

National identification weakens, and territorial identification strengthens, the relationship between masculine honor values and the justification of practices of connivance with the mafia

Alberto Mirisola ¹ | Giovanni A. Travaglino ² | Isabella Giammusso¹

¹Department of Psychology, Educational Science and Human Movement, University of Palermo, Palermo, Italy

²Institute for the Study of Power, Crime, and Society, Department of Law & Criminology, School of Law & Social Sciences, Royal Holloway, University of London, London, UK

Correspondence

Alberto Mirisola, Department of Psychology, Educational Science and Human Movement, University of Palermo, Palermo, Italy.

Email: alberto.mirisola@unipa.it

Giovanni A. Travaglino, Institute for the Study of Power, Crime, and Society, Department of Law & Criminology, School of Law & Social Sciences, Royal Holloway, University of London, London, UK.

Email: giovanni.travaglino@rhul.ac.uk

Funding information

Economic and Social Research Council, Grant/Award Number: EP/X02170X/1

Abstract

Organized crime's governance raises questions about mechanisms facilitating the exercise of illegal authority in society. The present research tested the association between masculine honor ideology and the justification of connivance practices facilitating criminal groups' activities. We examined the novel idea that national identification would attenuate and territorial identification would strengthen such a relationship, reflecting different sources of authority at the national and territorial levels. In Studies 1a and b ($N = 398$ and $N = 399$), we measured individuals' endorsement of masculine honor, justification of connivance practices, and national and territorial identifications. In Study 2 ($N = 390$), we experimentally manipulated the salience of these identities. Results supported the hypotheses that the link between masculine honor and justification of connivance was weaker at higher levels of national identification and stronger at higher levels of territorial identification. Implications and future directions are discussed.

KEYWORDS

authority, national identity, norms of connivance, organized crime, social identity, territorial identity

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

© 2024 The Author(s). *Political Psychology* published by Wiley Periodicals LLC on behalf of International Society of Political Psychology.

Highlights

- Masculine honor is linked to the justification of connivance practices that facilitate the mafia's ability to fulfill governance functions
- The link between masculine honor and practices of connivance depends on individuals' social identity
- National identification weakens, while territorial identification strengthens, the association between masculine honor and connivance
- Experimental manipulation of identity salience confirmed the findings
- These insights are crucial for developing targeted interventions and policies aimed at undermining organized crime's tolerance and support within communities.

Criminal groups like the Sicilian mafia exert political and quasi-governmental authority over people. These groups can become firmly embedded within communities, establishing normative frameworks alternative to those of the state (Travaglino et al., 2022). For instance, criminal groups can fulfill functions such as enforcing regulations, solving disputes, punishing wrongdoings, and overseeing economic transactions (Lessing, 2021). Recent research has started investigating the psychological dynamics enabling the exercise of illegal authority. Authority cannot be merely grounded in coercion or fear but must be based, at least in part, on legitimacy (Turner, 2005). While legal institutions can rely on the legitimacy conferred by their adherence to the rule of law, criminal groups must resort to other means. Examining such means is vital because uncovering how authority functions outside the legal context can offer valuable insights into the psychology of authority and social power in general.

Intra-cultural Appropriation Theory (ICAT) contends that non-state agents, such as criminal groups, gain legitimacy by appropriating and embodying the values of the community in which they operate (Travaglino & Abrams, 2019). Prior research has shown a positive association between individuals' endorsement of values of masculine honor and the legitimization of criminal groups (Travaglino et al., 2022). Such values emphasize the crucial role of private male violence in resolving disputes among people and regulating conflicts (Barnes et al., 2012), fostering distance between individuals and institutional authorities that criminal groups can subsequently exploit.

Even though their influence has repercussions globally (Travaglino et al., 2023), criminal groups' authority is typically rooted in specific territories. A notorious example of their ability to control communities is the phenomenon of “*pizzo*,” which is observed in Sicily and other regions of Southern Italy. *Pizzo* is a form of racketeering in which the Mafia requests money from local businesses and entrepreneurs in exchange for protection. The Mafia uses *pizzo* to amass economic resources and assert authority over communities (e.g., Partridge, 2012). Tolerating *pizzo* constitutes a “tangible recognition of the criminal organization in the territory, and in this sense is a sort of fee for the organization that controls it” (Falcone, n.d., quoted in Sciarrone, 2009, p. 345). Local communities often turn a blind eye to illegal activities like *pizzo* because of practices of connivance (Travaglino et al., 2016), which inhibit opposition against these groups (Paoli, 2003).

In the present research, we employed a novel scale tapping into the justification of connivance practices to examine the hypothesis that such justification is predicted by individuals' masculine honor. Moreover, we proposed and tested the idea that the linkage between masculine honor and the justification of connivance practices is influenced by people's identification with different group memberships (see Reynolds et al., 2001). Specifically, we examined the hypothesis that this linkage is strengthened by individuals' social identification with territorial identities and weakened by identification with the national group. We contend that this process

reflects people's relatively stronger acknowledgment (territorial identity) or rejection (national identity) of criminal groups as a valid source of influence in the community (cf. Haslam & Reicher, 2017), leading them to attribute a different function to the values of masculine honor that sustain criminal groups' power.

INTRA-CULTURAL APPROPRIATION THEORY

Social power, the capacity to influence others and obtain the desired effects on the world, can be exercised effectively and over a prolonged period only when it is acknowledged as legitimate by subordinates. Legitimate power is defined as “*authority*” (Turner, 2005). Illegitimate power (i.e., coercion) may dramatically affect society, but it also seeds change by triggering active or passive resistance and disobedience (Turner, 2005). A question of great theoretical and practical relevance is to address the basis of the legitimacy of criminal groups' authority.

ICAT suggests that criminal groups gain authority by appropriating and strategically utilizing cultural values shared within the community (Travaglino & Abrams, 2019). Unlike legal institutions (Tyler, 2006), these groups cannot base their authority on the rule of law or legal procedures. Instead, these groups appeal to shared meaning, customs, and values to justify their claims to power. They gain social approval and respect by presenting themselves as embodying these values and reinforcing them (Travaglino et al., 2022).

ICAT posits that shared meaning may function as an ideological device that justifies and sustains relationships of dominance in society. The theory draws on a *critical* conceptualization of ideology as “meaning in the service of power” (Thompson, 1996, p.11). Unlike neutral conceptualizations as “systems of meaning and beliefs about political relations” (Becker, 2020), this critical conceptualization of ideology is explicitly concerned with how meaning is employed by powerholders to underwrite their position in the social hierarchy. An important implication of this conceptualization is that ICAT does not restrict the notion of ideology to any specific doctrine or set of beliefs (e.g., authoritarianism or Marxism). According to this framework, meaning (including cultural meaning) becomes “ideological” to the extent that it is employed to sanction asymmetrical relationships. The same cluster of values and beliefs may be ideological in one context (when used to sustain relationships of domination) or neutral and even subversive in another (when it is employed to challenge them).

Masculine honor, ideology, and organized crime

Scholars from various disciplines have explored the role of masculinity—particularly beliefs, values, and practices associated with violence, respect, and reputation—in various forms of organized crime in multiple contexts (Chomczyński et al., 2023; Deuchar & Weide, 2019; Holligan & Deuchar, 2015; Stewart et al., 2006; Winlow, 2021; Zdun, 2008). In psychology, these beliefs are often investigated under the label of “masculine honor”, which refers to the values and beliefs about the constituting traits of a ‘real man’ and the perceived suitability of using male violence in social relationships (Barnes et al., 2012). Masculine honor is a component of a broader cultural framework of honor, which underscores the importance of reputation and social image in an individual's sense of self-worth (Rodriguez Mosquera, 2013).

Masculine honor plays a critical role in regulating relationships within criminal groups. For instance, in youth gangs, displays of dominance, aggression, and strength enable members to gain status within the group and protect these members from challenges, threats, and social isolation (e.g., Zdun, 2008). Additionally, masculine honor is crucial in regulating

the relationships between criminal groups and the broader community. In Mexico, research suggests that meeting cultural expectations about masculinity—demonstrating financial power and successfully offering a pathway to financial independence—enables cartels to recruit new members, especially in disadvantaged working-class communities (Chomczyński et al., 2023).

In the context of Italian mafias, ICAT proposes that these groups' adherence to values of masculine honor enhances their capacity to exert power (Travaglino & Abrams, 2019). Specifically, ICAT proposes a process of cultural “appropriation.” On one side of this process, mafia members strategically “co-opt” values of masculine honor that are important in the community. They call themselves “men of honor” and claim to enforce a morality grounded in patriarchal values of protection and respect (Paoli, 2003; Schneider & Schneider, 2003). Affiliates carefully monitor deviations from these values and strategically use violence to punish actions that threaten their reputation as ‘real men’. Through their actions, these groups communicate the importance of being self-reliant with regard to state authorities and institutions. Cooperating with state authorities rather than solving problems independently is framed as losing prestige and reputation.

On the other side of the process, to the extent that masculine honor is endorsed by individuals, mafias' actions become more acceptable because they reflect idealized views of how social relationships ought to be conducted. There is preliminary and initial evidence consistent with this proposition. For instance, previous research has established a relationship between individuals' endorsement of masculine honor, positive attitudes toward mafias, and diminished intentions to engage collectively against these groups (Travaglino & Abrams, 2019; Travaglino et al., 2016). Moreover, the perception of mafia members as “men of honor” who are part of the history of the territory and worthy of respect—a construct labeled as “romanticisation”—mediates the association between individuals' endorsement of masculine honor and the tendency to oppose these groups (Drury & Travaglino, 2020).

Thus, as theorized by ICAT, masculine honor can function as an ideology, namely the meaning sustaining mafias' capacity to exert influence in the community (Travaglino & Abrams, 2019). Importantly, criminal groups' adherence to values of masculine honor enables them to establish alternative normative frameworks in a territory. These normative frameworks limit cooperation with institutional authority, mandate secrecy about the mafia's presence, and require individuals to display indifference against crime. In the Southern Italian context, secrecy and indifference are often referred to as *omertà*. *Omertà* enhances and perpetuates criminal organizations' authority over communities and underpins practices of connivance between the population and criminal groups (Travaglino & Abrams, 2019; Travaglino et al., 2016).

Research has yet to directly examine the relationship between individuals' endorsement of masculine honor and their justification of connivance practices. In this article, we employed a novel measure of justification of connivance practices to investigate this relationship in Sicily, a southern Italian region where mafias such as Cosa Nostra have historically had a particularly strong hold over territories and communities (Paoli, 2003). We tested the hypothesis that individuals' endorsement of masculine honor ideology would be linked to justifying practices that limit cooperation with institutional authorities and underpin mafias' authority. Furthermore, we explored whether this link might be influenced by how individuals construe their broader social environment and which systems of authority they view as relevant (Travaglino & Abrams, 2019). One major factor shaping such construal is individuals' identification with relevant groups (Reicher, 2004). Therefore, we addressed how the relationship between individuals' endorsement of masculine honor ideology and their acceptance of connivance practices might change based on their social identification with two critical groups: the territorial (neighborhood, regional) and national ones.

SOCIAL IDENTITY, CATEGORIZATION, AND VALUES

Social Identity Theory and Self-Categorization Theory contend that group memberships constitute an extremely important component of individuals' selves (Tajfel, 1974; Turner, 1987). Individuals can categorize themselves at different levels of abstraction. When they view themselves as individuals (in contrast to other individuals), their social perceptions, beliefs, and values are grounded in idiosyncratic personal identities (Turner, 1987). People can also perceive themselves as part of a group (in contrast to other groups). This process of "social identification" leads people to endorse the groups' values, beliefs, norms, and ideologies (Livingstone & Haslam, 2008; Turner, 1993; Turner-Zwinkels & van Zomeren, 2021). For instance, highly identified individuals tend to endorse the political stances of the relevant group and behave consistently with such a stance (e.g., Duckitt, 1989).

Individuals belong simultaneously to various groups. Self-Categorization Theory contends that the activation of a specific identity depends on the interaction between the nature of the social context (i.e., situational clues prompting the emergence of a specific identity) and the individuals' readiness to perceive themselves in a certain way (Turner et al., 1994). As different social identities become salient, individuals experience significant alterations in interpreting and responding to their social environment (Reicher, 2004).

Especially relevant in the context of this research, shifts in the salience of a social identity might influence the implications of embracing specific attitudes or ideologies for individuals' perception of social reality (Mirisola et al., 2007; Verkuyten & Hagendoorn, 1998). For instance, Reynolds et al. (2001) demonstrated that the pattern of associations between participants' authoritarianism and prejudice changed as a function of the social identity made salient by the experimenters. Specifically, they found that the association between authoritarianism and prejudice was weaker when groups characterized by shared norms against prejudice were salient (national identity as Australians). Conversely, the association was stronger when groups that increased awareness of intergroup differences and conflict were salient (e.g., a gender identity, male vs. female).

In the context of responses to authorities, individuals' self-definition as a group member shapes the perception of what other social actors belong to and best represent the group, "us" (Turner, 1993). In turn, this perception determines what actors can set the normative agenda of the group (Haslam & Reicher, 2017; Reicher & Stott, 2020). Therefore, identification with a social group may be connected with the emergence of distinct systems of social order.

In this research, we extended this work by examining how shifts in the salience of two distinct social identities (national vs. territorial) may moderate the association between individuals' endorsement of masculine honor beliefs and justification of connivance practices. Drawing on ICAT and research on social identity (Haslam & Reicher, 2017; Reynolds et al., 2001), we propose that shifts in the salience of a social identity may imply the acknowledgment of different authorities and agents of influence (Turner, 1993), thus altering the patterns of relationships between masculine honor values and the justification of connivance practices.

INTRACULTURAL APPROPRIATION THEORY AND SOCIAL IDENTITY: OVERVIEW OF THE HYPOTHESES

The current research reports correlational (Studies 1a-b) and experimental (Study 2) studies investigating the relationship between the endorsement of masculine honor values and individuals' justification of connivance with criminal groups. The justification of connivance practices is enormously consequential because it facilitates the action of mafias in the community (Paoli, 2003). Across studies, we examined the linkage between masculine honor and the justification of connivance in Sicily, testing for the first time ICAT in an Italian

region characterized by the pervasive presence of Cosa Nostra. Based on previous research (Travaglini & Abrams, 2019), we expected that masculine honor would be positively associated with justifying connivance practices.

Additionally, we addressed the question of how self-categorization as national and territorial group members moderates the relationship between masculine honor and the justification of connivance practices. According to ICAT, masculine honor constitutes an ideological device that legitimizes criminal groups, sustaining their capacity to set normative frameworks in the community. However, ICAT states that the *ideological function* of a set of values—namely, the value's capacity to sustain relationships of domination—varies depending on the social and psychological context. A set of values may be associated with norms facilitating the authority of a powerholder when there is correspondence between individuals' values and those “appropriated” by the powerholder. Alternatively, the same set of values may have a weaker influence when people recognize a different powerholder that does not rely on those values. This reasoning implies that the effectiveness of masculine honor as an ideological device is contingent on whether individuals' self-categorization aligns more closely with that of the powerholder.

The Italian context is characterized by the presence of both strong mafia groups and a resilient national state. For example, the Global Organized Crime Index (Global Organized Crime Index, n.d.) places Italy in the top quartile worldwide for both the influence of criminal organizations and the resilience of the state (6.70 and 6.46 on a 1 to 10 scale, respectively). The state challenges the mafia through the efforts of magistrates, police officers, and politicians, as well as by implementing advanced legislation designed to tackle this phenomenon. Public discourse and policies strongly advocate for the delegitimization of criminal organizations, employing numerous educational initiatives and sustaining associations aimed at fighting the mafia (Schneider & Schneider, 2003). Conversely, the mafia maintains strong territorial control, especially in the South of the country, where it is perceived as having determinant influence over local affairs (Contro Ogni Forma Di Violenza, 2018; Legalità Debole, 2024). Acknowledging the influence of the mafia locally, together with the resilience of the national state against these groups, is consistent with the notion of individuals simultaneously experiencing and dealing with different systems of social order (see also Travaglini et al., 2023). The co-existence of different systems of social order suggests that we should observe oppositional effects of territorial and national social identification on the ideological function of masculine honor. Specifically, Individuals' identification with a territorial group membership should strengthen the relationship between masculine honor and the justification of connivance practices. Conversely, a stronger identification with the national group membership should weaken such a relationship.

Individuals' identification as members of the national group should weaken the linkage between masculine honor and justification of connivance practices because the salience of a national identity entails supporting the authority of the state. Previous research indicates that stronger national identification is associated with stronger patriotism, political involvement (e.g., political interest and knowledge), engagement in institutional forms of collective actions such as voting, and generalized trust in the nation (Huddy & Khatib, 2007). Moreover, individuals identifying more strongly with their national group are more likely to legitimize and cooperate with the police (Wolfe & McLean, 2021). Thus, individuals who identify more strongly with their nation should be more likely to acknowledge state institutions as a source of authority and influence. In such a context, mafia groups may be seen as more subversive and deviants, and the ideological capacity of masculine honor to sustain their normative agenda should be attenuated.

Conversely, criminal groups' control extends over local communities and territories, where affiliates are typically well-known and have contact with people (Travaglini & Drury, 2019). In such contexts, criminal groups may be perceived as influential authorities to which people must respond. Moreover, in the Italian context, identification with

a territorial group membership might also imply a disconnection from the institutions of the nation-state. Italy has an especially pronounced history of localism and regionalism, whereby people's allegiance to the central authority of the state is questioned by the existence of multiple loyalties to territorial identities and regions (Levy, 1996). Thus, we expected that identification with a local group membership—the region or, in some contexts, the neighborhood—should strengthen the association between masculine honor and individuals' justifications of connivance practices.

STUDIES 1A-B

Studies 1a-b were two correlational studies conducted in two cities affected by the presence of Cosa Nostra, Palermo (Study 1a) and Catania (Study 1b). In Sicilian cities, neighborhoods hold historical significance for the mafia, which utilizes them as administrative units, known as 'mandamenti' (Borrometi, 2016), to control "their" territory and the population. These 'mandamenti' are overseen by a so-called "Sicilian Mafia Committee" at the regional level (Falcone & Padovani, 1991). Thus, as the power of the mafia is exercised both locally and regionally, we operationalized territorial identity in two ways to enhance the generalizability of the findings: as individuals' identification with the neighborhood (Study 1a) or as individuals' identification with the regional group "Sicilians" (Study 1b).

In both studies, we tested the hypotheses that individuals' identification with different group memberships would distinctively moderate the association between individuals' endorsement of masculine honor values and their justification of connivance practices. We expected that as individuals identify more strongly with their territory, the linkage between masculine honor and justification of connivance would strengthen. Conversely, we predicted that a stronger national identification would entail a weaker association between the two constructs.

Methods

Procedure and participants

We recruited $N=414$ participants from Palermo (Study 1a) and $N=411$ participants from Catania (Study 1b). In Palermo, $N=16$ participants were excluded from the analyses because they did not pass the attention checks.¹ The final sample consisted of 398 participants (47.99% female and 47.24% male). Participants' age ranged from 17 to 75 years ($M=31.84$, $SD=15.22$), and their education level from middle school to postgraduate education (17.84% middle school, 48.49% high school, 8.29% bachelor's degree, 19.60% master's degree, 1.26% postgraduate education, and 4.52% did not report their education level). Furthermore, 38.19% of participants were workers, 7.54% unemployed, and 42.46% were students (4.52% did not respond to the question).

In Catania, $N=12$ participants failed the attention checks and were excluded from further analyses. The final sample involved $N=399$ participants (60.65% female and 33.83% male). The mean age of the participants was 43.60 years ($SD=14.68$), ranging from 18 to 75 years. Regarding their occupational status, the majority of the participants were workers (54.89%), 5.26% unemployed, 16.04% students, and 23.81% not reported. As for education, the participants' levels varied from primary school to postgraduate education (.25% primary school, 2.76% middle school,

¹We used five, six and four attention checks in Studies 1a and 1b and Study 2, respectively. We included only participants who correctly responded to at least 70% of these checks. Results remain unchanged when no participants are excluded.

22.81% high school, 12.78% bachelor's degree, 37.84% master's degree, 18.30% postgraduate education, and 5.26% did not respond to the question). In both studies, we aimed for a sample size of approximately 400 participants. We determined the sample size using the R-package *pwr* (Champely, 2020) for a test of a two-way interaction effect in moderated multiple regression that could achieve a power of .80, assuming $\alpha = .05$ and $f^2 = .02$ (Aguinis et al., 2005).

Across studies, participants were invited to take part in a short study on “The Perceptions of Social Groups.” To recruit participants, we employed a chain referral sampling method (Johnson, 2014). We identified an initial set of contacts local to each of the two areas of Sicily (Palermo and Catania) and invited them to take part in the study via a survey link. Upon completion, participants were asked to identify other potential participants living in the same area as them and send them the link. The method was deemed suitable for reaching a community sample in each area of Sicily, for which we lacked pre-existing online databases (e.g., Prolific Academic). Despite its limitations (e.g., risk of selection bias; Johnson, 2014), this method was chosen for its feasibility, given the geographical constraints and the fact that it allowed us to recruit a more diverse community sample beyond university students.

The surveys were in Italian, and participation was voluntary. After reading the consent form, participants were asked to complete the measures. The studies included attention checks (e.g., “This is a control question. Select answer +2”). Participants provided demographic information after completing the measures (gender, age, city and neighborhood in which they lived, and level of education).

Measures

Honor ideology for manhood (HIM)

To measure participants' endorsement of masculine honor, we used the Italian version (Travaglino et al., 2016) of the honor ideology for manhood (HIM) scale (Barnes et al., 2012). HIM consists of 16 items, tapping endorsement of qualities that define a “real man” (e.g., “A real man never backs up from a fight”) and males' physical aggression in honor-related domains (e.g., “A male has the right to act with physical aggression against another man who flirts with his wife”). The scale ranged from -3 , *completely disagree* to $+3$, *completely agree*, and had good reliability ($\alpha_{\text{Palermo}} = .93$ and $\alpha_{\text{Catania}} = .94$).

Territorial identification

Five items were used to measure neighborhood identification in Palermo (from -3 , *completely disagree* to $+3$, *completely agree*). Three items (“I am pleased to think of myself as belonging to my neighborhood”; I am proud I am from my neighborhood; and “I identify with other people who live in my neighborhood”) were adapted from Travaglino et al. (2016), and two were created ad hoc for this study (“I feel a sense of belonging to my neighborhood” and “For me, it's important to be from my neighborhood”). In Study 1b, we employed identical items but adapted to the regional level of analysis (e.g., “I am pleased to think of myself as Sicilian”). The scales showed good internal consistency ($\alpha_{\text{Palermo}} = .92$ and $\alpha_{\text{Catania}} = .90$).

National Identification

We adapted the five items employed to measure participants' territorial identity to the national context (e.g., “I am pleased to think of myself as Italian”; from -3 , *completely disagree* to $+3$, *completely agree*). The scale had good internal consistency in both cities ($\alpha_{\text{Palermo}} = .88$ and $\alpha_{\text{Catania}} = .89$).

Justification of connivance practices

To measure participants' justification of connivance practices, we used eight items. For each item, participants read a brief scenario portraying a situation of connivance with organized

crime. Specifically, the scale provides participants with a range of context-specific practices and situations revolving around three broad facets: *refusals to talk about the mafia* (e.g., A person is walking down the street in Corleone when they are approached by a journalist and agree to be interviewed. The journalist asks what they think of the death of Totò Riina. The person refuses to answer), *turning a blind eye towards other people's crimes* (e.g., In a supermarket in Palermo, a person, while shopping, bumps into a man who is stealing from a shelf. The thief notices that he has been seen. The person then pretends to see nothing and continues shopping.) and *complicity with the mafia* (A car is stolen from a person living in the Sperone. They turn to an important family in the area who, in exchange for a small sum of money, get his car returned). The items were adapted to each of the two contexts by altering the names of the neighborhood/local mafia bosses (the full list of items in both cities is presented at the following link <https://osf.io/kq7cy/>). After reading the scenarios, participants were asked the extent to which they would justify the person's behavior using a scale ranging from $-3 = \textit{completely unjustifiable}$ to $+3 = \textit{completely justifiable}$. The scale demonstrated good internal consistency ($\alpha_{\text{Palermo}} = .79$ and $\alpha_{\text{Catania}} = .86$) and convergent validity with legitimizing attitudes toward mafia groups (see Supplementary Materials).

Results and discussion

Testing the measurement model of the justification of connivance practices scale

The Justification of Connivance Practices is a new scale measuring individuals' justification of behaviors related to complicity with the mafia. These practices facilitate criminal groups' control of the territory (Paoli, 2003). We hypothesized a one-factor measurement model for the scale. We tested this hypothesis in the two samples using confirmatory factor analysis with maximum likelihood estimation and robust standard errors. The analyses yielded good fit indices for a one-factor model in the sample from Palermo (comparative fit index [CFI] = .97, Tucker–Lewis index [TLI] = .96, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .05) and Catania (CFI = .97, TLI = .96, RMSEA = .07), indicating the existence of a unique latent factor related to individuals' justification of connivance practices (standardized factor loadings and further information about the scale are reported in the Supplemental Materials). The scale was subsequently employed as a criterion in the moderated regression models described below.

Moderated regression models

Means, standard deviations, and correlations among variables are shown in Table 1 for Study 1a (Palermo) and Table 2 for Study 1b (Catania). Participants rated items on a scale of -3 to $+3$, but the responses were numerically coded as ranging from 1 to 7. In both samples and consistent with ICAT, individuals' endorsement of masculine honor was positively associated with their justification of connivance practices. To test our hypothesis that this association was oppositely moderated by identification with individuals' territorial and national groups, we employed a moderated regression model in each sample.² In step 1, justification of connivance practices was regressed

²Tables 1 and 2 indicate that the size of the correlation between territorial and national identity varies substantially across studies. We believe the difference may reflect the levels at which territorial identity was operationalized in Studies 1a (neighborhoods) and 1b (Sicilian regional identity), which vary in distance from the national group membership. To address potential issues of multicollinearity in the model, we computed the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) in both studies. VIF values remained below 2, suggesting that multicollinearity did not threaten the validity of the model.

TABLE 1 Study 1a: Correlations, means, and standard deviations.

	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
1. National identification	–					5.80	1.15
2. Territorial identification	.24 *** (398)	–				4.58	1.62
3. HIM	.11* (398)	.17*** (398)	–			3.13	1.36
4. JCP	.03 (398)	.06 (398)	.26*** (398)	–		2.43	1.01
5. Gender	.02 (379)	.03 (379)	.32*** (379)	–.04 (379)	–	–.01	1.00
6. Age	–.05 (372)	–.11* (372)	–.09 (372)	–.23*** (372)	–.06 (371)	31.84	15.22

Note: Gender: 1 = male, –1 = female. Sample sizes for each correlation are in parentheses.

Abbreviations: HIM, Honor Ideology for Manhood; JCP, Justification of Convivance Practices; SD, standard deviation.

* $p < .05$; *** $p < .001$.

TABLE 2 Study 1b: Correlations, means, and standard deviations.

	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
1. National identification	–					5.01	1.33
2. Territorial identification	.62*** (399)	–				5.12	1.45
3. HIM	–.05 (399)	.17*** (399)	–			2.96	1.40
4. JCP	–.17*** (399)	.05 (399)	.51*** (399)	–		2.62	1.23
5. Gender	–.04 (377)	–.01 (377)	.28*** (377)	.06 (377)	–	–.28	.96
6. Age	.09 (376)	–.01 (376)	.02 (376)	–.17*** (376)	.05 (375)	43.60	14.68

Note: Gender: 1 = male, –1 = female. Sample sizes for each correlation are in parentheses.

Abbreviations: HIM, Honor Ideology for Manhood; JCP, Justification of Convivance Practices; SD, standard deviation.

*** $p < .001$.

onto HIM and the two social identities. In step 2, the two interaction terms (i.e., HIM x National Identification and HIM x Territorial Identification) were entered into the model. Measures of HIM, regional, and territorial identifications were mean-centered. In both samples, age and gender (effect coded), and education were control variables. Results³ are summarized in Table 3 (Palermo) and Table 4 (Catania). Due to missing data on the covariates, the sample size for Study 1a used in the final model was $N=371$. With this sample size, we were able to detect an effect $f^2 = .022$ 80% of the time, assuming $\alpha = .05$. The final sample size in Study 1b was $N=375$, which enabled us to detect an effect $f^2 = .021$ 80% of the time, assuming $\alpha = .05$.

Study 1a (Palermo)

In the first step of the model, HIM significantly predicted the justification of connivance practices ($\beta = .32, p < .001$). Entering the interactions in the second step significantly increased the variance explained by the model ($F(2, 362) = 8.94, p < .001; f^2 = .05$). Specifically, and in line with our hypotheses, justification of connivance practices was predicted both by the HIM x national identification ($\beta = -.22, p < .001$) and the HIM x territorial identification ($\beta = .14, p = .012$) interactions.

Simple slopes analyses (see Figures 1a and 1b) of the two interaction terms revealed that HIM was more strongly associated with the justification of connivance practices among participants with higher levels (+1 *SD*) of territorial identification (*simple slope* = .33,

TABLE 3 Study 1a: Unstandardized regression coefficients of the moderated regression model on Justification of Connivance Practices.

Predictors	Step I				Step II			
	B	CI	t	p	B	CI	t	p
Constant	2.49	2.14–2.85	13.82	<.001	2.52	2.17–2.87	14.15	<.001
National identification	-.02	-.10 to -.07	-.36	.722	-.03	-.11 to -.06	-.62	.536
Territorial identification	-.00	-.07 to -.06	-.15	.884	.01	-.06 to -.07	.21	.831
HIM	.24	.16 to -.31	5.94	<.001	.23	.16 to -.31	5.94	<.001
Gender	-.13	-.24 to -.03	-2.58	.010	-.13	-.23 to -.03	-2.59	.010
Age	-.02	-.02 to -.01	-4.87	<.001	-.02	-.02 to -.01	-4.78	<.001
Education	.14	.03 to -.24	2.63	.009	.12	.02 to -.22	2.45	.015
HIM x National identification					-.14	-.20 to -.07	-4.20	<.001
HIM x Territorial identification					.06	.01 to -.11	2.52	.012
Observations (df)	371 (364)				371 (362)			
R^2/R^2 adjusted	.142/.128				.184/.166			

Note: Gender: 1 = male, -1 = female. The moderators (National and Territorial Identification) and the predictor (HIM) were centered in the regression model.

Abbreviation: HIM, Honor Ideology for Manhood.

³Results remain unchanged when the covariates are not included into the model. When no covariates are not included in the model, there are no missing values in the analyses.

TABLE 4 Study 1b: Unstandardized regression coefficients of the moderated regression model on Justification of Connivance Practices.

Predictors	Step I				Step II			
	B	CI	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	B	CI	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	3.48	2.98–3.99	13.57	<.001	3.44	2.94–3.95	13.48	<.001
National identification	-.16	-.27 to -.06	-3.13	.002	-.12	-.23 to -.02	-2.30	.022
Territorial identification	.08	-.02 to .17	1.60	.110	.06	-.04 to .15	1.16	.249
HIM	.44	.35 to .52	10.09	<.001	.40	.31 to .48	8.86	<.001
Gender	-.12	-.24 to -.01	-2.12	.034	-.12	-.24 to -.01	-2.09	.038
Age	-.01	-.02 to .01	-3.33	.001	-.01	-.02 to .01	-3.58	<.001
Education	-.08	-.18 to -.02	-1.58	.115	-.07	-.17 to -.03	-1.44	.151
HIM × National identification					-.08	-.14 to -.02	-2.45	.015
HIM × Territorial identification					.10	.03 to .16	2.93	.004
Observations (df)	375 (368)				375 (366)			
<i>R</i> ² / <i>R</i> ² adjusted	.323/.311				.340/.326			

Note: Gender: 1 = male, -1 = female. The moderators (National and Territorial identification) and the predictor (HIM) were centered in the regression model.

Abbreviation: HIM, Honor Ideology for Manhood.

$t(362) = 6.53, p < .001$) than lower (-1 SD) levels of territorial identification (*simple slope* = .13, $t(362) = 2.20, p = .020$). Conversely, at higher ($+1$ SD) levels of national identification, the relationship between HIM and justification of connivance practices was weaker (*simple slope* = .08, $t(362) = 1.42, p = .158$) than at lower (-1 SD) levels of national identification (*simple slope* = .39, $t(362) = 7.07, p < .001$).

Study 1b (Catania)

There were significant main effects of HIM ($\beta = .49, p < .001$) and national identity ($\beta = -.18, p = .002$) on the individuals' justification of connivance practices. Including the two interaction terms in the second step significantly improved the model's fit, $F(2, 366) = 4.96, p = .008, f^2 = .03$. Consistent with our hypothesis, both HIM × national identification ($\beta = -.12, p = .015$) and HIM × territorial identification ($\beta = .15, p = .004$) interactions predicted the justification of connivance practices.

A simple slope analysis (see Figures 2a and 2b) showed that HIM had a stronger relationship with the justification of connivance practices among participants with higher ($+1$ SD) levels of territorial identification (*simple slope* = .53, $t(366) = 9.76, p < .001$) than those with lower (-1 SD) levels of territorial identification (*simple slope* = .26, $t(366) = 3.47, p < .001$). Conversely, HIM showed a weaker relationship with the justification of connivance practices among participants with higher ($+1$ SD) levels of national identification (*simple slope* = .29, $t(366) = 4.37, p < .001$) than those with lower (-1 SD) levels of national identification (*simple slope* = .50, $t(366) = 8.91, p < .001$).

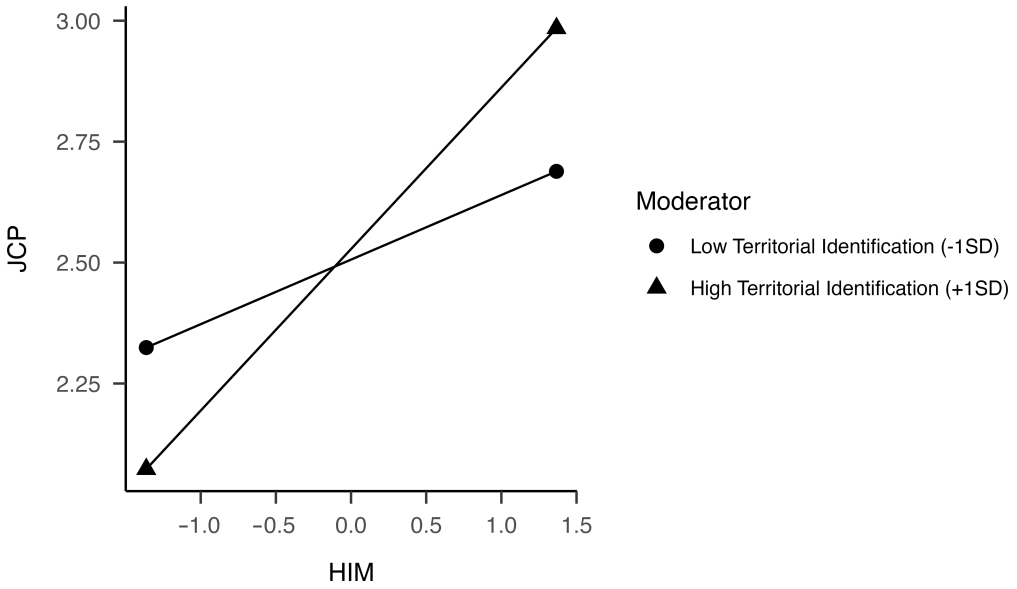


FIGURE 1A Study 1a: The moderating effect of territorial identification on the relation between Honor Ideology for Manhood (HIM) and Justification of Connivance Practices (JCP). Variables were numerically coded as 1 to 7. The predictor (HIM) and moderator (Territorial Identification) were centered in the regression model.

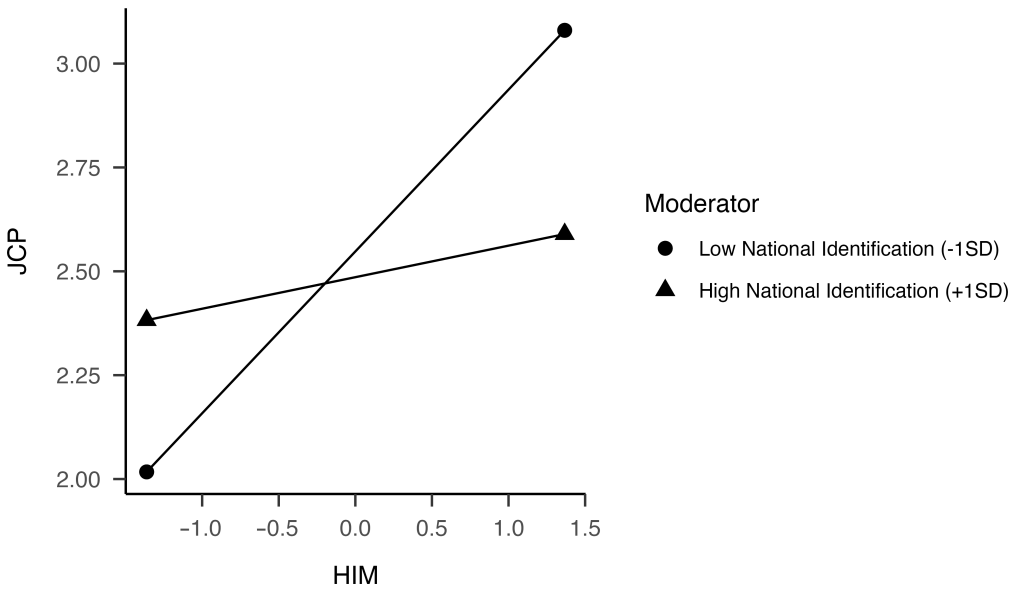


FIGURE 1B Study 1a: The moderating effect of national identification on the relation between Honor Ideology for Manhood (HIM) and Justification of Connivance Practices (JCP). Variables were numerically coded as 1 to 7. The predictor (HIM) and moderator (National Identification) were centered in the regression model.

STUDY 2

Studies 1a-b demonstrated the existence of a relationship between individuals' endorsement of masculine honor values and justification of connivance practices. Notably, this relationship

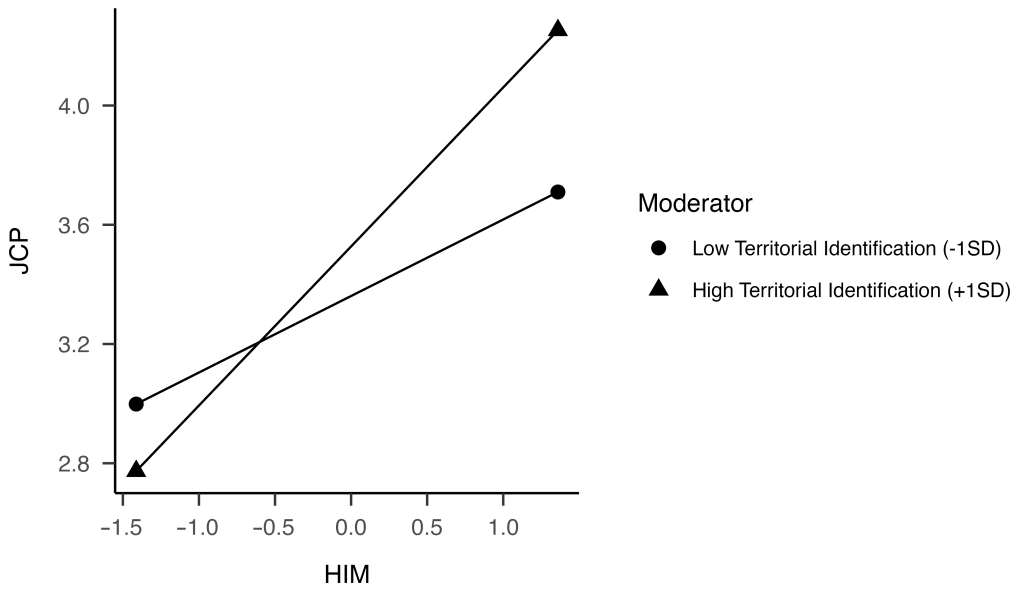


FIGURE 2A Study 1b: The moderating effect of territorial identification on the relation between Honor Ideology for Manhood (HIM) and Justification of Connivance Practices (JCP). Variables were numerically coded as 1 to 7. The predictor (HIM) and moderator (Territorial Identification) were centered in the regression model.

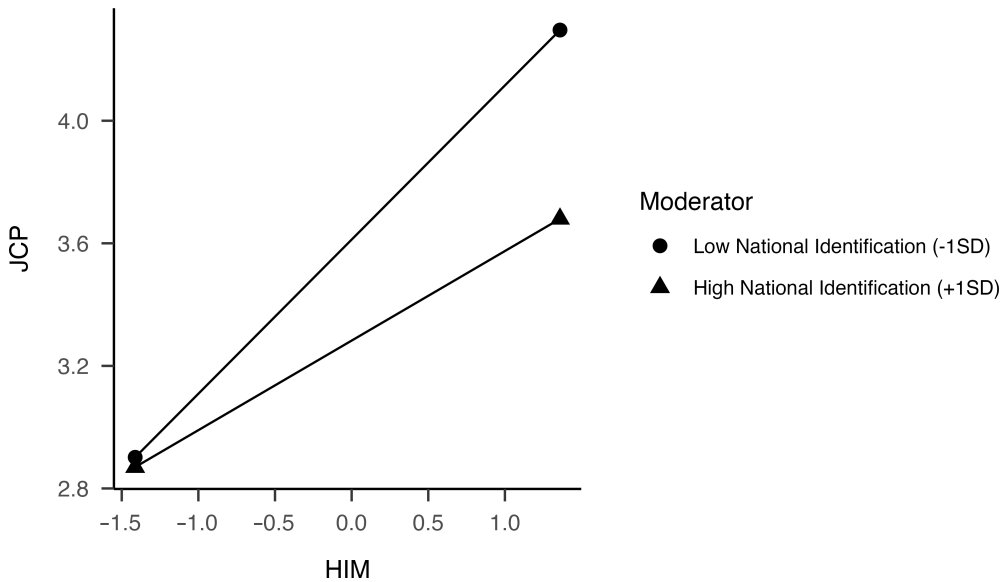


FIGURE 2B Study 1b: The moderating effect of national identification on the relation between Honor Ideology for Manhood (HIM) and Justification of Connivance Practices (JCP). Variables were numerically coded as 1 to 7. The predictor (HIM) and moderator (National Identification) were centered in the regression model.

was stronger when individuals reported higher levels of identification with their territorial group. Conversely, the relationship was weaker at higher levels of identification with the national group. These findings were consistent across two cities in Sicily (Palermo and Catania) and using different operationalizations of territorial identity (neighborhood or region).

Although the results were consistent across the two studies, the correlational design employed posed a threat to the internal validity of the findings. Specifically, we could not directly test the hypothesis that the activation of different identities implies different relationship patterns between masculine honor and justification of connivance practices because individuals' social identification was measured together with the other variables. To address this limitation, we designed an additional study to manipulate the salience of different social identities. We aimed to increase individuals' territorial or national identity salience experimentally. In the present study, territorial identity was operationalized as regional identity due to its similar impact to that of neighborhood identity observed in Studies 1a-b, with its effects more likely to generalize across different contexts in southern Italy.

As in Studies 1a-b, we tested the hypotheses that a salient territorial identity would strengthen the relationship between masculine honor and justification of connivance practices, whereas a salient national identity would weaken this relationship. To assess the unique contributions of these two identities, a base personal identity condition was also included (as in Reynolds et al., 2001). The inclusion of this condition enabled us to employ two effect-coded variables in our model, capturing the distinct and unique effects of national and territorial identities (see Cohen et al., 2003). Consistent with Self-Categorization Theory and with studies 1a and 1b, we expected a stronger relationship between masculine honor and justification of connivance practices when territorial identity was made salient and a comparatively weaker relationship in the condition of national identity salience.

Methods

Participants and designs

We recruited $N=390$ participants from Sicily in a study on the “perception of different social groups.” Seven respondents failed the attention checks¹ and were excluded from the analyses. The final sample involved $N=383$ participants (58.90% female, 40.84% male, and .26% missing). Participants' age ($M=31.31$, $SD=13.71$) ranged from 18 to 66 years. Their education levels included 7.07% middle schoolers, 60.21% high schoolers, 19.37% participants with a bachelor's degree, 12.83% with a master's degree, and .26% with a PhD. Concerning participants' employment, 39.79% of participants were workers, 6.28% were unemployed, and 45.03% were students (8.90% did not report their employment). Participants were from several different Sicilian provinces, including 62.66% from Palermo, 19.06% from Agrigento, 9.14% from Messina, and 4.44% from other Sicilian provinces (4.70% of participants did not indicate the city in which they lived). A community sample was recruited using the same sampling strategy as in Studies 1a-b in Sicily. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions, territorial ($N=135$), national ($N=122$), and personal ($N=126$) identity salience. Using the smallest effect size of previous studies as the basis for our estimate, we aimed to reach a sample size of 330 participants for a test of two interaction effects in a moderated regression with a power of .80 and an alpha level of .05.

Procedures and measures

In the study, the salience of different social identities was manipulated using a procedure similar to the one employed by Reynolds et al. (2001). Before completing the measures, participants were asked to focus on the most important traits describing them more as Italians (or Sicilians) than as Sicilians (or Italians) and to list three of these traits. Differently from Reynolds et al., participants in these two conditions were not asked to list

traits for the outgroup because the Sicilian identity is nested within the Italian one, and participants belong simultaneously to both groups. Participants assigned to the personal identity condition were asked to focus on traits that make them unique compared to other individuals (e.g., friends, family, and acquaintances). They were asked to list three keywords that “characterize others with whom you are familiar” and three keywords that “characterize you as a unique individual.”

At the beginning of each section of the questionnaire, participants read instructions reminding them that the research focus was on the characteristics describing them as Sicilians, Italians, or as unique individuals (depending on the condition). Participants completed the measures of masculine honor (HIM scale, 16 items as in Studies 1a-b, $\alpha = .90$) and justification of connivance practices (the same eight items as in Studies 1a-b, $\alpha = .74$).

Results and discussion

Means, standard deviations, and correlations among variables are summarized in Table 5. Participants rated items on a scale of -3 to $+3$, but the responses were numerically coded as ranging from 1 to 7. Replicating Studies 1a-b, the correlation between individuals' endorsement of masculine honor and their justification of connivance practices was significant and positive. Notably, this correlation varied substantially across conditions. Consistent with our hypothesis, the correlation between masculine honor and justification of connivance practices was strong and positive when territorial identity was salient ($r = .46, p < .001, N = 135$) and close to zero when national identity was salient ($r = .05, p = .613, N = 122$). Moreover, the correlation was small and not significant when personal identity was salient ($r = .13, p = .150, N = 126$).

To formally test our hypotheses, we employed a moderated regression model. Due to missing data, the final model's $N = 379$. This sample size enabled us to detect an interaction effect of magnitude $f^2 = .021$ 80% of the time, assuming $\alpha = .05$. In step 1, justification of connivance practices was regressed on HIM and the experimental conditions. Specifically, similar to Reynolds et al. (2001) and Andrighetto et al. (2013), the effects of territorial identity salience and national identity salience were modeled using effect coding (Cohen et al., 2003), with the personal identity condition as the base group. Age, gender, and education were included as control variables.⁴ In Step 2, the two-way interactions between HIM and the national and regional salience were entered into the model.

Results are summarized in Table 6. In the first step, HIM positively predicted justification of connivance practices ($\beta = .31, p < .001$). Entering the interaction terms in the second

TABLE 5 Study 2: Correlations, means, and standard deviations.

	1	2	3	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. HIM	–			3.01	1.16
2. JCP	.24*** (383)	–		2.67	.99
3. Gender	–.27*** (381)	.16** (381)	–	.18	.98
4. Age	.14** (379)	–.10 (379)	.00 (379)	31.31	13.71

Note: Gender: $-1 =$ male, $1 =$ female. Sample sizes for each correlation are in parentheses.

Abbreviations: HIM, Honor Ideology for Manhood; JCP, Justification of Connivance Practices; *SD*, standard deviation.

** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

⁴Results remain unchanged when the covariates are not included in the model. When no covariates are not included in the model, there are no missing values in the analyses.

TABLE 6 Study 2: Unstandardized regression coefficients of the moderated regression model on Justification of Connivance Practices.

Predictors	Step I				Step II			
	B	CI	t	p	B	CI	t	p
Constant	3.14	2.68–3.60	13.45	<.001	3.16	2.70–3.62	13.61	<.001
Territorial identity salience	-.05	-.18–.08	-.78	.437	-.05	-.18–.08	-.80	.424
National identity salience	-.00	-.14–.13	-.07	.944	-.01	-.14–.13	-.10	.919
HIM	.26	.18–.35	6.05	<.001	.23	.15–.32	5.23	<.001
Age	-.01	-.02 to .00	-2.80	.005	-.01	-.02 to -.00	-2.89	.004
Gender	.25	.15–.34	4.86	<.001	.23	.13–.33	4.48	<.001
Education	-.06	-.18–.05	-1.06	.290	-.07	-.18–.05	-1.14	.257
HIM × Territorial identity salience					.13	.03–.24	2.42	.016
HIM × National identity salience					-.14	-.26 to -.02	-2.27	.024
Observations (df)	379 (372)				379 (370)			
R ² /R ² adjusted	.125/.111				.143/.125			

Note: Gender: -1 = male, 1 = female.
 Abbreviation: HIM, Honor Ideology for Manhood.

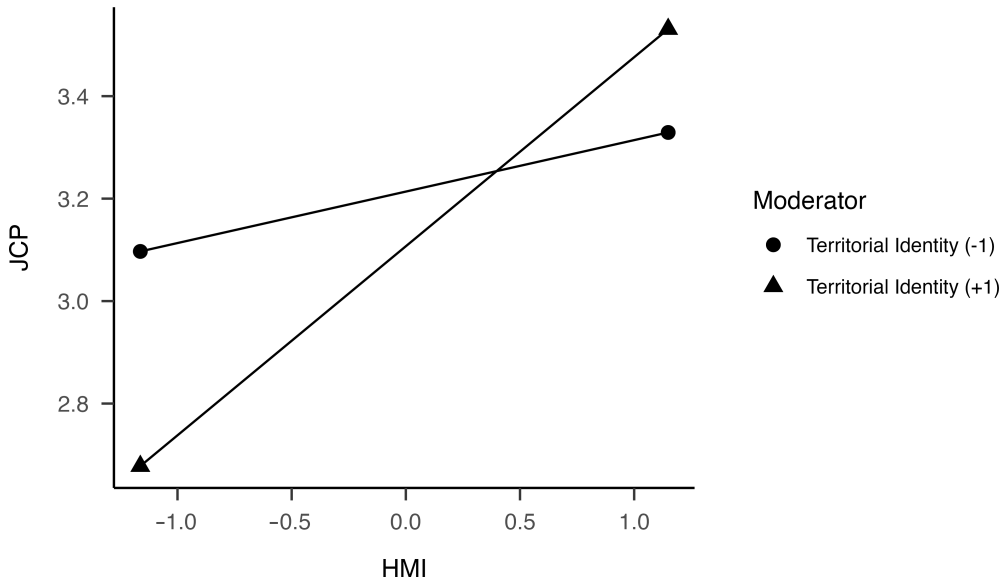


FIGURE 3A Study 2: The moderating effect of territorial identity effect on the relation between Honor Ideology for Manhood (HIM) and Justification of Connivance Practices (JCP). Variables were numerically coded as 1 to 7. The predictor (HIM) was centered in the regression model.

step significantly improved the model's fit, $F(2, 370) = 3.96, p = .02, f^2 = .02$. Consistent with our hypothesis, both the HIM x national identity salience ($\beta = -.12, p = .024$) and HIM x territorial identity salience ($\beta = .13, p = .016$) interactions were significant. A simple slope analysis (see Figures 3a and 3b) revealed that masculine honor had a stronger relationship

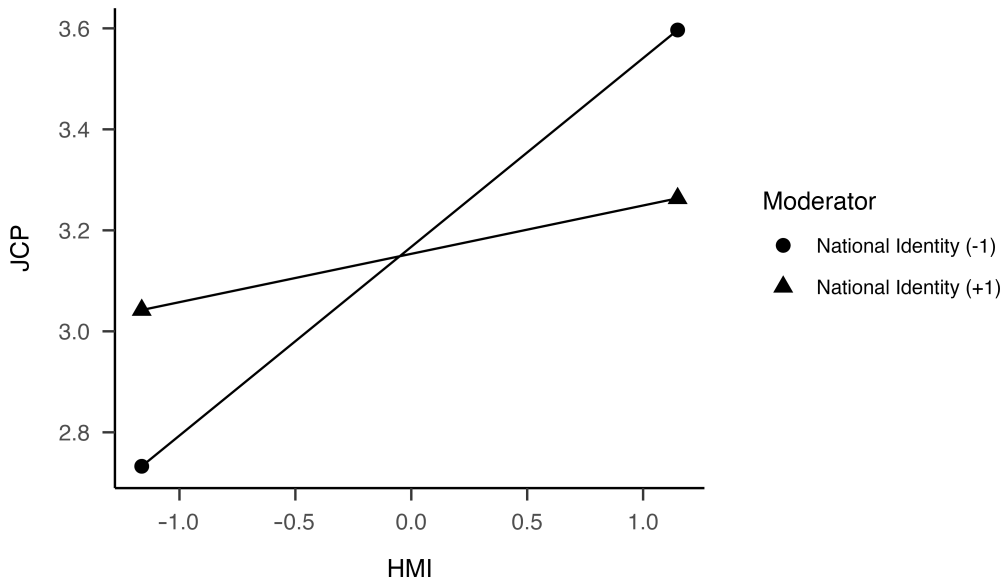


FIGURE 3B Study 2: The moderating effect of national identity effect on the relation between Honor Ideology for Manhood (HIM) and Justification of Connivance Practices (JCP). Variables were numerically coded as 1 to 7. The predictor (HIM) was centered in the regression model.

with the justification of connivance practices when territorial identity was salient (simple slope = .369, $t(370) = 6.09$, $p < .001$) compared to other conditions (simple slope = .100, $t(370) = 1.24$, $p = .215$). Finally, the relationship between HIM and justification of connivance practices was attenuated when national identity was salient (simple slope = .096, $t(370) = 1.23$, $p = .219$) compared to other conditions (simple slope = .374, $t(370) = 5.06$, $p < .001$).

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Organized criminal groups such as the Sicilian mafia pose a significant challenge to legal and democratic systems because they can wield political authority over communities and territories. ICAT theorizes that they strategically appropriate and exploit masculine honor values to gain legitimacy among people. According to ICAT, these values constitute an ideological framework sustaining the mafia's dominant position in society and underpinning its capacity to propagate norms in the territory (Travaglino & Abrams, 2019). In the present article, we investigated the articulation between the endorsement of masculine honor values, the justification of connivance practices, and territorial and national identities. Specifically, we tested the idea that people's endorsement of masculine honor values is associated with the justification of connivance practices favoring mafia activities. Moreover, we hypothesized that this association would be stronger at higher levels of territorial identification, where the mafia is a relevant powerholder. Conversely, we expected the association to be weaker at higher levels of national identification, reflecting the acknowledgment of the state's authority.

In Studies 1a and 1b, participants completed measures of masculine honor, justification of connivance practices and reported their identification with territorial and national groups. In the two studies, we considered different levels of territorial identity, operationalized either as

identification with the neighborhood (Study 1a) or the region (Study 1b). Across studies and operationalizations of territorial identity, the patterns of relationships between masculine honor and justification of connivance practices were consistent with our predictions. Specifically, the relationship was attenuated at higher levels of national identification and stronger at higher levels of territorial identification.

Study 2 confirmed these findings by experimentally manipulating the salience of social identities. Participants were asked to think of themselves as either Italian (national group membership) or Sicilian (territorial group membership). Results showed that making participants' identity as Italian salient resulted in an attenuated relationship between masculine honor and justification of connivance practices. Conversely, increasing the salience of the territorial identity resulted in a stronger association between masculine honor and justification of connivance.

The results are consistent with research on Social Identity Theory (Haslam & Reicher, 2017; Reicher & Stott, 2020; Reynolds et al., 2001) and ICAT (Travaglino & Abrams, 2019). The findings suggest that the strength of the link between (i.e., the ideological function of) masculine honor and the justification of connivance practices depends, in part, on which identity is activated. Specifically, our findings highlight that when individuals identify as members of the territorial ingroup, masculine honor is more strongly linked to the justification of practices that may favor mafia activity in the territory. Conversely, when individuals identify with the national group membership, the ideological capacity of HIM is attenuated, reflecting different sources of influence at the territorial and national levels. Identification with a territorial identity may prompt individuals to see the mafia as sharing a common ingroup, rooted in geographical proximity, shared history, and the mafia's impactful presence in people's everyday lives. This, in turn, strengthens the links between masculine honor and individuals' justification of practices of connivance facilitating their power. Conversely, identification with a national group membership is more likely to foster a common ingroup with national institutions and the state, weakening such a link.

Notably, the findings do not imply that national Italian identity excludes connivance with organized crime, nor that southern Italian territorial identities are inherently aligned with the justification of connivance practices or with organized criminal groups. Social scientists have often attributed characteristics of 'backwardness' to southern Italian populations, describing them as "amoral familist" societies (e.g., Banfield, 1967) or as characterized by cultural attitudes that favor the emergence of groups such as the mafia (Hess, 1973). These claims, however, betray a deep cultural determinism and tend to essentialize southern Italian identities, reducing people's behaviors to a set of fixed traits (Travaglino & Abrams, 2019).

In contrast to these perspectives, we believe that the connection between values and practices of connivance with organized criminal groups is contingent on the socio-political conditions at play, which have seen the emergence of mafia groups in southern Italy (e.g., Paoli, 2003). Social identities are multifaceted constructs, and it is crucial to distinguish identification with a group (e.g., being a Sicilian) from the various sets of values, beliefs, and norms that may constitute the identity content (Livingstone & Haslam, 2008; Turner-Zwinkels & van Zomeren, 2021).

The observation that the relationship between masculine honor values and justification of connivance with the mafia is contingent on the specific socio-psychological context raises crucial questions on the generalizability of the effects investigated in our studies. Globally, there are numerous examples (both current and past) of groups exerting criminal authority over communities. For instance, the ETA in Spain, the Cartels in Mexico, the IRA in Northern Ireland, the Taliban in Afghanistan, and the Boko Haram in Nigeria are all examples of groups controlling territories, relying on some degree of connivance from communities while also pushing forward specific religious, insurgent or criminal agendas.

To the extent that such groups weaken state authority and employ violence to regulate relationships, the justification of connivance among the public might similarly be predicted by shared values of masculine honor. Indeed, as discussed earlier, values of masculinity, honor, and respect are involved in the practices of different organized criminal groups (e.g., Winlow, 2021; Zdun, 2008). However, ICAT posits that the ideologies sustaining these groups' power and the interplay between such ideologies and social identities would depend on the specific social, cultural, and political conditions in which these groups operate. Other beliefs or values could coexist with or replace honor values in other contexts. Conversely, there are situations in which masculine honor may be involved in support of the state (Barnes et al., 2014). Research should empirically examine individuals' appraisal of legal and illegal authorities and address the complex interplay between identity, values, and connivance justification across contexts.

Limitations and directions for future research

This research was affected by some limitations that should be addressed in future research. Firstly, the methods employed in this research do not allow us to draw causal inferences on the association between masculine honor and justification of connivance practices. We demonstrated that this association varies depending on which identity is experimentally made salient. Future research should employ longitudinal designs or directly manipulate masculine honor values and examine the effects of this construct on individuals' justification of connivance.

Moreover, a crucial direction for future studies is to devise strategies to directly test the mechanism of appropriation proposed by ICAT (Travaglini & Abrams, 2019). Specifically, future research should examine whether individuals perceive the mafia as embodying masculine honor values and whether such perception, in turn, drives the justification of connivance practices and other forms of support for the mafia.

Additionally, in this research, we focused on the context of Sicily. Sicily provides a crucial environment in which to investigate the dynamics of power and resistance in the context of illegal authorities and powerholders. However, future research should explore these dynamics in other Italian regions and other countries with a significant presence of criminal organizations to assess the generalizability of our findings. It would also be useful to investigate the roles of other socio-cultural values and beliefs and their interplay with various forms of social identity in legitimizing or challenging the power of these organizations. For instance, the mafia might appropriate a variety of distinct codes to propagate its power in society, including values more directly emphasizing the protection of the community (Schneider & Schneider, 1994).

Another limitation of this research concerns the measurement of connivance practices. We aimed to create a measure tapping into people's endorsement of practices that may facilitate mafia activities while also lowering the likelihood of social desirability. The scale employed exhibited a reliable one-factor structure, suggesting it tapped into the acceptability of a set of practices that included silence about the mafia, turning a blind eye towards criminal activities and complicity with the mafia (see the Supplemental Materials for additional details about the measure). However, we acknowledge that the scale refers to behaviors that are specific to the context in which the study was conducted. Additional research is needed to develop a more generic measure of endorsement of practices that can be used across different geographical areas, groups, and situations, relying less on local knowledge of events and people.

Yet another important direction for future research is to examine how individuals' beliefs about authority become connected with social identities in specific contexts. For instance, both distal (e.g., socioeconomic) and proximal factors (socialization) may account for the acknowledgment of different structures of power in the territory. Research should explore these

processes and investigate how they can be shaped to promote inclusive, democratic, and law-abiding forms of identification.

Implications and conclusions

Overall, our findings underscore the complex interplay between masculinity, identity, and the justification of connivance practices that facilitate organized criminal groups' activities. They provide critical insights into how criminal authorities can leverage cultural and social dynamics to foster compliance within communities. Importantly, the results highlight the need to consider cultural and social factors in interventions aimed at shaping individuals' attitudes and behaviors related to organized crime. Furthermore, the findings emphasize the significance of examining power and authority dynamics in the context of illegality.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to express our gratitude to Naomi Alexia Randazzo, Elisabetta Senzarobba, and Claudia Lo Faro for their assistance during the data collection for Studies 1a and 1b. Open access publishing facilitated by Università degli Studi di Palermo, as part of the Wiley - CRUI-CARE agreement. AM and GAT have equally contributed to this manuscript and share the first authorship.

FUNDING INFORMATION

This work was supported by the UKRI under Grant “Secret Power” No. EP/X02170X/1 awarded to G. A. Travaglino under the European Commission's “European Research Council—STG” Scheme.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

For all studies in this article that were not preregistered, we report data for all conditions, measures, and excluded participants. All the materials, data and analysis code are available at the following link <https://osf.io/kq7cy/>.

ORCID

Alberto Mirisola  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7591-1058>

Giovanni A. Travaglino  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4091-0634>

REFERENCES

- Aguinis, H., Beaty, J. C., Boik, R. J., & Pierce, C. A. (2005). Effect size and power in assessing moderating effects of categorical variables using multiple regression: A 30-year review. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 90*(1), 94–107. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.90.1.94>
- Andrighetto, L., Durante, F., Lugani, F., Volpato, C., & Mirisola, A. (2013). Obstacles to intergroup contact: When outgroup partner's anxiety meets perceived ethnic discrimination. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 52*(4), 781–792. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12039>
- Banfield, E. C. (1967). *The moral basis of a backward society*. The Free Press Collier Macmillan.
- Barnes, C. D., Brown, R. P., Lenes, J., Bosson, J., & Carvallo, M. (2014). My country, my self: Honor, identity, and defensive responses to National Threats. *Self and Identity, 13*(6), 638–662. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2014.892529>
- Barnes, C. D., Brown, R. P., & Osterman, L. L. (2012). Don't tread on me: Masculine honor ideology in the U.S. and militant responses to terrorism. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 38*(8), 1018–1029. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167212443383>
- Becker, J. C. (2020). Ideology and the promotion of social change. *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences, 34*, 6–11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cobeha.2019.10.005>
- Borrometi, P. (2016). La mafia in Sicilia, la nuova mappa di Cosa Nostra (2016): Le famiglie, i clan, i mandamenti per Provincia. <https://www.laspia.it/la-mafia-sicilia-la-nuova-mappa-cosa-nostra-2016-le-famiglie-clan-mandamenti-provincia/>

- Champely, S. (2020). Pwr: Basic functions for power analysis. R Package Version 1.3–0. <https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=pwr>
- Chomczyński, P. A., Guy, R., & Azaola, E. (2023). Beyond money, power, and masculinity: Toward an analytical perspective on recruitment to Mexican drug trafficking organizations. *International Sociology*, 38(3), 353–371. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02685809231168579>
- Cohen, J., Cohen, P., West, S. G., & Aiken, L. S. (2003). *Applied multiple regression/correlation analysis for the behavioral sciences* (3rd ed.) Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Contro ogni forma di violenza (Asud'europa). (2018). Pio La Torre – Onlus.
- Deuchar, R., & Weide, R. D. (2019). Journeys in gang masculinity: Insights from international case studies of interventions. *Deviant Behavior*, 40(7), 851–865. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2018.1443761>
- Drury, L., & Travaglino, G. A. (2020). Demobilising by legitimising: Masculine honour, positive and negative contact, and social activism against criminal organisations. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 23(3), 402–417. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430219842917>
- Duckitt, J. (1989). Authoritarianism and group identification: A new view of an old construct. *Political Psychology*, 10(1), 63. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3791588>
- Falcone, G., & Padovani, M. (1991). *Cose di Cosa nostra*. Rizzoli.
- Global Organized Crime Index. (n.d.). Global Initiative against transnational organized crime.
- Haslam, S. A., & Reicher, S. D. (2017). 50 years of “obedience to authority”: From blind conformity to engaged followership. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, 13(1), 59–78. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-lawsocsci-110316-113710>
- Hess, H. (1973). *Mafia and mafiosi: The structure of power*. Lexington Books.
- Holligan, C., & Deuchar, R. (2015). What does it mean to be a man? Psychosocial undercurrents in the voices of incarcerated (violent) Scottish teenage offenders. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 15(3), 361–377. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748895814545407>
- Huddy, L., & Khatib, N. (2007). American patriotism, National identity, and political involvement. *American Journal of Political Science*, 51(1), 63–77. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2007.00237.x>
- Johnson, T. P. (2014). Snowball sampling: Introduction. In N. Balakrishnan, T. Colton, B. Everitt, W. Piegorisch, F. Ruggeri, & J. L. Teugels (Eds.), *Wiley StatsRef: Statistics reference online* (1st ed.). Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118445112.stat05720>
- Legalità debole (Asud'europa). (2024). Pio La Torre – Onlus. https://www.piolatorre.it/public/a_sud_europa/a_sud_europa_anno-18_n-1.pdf
- Lessing, B. (2021). Conceptualizing criminal governance. *Perspectives on Politics*, 19(3), 854–873. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592720001243>
- Levy, C. (Ed.). (1996). *Italian regionalism: History, identity and politics*. Berg.
- Livingstone, A., & Haslam, S. A. (2008). The importance of social identity content in a setting of chronic social conflict: Understanding intergroup relations in Northern Ireland. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 47(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1348/014466607X200419>
- Mirisola, A., Sibley, C. G., Boca, S., & Duckitt, J. (2007). On the ideological consistency between right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 43(7), 1851–1862. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2007.06.006>
- Paoli, L. (2003). *Mafia brotherhoods: Organized crime, Italian style*. Oxford University Press.
- Partridge, H. (2012). The determinants of and barriers to critical consumption: A study of Addiopizzo. *Modern Italy*, 17(3), 343–363. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13532944.2011.594999>
- Reicher, S. (2004). The context of social identity: Domination, resistance, and change. *Political Psychology*, 25(6), 921–945. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2004.00403.x>
- Reicher, S., & Stott, C. (2020). On order and disorder during the COVID-19 pandemic. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 59(3), 694–702. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12398>
- Reynolds, K. J., Turner, J. C., Haslam, S. A., & Ryan, M. K. (2001). The role of personality and group factors in explaining prejudice. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 37(5), 427–434. <https://doi.org/10.1006/jesp.2000.1473>
- Rodriguez Mosquera, P. M. (2013). In the name of honor. On virtue, reputation, and violence. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, 16(3), 271–388. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430212472590>
- Schneider, J., & Schneider, P. (1994). Mafia, antimafia, and the question of sicilian culture. *Politics and Society*, 22(2), 237–258. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032329294022002007>
- Schneider, J., & Schneider, P. T. (2003). *Reversible destiny: Mafia, antimafia, and the struggle for Palermo*. University of California Press.
- Sciarrone, R. (2009). *Mafie vecchie, mafie: Radicamento ed espansione (Nuova ed. riv. e ampliata)nuove*. Donzelli.
- Stewart, E. A., Schreck, C. J., & Simons, R. L. (2006). “I Ain't gonna let No one disrespect me”: Does the code of the street reduce or increase violent victimization among African American adolescents? *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 43(4), 427–458. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022427806292338>
- Tajfel, H. (1974). Social identity and intergroup behaviour. *Social science information*, 13(2), 65–93.

- Thompson, J. B. (1996). *Ideology and modern culture: Critical social theory in the era of mass communication (Repr)*. Polity Press.
- Travaglino, G. A., & Abrams, D. (2019). How criminal organisations exert secret power over communities: An intracultural appropriation theory of cultural values and norms. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 30(1), 74–122. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10463283.2019.1621128>
- Travaglino, G. A., Abrams, D., & de Moura, G. R. (2016). Men of honor don't talk: The relationship between masculine honor and social activism against criminal organizations in Italy: Honor, Omertà, and Antimafia. *Political Psychology*, 37(2), 183–199. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12226>
- Travaglino, G. A., Burgmer, P., & Mirisola, A. (2023). Alternative systems: The interplay between criminal groups' influence and political trust on civic honesty in the global context. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 15(4), 439–449. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19485506231176615>
- Travaglino, G. A., & Drury, L. (2019). Connected guys: Endorsement of masculine honour predicts more frequent contact with members of criminal organisations. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 49(1), 157–168. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2389>
- Travaglino, G. A., Friehs, M., Kotzur, P. F., & Abrams, D. (2022). Investigating the social embeddedness of criminal groups: Longitudinal associations between masculine honour and legitimizing attitudes towards the camorra. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 53(4), 612–622. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2926>
- Turner, J. C. (1987). *Rediscovering the social group: Self-categorization theory*. B. Blackwell.
- Turner-Zwinkels, F. M., & van Zomeren, M. (2021). Identity expression through collective action: How identification with a politicized group and its identity contents differently motivated identity-expressive collective action in the U.S. 2016 presidential elections. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 47(3), 499–513. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167220933406>
- Turner, J. C. (1993). *Social influence (Repr)*. Open University Press.
- Turner, J. C. (2005). Explaining the nature of power: A three-process theory. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 35(1), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.244>
- Turner, J. C., Oakes, P. J., Haslam, S. A., & McGarty, C. (1994). Self and collective: Cognition and social context. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 20(5), 454–463. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167294205002>
- Tyler, T. R. (2006). Psychological perspectives on legitimacy and legitimation. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 57(1), 375–400. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.57.102904.190038>
- Verkuyten, M., & Hagoendoorn, L. (1998). Prejudice and self-categorization: The variable role of authoritarianism and in-group stereotypes. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 24(1), 99–110. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167298241008>
- Winlow, S. (2021). *Badfellas: Crime, tradition and new masculinities*. Routledge.
- Wolfe, S. E., & McLean, K. (2021). Is it un-American to view the police as illegitimate? The role of national identity in the legal socialization process. *Journal of Social Issues*, 77(2), 577–599. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12434>
- Zdun, S. (2008). Violence in street culture: Cross-cultural comparison of youth groups and criminal gangs. *New Directions for Youth Development*, 2008(119), 39–54. <https://doi.org/10.1002/yd.272>

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of this article.

How to cite this article: Mirisola, A., Travaglino, G. A., & Giammusso, I. (2024). National identification weakens, and territorial identification strengthens, the relationship between masculine honor values and the justification of practices of connivance with the mafia. *Political Psychology*, 00, 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.13049>