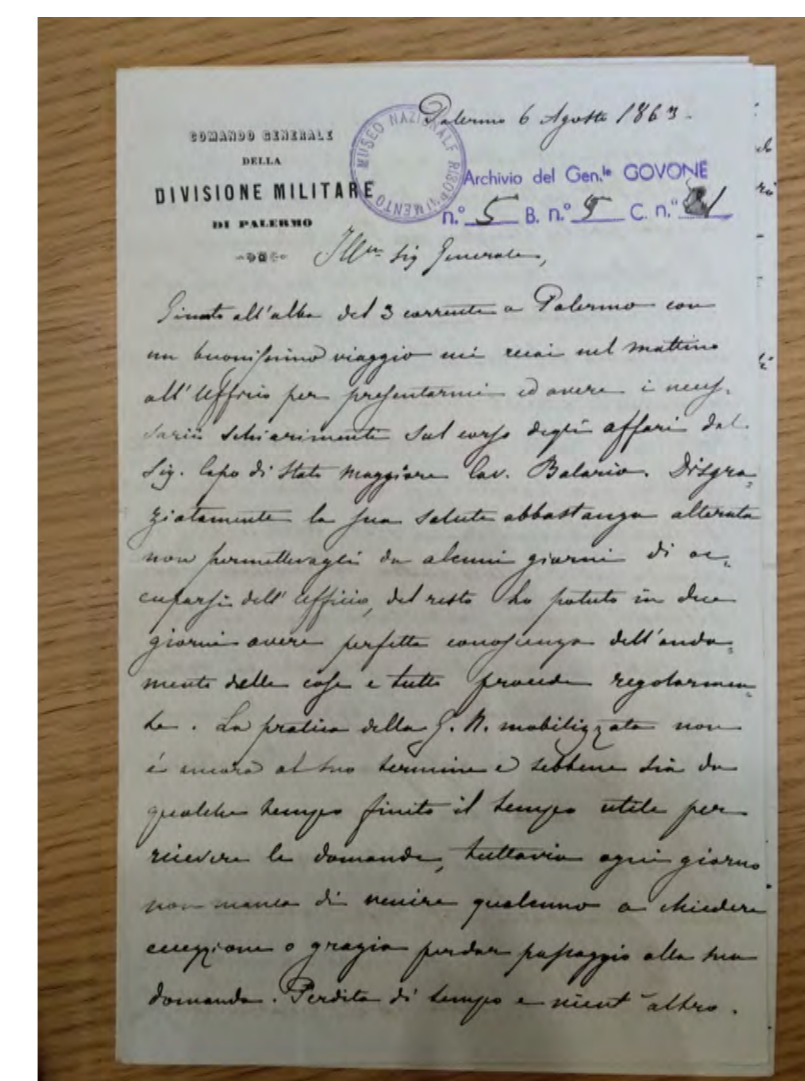


FIGURE 2 (from L to R): General Govone’s instructions to the troops, August 6, 1863; 1826 road network (in brown), garrison towns met by Govone’s troops (black triangles) and shortest route (red dotted line) connecting them. Garrison towns not involved in the repression campaign are in grey.

### ▶ First stage:

$$\text{repr1863}_{ip} = \alpha + \beta_1 \ln(1 + \text{dist. from shortest route})_{ip} + x_{ip}'\beta_2 + \delta_p + \epsilon_{ip}$$

### ▶ Second stage:

$$\text{mafia1875}_{ip} = \mu + \gamma_1 \text{repr1863}_{ip} + x_{ip}'\gamma_2 + \delta_p + \eta_{ip}$$

## 4. Results

Dep. variable:	Mafia 1875					
	OLS (1)	OLS (2)	2SLS (3)	2SLS (4)	OLS (5)	OLS (6)
Repression 1863	0.287*** (0.079)	0.243*** (0.087)	0.851*** (0.217)	0.787*** (0.221)		
ln(1+dist. from shortest route)					-0.082*** (0.023)	-0.079*** (0.023)
Province FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
All controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
N	339	339	339	339	339	339
K-P Wald F statistic			14.50	15.05		

Notes: The garrison towns visited by Govone’s troops are dropped from the sample. The set of confounders includes other determinants of early mafia presence (land suitability for citrus, sulphur mine presence in 1868-1870, banditry presence in 1820-1849), geographic and state presence controls. Standard errors are clustered by department (*circondario*). \* = p-value < 10%, \*\* = p-value < 5%, \*\*\* = p-value < 1%.

## 5. Mechanism

- ▶ Repression ⇒ **increasing demand for mafia**, via larger distrust in central government (lower electoral turnout and vaccination rate)

Dep. variable:	Turnout 1861	Turnout 1867	Vote concentr. HHI 1861	Vote concentr. HHI 1867	Vaccinated children 1885 p.c.
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Repression 1863	-0.030 (0.019)	-0.059*** (0.017)	-0.050 (0.048)	0.010 (0.054)	-0.017** (0.008)
Province FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
All controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	349	349	349	349	349

Notes: OLS estimates of the impact of exposure to the 1863 repression campaign on proxies for trust in central government (Columns 1, 2 and 5). Standard errors are clustered by department (*circondario*). \* = p-value < 10%, \*\* = p-value < 5%, \*\*\* = p-value < 1%.

## 6. Conclusion and Way Forward

- ▶ Coercive nation building reforms can unintentionally fuel organised crime
- ▶ Alternative mechanism (WIP): repression ⇒ **increasing mafia supply**, via increasing number of outlaws in repressed towns

## References

Redding, S. J. and Turner, M. A. (2015), *Transportation Costs and the Spatial Organization of Economic Activity*, in G. Duranton, J. V. Henderson and W. C. Strange, eds, ‘Handbook of Regional and Urban Economics, Volume 5’, New York: Elsevier.