

Working with(in) kinship: value in Italian family businesses

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In Italy, living close to or even within a place of business is not in and of itself unusual. Forms of housing in Italy are similar to many other European countries in that people primarily live in mixed-use spaces. It is common to have an apartment above cafés, bars, and bakeries. In this article, I examine how this form of mixed-use residence shapes market practices, decision-making, and labour relations among owners and workers. I argue that the spaces in which employees participate in the market economy also mirror their commitments to family. By examining workspaces across two food certifications in Milan, Italy – a Made in Italy certification (Food Italy) and a halal certification (Halal Italia) – I argue that Italian kinship networks structure how workers in each business operate. This intervention contributes to a larger literature on the cultural dimensions of capitalism.

Keywords: capitalism; workspace; family-owned business; food certifications; halal; Made in Italy.

Introduction

The average person is familiar with a number of Italian global brands controlled by families: Fiat, Ferrari, Pirelli. This phenomenon has a long history in the study of economics, undermining theories that regard economy as separate from other social spheres. Indeed, Italy is an interesting case study to explore the relationship between economic and family life because of the very real entanglements between the two. Anthropologists Lisa Roefel and Sylvia Yanagisako (2019) show that medium-sized Italian Chinese fashion houses convert kinship relations into capital. Following on their findings, I too show the ways in which relationships are converted into economic capital. However, I extend this analysis to include the ways in which workers harness the domestic sphere in the service of business and capitalist productivity and vice versa.

Anthropologists studying Italy have shown that family is foundational to economic exchange (Yanagisako 2002; Blim 1990; Krause 2018). Theorists of economy have also argued that space structures relationships, but how is this dynamic articulated in daily work? I argue that space is another important dimension that shapes the cultural and gendered contours of economic practice, and this has implications beyond the Italian case study. Understanding how labour and commerce are entwined and mutually productive of one another and of the food sector in Italy – one of the country's most economically important and renowned sectors of production and export – enriches broader sociological understandings of work.

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I accomplish this by looking at two food certifications, in which I spent ten months as an intern.¹ The first is a halal food certification based in Milan, called Halal Italia. Halal refers to the Islamic religious proscription of blood, pork, and carrion. Across the globe, the halal sector has exploded in the last ten to 15 years (Armanios and Ergene 2018). Although Italy has a sizable domestic Muslim minority, the majority of halal certifiers work in exporting Italian foods to Muslim-majority countries such as the United Arab Emirates. This is similar to Made in Italy certifiers, whose work, historically, has been for an export market.

The Italian government has supported the halal industry's engagement with foreign markets because, for government officials, halal is seen as way to strengthen the domestic craft food economy. In 2009, the Ministry of the Interior provided funds and advice to a community of Muslim Sufi converts to help the domestic Muslim community establish a halal certification. The development of the halal sector in Italy is inextricable from the domestic, local craft food economy. The Ministry's pilot project eventually became Halal Italia. In 2018, Halal Italia certified approximately 150 products across a number of sectors, including food ingredients, coffee products, ice creams, meat products and baked goods.

The second site is another food certification called Food Italy, also based in Milan, which certified about one hundred products as 100 per cent made in Italy. I noticed that, in a similar way to Halal Italia, spatial boundaries between home and work were flexible, though the workspace structured interactions differently. The Food Italy office had a large co-working table, behind which there was a small office where I and my work colleague, the office manager Chiara, primarily worked, and an open area behind the large conference table where the owner worked. Through the two case studies, I show that the navigation of space is structurally analogous.

Made in Italy certifications cater to a foreign audience, and as such, the Italian government has been heavily involved in its development. Historically, much of this oversight was the result of a notorious wine scandal that killed 20 people in the 1980s. Although none of the tainted Italian wine was exported, many countries refused to import Italian wine until the Italian government provided more oversight (Henry 1986). Since the scandal, the Italian government oversees strict regulations and guidelines regarding the health and safety of exported foods.

This article investigates work culture (the controversies, tensions, and attitudes) in these two offices to argue that family and relations in these spaces are integral to business but articulated to different ends. Food Italy and Halal Italia's business relationships are structured by kinship-based forms of business residence, which inflect the daily running of the businesses. This article provides additional data to understand the complicated relationship between family and work life, which is not just that family is important in Italian work life but that this importance is navigated differently across institutions. Put another way, it is only through an empirical investigation that social scientists can understand how family shapes varied capitalist forms in Italy.

In studying the economy of Italy, social scientists have focused on the 'Third Italy', or the industrial districts, primarily in the north of Italy, that underpin the small craft-based economy in post-Fordism Italy (Bianchini 1991). The craft economy is not just relegated to industrial crafts such as silk, fashion, and cars but now encompasses craft foods, as a result of Italy's portrayal in popular culture as a destination for good and approachable food (Parasecoli 2014; 2017). Seeing the importance of this image, the Italian government is involved in supporting what anthropologist Elizabeth Krause has termed the 'myth of continuity' or the historical sentiments unproblematically used to produce value (Krause 2018, 68–9). Although Krause applies this myth to Italian fashion, there are also parallels with Italian craft foods. As with Italian fashion, the government seized an opportunity to build an economy around the idea that Italian food has always existed since time immemorial, and that 'Italians' have always produced and consumed crafted, artisanal foods. Halal

entities exporting Italian products are also greatly influenced by the imagining of Italian food, as much of the demand for Italian crafted foods is from markets abroad. Ideas circulating about Italian food have both social and economic value.

The major finding from this work is that Food Italy emphasises impartiality and this means that although families, and in particular adult children, dictate daily work life, they are rendered invisible to outsiders. Workers at Food Italy want to appear objective. They do this in many ways, one of which is to conceal children from outsiders. On the other hand, for Halal Italia – an institution embedded in a religious community – children are a fundamental part of the community and, therefore, are made visible in the community spaces.

First, I provide background on the two businesses, Food Italy and Halal Italia, to go beyond the theories about the totalising effects of the family in Italian business. While this new administrative style may have dysfunctional, totalising consequences in some cases, in Italy, differing notions of space and family organise features of daily business life. Italian business entities emphasise or de-emphasise familial relations in their workspaces in ways that support their claims of being legitimate actors and entities. I unpack the patterns and relations in these workspaces with a tool familiar to anthropologists: the kinship chart. Finally, I look at the dynamics of the mundane in these spaces to understand how the workspaces, while analogous, translate different ideals about family and work.

Structuring the landscape: the family in business

In 2003, the then prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi, was in the midst of a scandal about his explicit conflicts of interest. When asked why he would not sell his media empire he responded: ‘I wanted to do it, but my children won’t let me [...]. They are in love with my companies. They want to continue to manage what their father constructed’ (Johnston 2003). Even Berlusconi, the richest man in Italy, is beholden to family wishes in business. According to the Italian governmental statistics bureau (ISTAT), 70 per cent of companies in Italy’s industrial and services sector involve a ‘[...] family-business structure (where control is directly or indirectly exercised by a physical person or family)’ (ISTAT 2013, 6). While family businesses are found across the globe, they remain an important organisational form in Italy.

Italian labour laws have greatly influenced the size of the majority of family businesses. In 1970, the *Statuto dei Lavoratori* (Worker’s Statute) made it nearly impossible to fire workers for employers who hired more than 15 employees. If workers were found to have been dismissed unfairly, they would be reinstated. For fear of having a disgruntled employee in their company, the law motivated business owners to hire fewer than 15 employees. The law also encouraged companies not to officially hire people, but to turn, rather, to a precarious labour model of yearly contracts (Molé 2011). Combined with a strong social welfare state, Italian labour laws set the stage for an increase in small- to medium-sized businesses in the Italian economy.

Due to the yearly contract model, the organisational structure of most small- and medium-sized businesses remains horizontal. Typically, employees are not managed directly by anyone other than the owner. The owner often addresses many issues raised by staff, but workers also rely on each other to solve issues that may arise. Another feature to come out of this history is the common practice of co-working spaces. In the two companies I worked with most, the workspace was shared by all. Due, perhaps, to the horizontal structure of the businesses, there is little hierarchical office separation. Even Chiara’s ‘office’ opened directly into the owner’s ‘office’. The two spaces were so close, that Chiara and the owner would often talk to each other from their ‘respective’ offices.²

Academic literature has investigated another feature of family-owned businesses – that of succession (Burkart, Panunzi and Shleifer 2003; Bunkanwanicha, Fan and Wiwattanakantang 2013). Anthropologist Silvia Yanagisako's ethnography begins with an Italian saying about succession: 'The grandfather founded the firm, the sons develop it, and the grandsons destroy it' (Yanagisako 2002, 1). In her case study of Cuomo's silk industry, she finds that the issue of succession structures gender relations. She examines the sphere of business, which is male dominated and should not include 'family', which is the business of women. This stark gender division is the greatest irony she finds: the men who run the businesses are reliant on women's work in maintaining bonds, but their patrilineal consanguineal kinship ties give them eventual ownership of the company.

Although issues of succession and inter-familial strife can weigh heavily on a small family- or community-run business, the family firm model persists (Chiesi 2010; Chiesi 2014). Family firms have been found not only to be resilient but also flexible, which is key to participating successfully in the market economy (Colli 2003; Colli and Larsson 2014; Bianchini 1991). In addition to flexibility as a feature of family firms, I also argue that the physical space structures relations.

In anthropology and other social sciences, the notion of family has, historically, been viewed as an impediment to economic growth, especially in postwar Italy. Edward Banfield's *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society* (1958) proposed that slow economic growth in southern Italy was the result of a heavy reliance on familial ties, which he called amoral familism (Banfield 1958; Bertrand and Schoar 2006). The importance of family ties in economy should not be understated, and even today there exist many family firms that are publicly traded, including the Waltons' Walmart and the Agnellis' Fiat. In addition to these large enterprises, there are also small- to medium-sized family firms, which makes defining 'family firms' both difficult and contested (Colli 2003). It is not surprising then that definitions vary, especially because large publicly traded family firms share much more in common with other corporate enterprises than they do with their small- to medium-sized counterparts. For the purposes of this article, the definition of 'family firm' is expanded to include kin networks within a business not just in terms of leadership, but also as regards the workers. I build on previous literature of small-scale industrialisation and expand this to look at the service sector which regulates the industry of craft goods (Blim 1990; Krause 2018; Yanagisako 2002). The anthropological lens not only expands notions of kinship but also provides the methodology to observe when relations are utilised in daily economic activity. Following on seminal works by other anthropologists, I eschew ideas of 'the Italian economy' as motivated by rational calculation and highlight the essential nature of religious and familial motivation as integral to economy and work (Yanagisako 2002; Rofel and Yanagisako 2019). From this perspective, I expand on current literature to think about the role not only of kinship ties, but also of bonds formed in a religious community that is also participating in the global economy. While the forms of certification look similar, the functions vary significantly. In other words, I do not mean to conflate the halal project with that of the Made in Italy project but rather I seek to compare across projects to understand how people privilege and navigate bonds in an analogous economic activity.

Identifying patterns through kinship and locality

Work life in Italy is shaped by the historical legacy of mixed-use spaces and the tendency to live in or close to one's place of work. At first glance, the historical trajectory means that all small businesses combine home and work in similar ways and to parallel ends. However, through the relations expressed in the following kinship charts, it becomes clear that the social process is different for each entity and that the dynamics of the mundane vary. This difference is crucial to understanding how each form of workspace dwelling is translated into value.

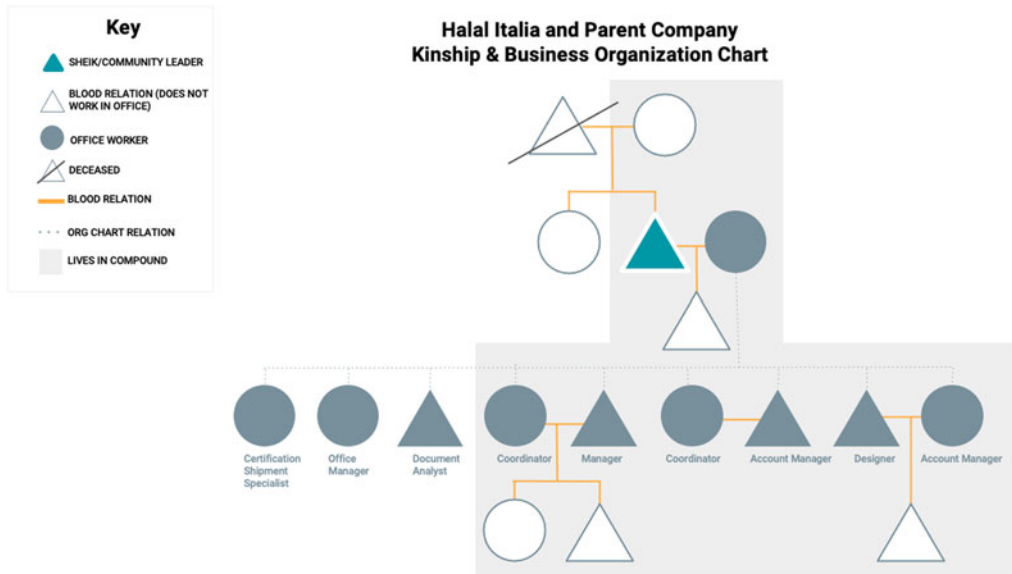


Figure 1. Kinship and business organisation at Halal Italia and parent group (not including auditors). Circles represent women and triangles represent men. Created by the author.

In my time working with Halal Italia, I began to notice that spatial distinctions shaped business life. Situated in a new and upcoming neighbourhood of Milan, the overarching religious organisation that ran Halal Italia was located in a complex donated by the founder. The complex has a prayer space, a courtyard, two different office spaces, a dormitory, and a kitchen. Additionally, the community owns many of the apartments on the property. This means that employees of the Halal Italia business often come and go as needed. For example, I often arrived at the offices while workers were running errands. My two closest interlocutors, a married couple, Mohammed and Fatima,³ often went to the bank during the day. They ate lunch at home, which was within the complex overlooking the mosque courtyard.

As Figure 1 shows, 13 members lived and worked in the community offices in Milan during the time of my study. The majority of employees live in the apartments just above the businesses: most are married couples. This means the apartments house a series of neolocal units. Those who lived in the compound often told me that the location made it much easier not only to work at the community business but also to attend Friday prayers (*Jumu'ah*). In addition, the community subsidised living costs, especially for young couples. Fatima told me that without the community's support she and her husband would have never been able to afford to live in the area, which was gentrifying quickly. There are two motives for working here: young married couples are raising their family within the complex because it is convenient, and the community provides stable jobs for those who work in the businesses and are members of the community.

While the Halal Italia office was a communal and collapsed space, the Food Italy office was not. The back of the space held the apartments where the owner and his nuclear family lived. The front of the office was dominated by a large conference table, used for training and to receive visitors. The office also had two smaller spaces, one where my colleague Chiara and I worked and another where the owner and others worked. I primarily worked in the small side office with Chiara, and noticed that the separation of office and apartment acted as an attempt to maintain

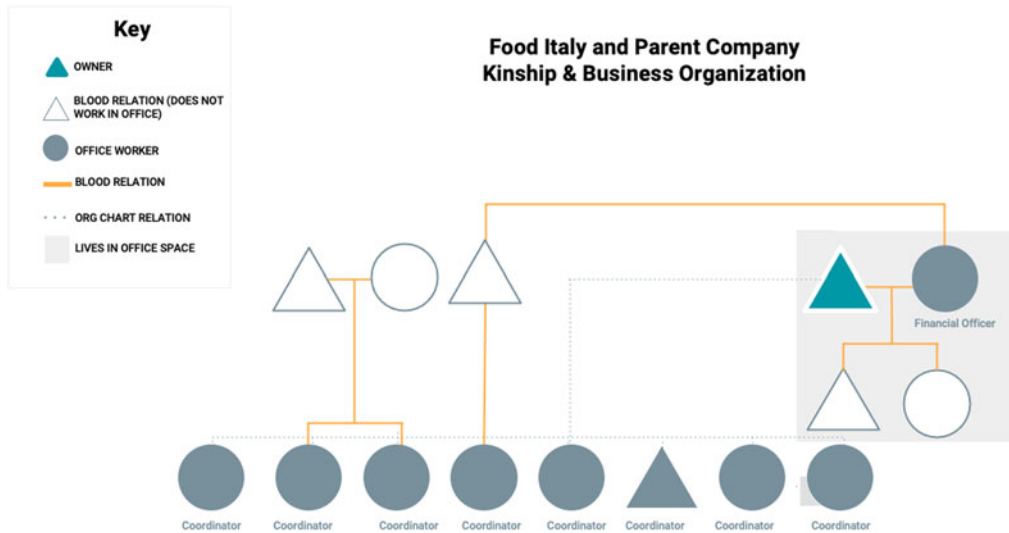


Figure 2. Kinship and business organisation at Food Italy and parent group. Circles represent women and triangles represent men. Created by the author.

spatial separation between family and work. In my many months of internship, I never saw the back apartment.

As a space dwelled in by the owner and his family, this business had the owner's nuclear family at the centre of its life. As Figure 2 illustrates, the business owner's family lived within the compound. Employees' residences were elsewhere. Also, in the Food Italy case, kin relations were common. Two relations of the owner were active in the business: his wife (W) and a sibling's daughter (SID). Further, sisters (Z) also worked in the office. Comparing the kinship patterns of the two spaces brings the specificity of each into relief. A superficial analysis would end with an argument that kinship motivates relations in Italian office spaces. This would, however, flatten the differences between the two spaces, which offer an insight into the motivations at play in each context. As I will show, Halal Italia's work is motivated by the perceived legitimacy of their religious community and the space reflects this commitment. In contrast, Food Italy staff hide familial relations in public, even though these relations are at the centre of the daily organisation of the business.

Gender roles and children at work

One way to see the differences in how each workplace is structured is the presence of children in each of the two workspaces. In both cases, gender norms expect women to be the primary caregivers for children, although this is changing (Counihan 2004). However, in the cases I investigated, women often felt frustrated as the main caregivers for their children. They were usually expected, if they had children, to work part-time in order to spend time with them. In Halal Italia this did not mean there were fewer women, but that more children were visible in the workspace.

'I'd really like to interview Noah,⁴ he's an auditor, right?' I asked Fatima, the administrator at Halal Italia. We sat close together at a large table co-working with three other employees. She smiled and said, 'He just lives upstairs, I'll ask him when I see him next.' As we continued

working, Noor, an employee, was with her son in the apartment above us and we could hear her son stamping on the wooden floors. As I spent more time in the offices, I became accustomed to the workplace dynamics: the stamping above us, my colleagues running home for various tasks like letting in the cleaning lady, and eating dinner with them at their homes attached to the compound.

When Noor's son was sick, which was unfortunately fairly often at the age of two, she would bring him into the office while she worked on important emails; other employees and even the visiting anthropologist would pitch in with childcare. Noor left often to check on her son, when he was too sick to stay with us in the office. Her proximity to work meant she could care for her son, while also contributing to the labour of the community. This was also encouraged. The sheikh (community leader) believed that women should be near their children until the age of five, as they were responsible for raising the next generation of Italian Muslims. Non-Muslim workers were also encouraged to bring family members into the office. Giuseppina, one of the few non-Muslim workers, often brought in her twin daughters. They would sit quietly and do their homework while waiting to be taken to their maths lessons. The visibility of children in Halal Italia showed the company's commitment to family. This commitment supported the organisation's legitimacy as an Islamic community, which could then be trusted to implement halal standards.

In contrast, small children never made an appearance in Food Italy, at least while I was present. The owner's adult children made frequent appearances, but never to outsiders. Women, seen as primary caregivers, were allowed to take care of children outside the office space. One of the workers in Food Italy told me she felt very fortunate to work at the company because the boss's wife, who also managed the workers, 'is so kind and understands family'. She told me this as another employee left to get her child vaccinated for the school year. While the emphasis on family was present in abstract terms for the workers, the owner's family, who also dwelled in the space, took precedence. In other words, workers were encouraged to support their own children though this took place outside the office. The lack of visibility of children is a way family ties remained hidden, which supported Food Italy's claim to be an objective process.

In Food Italy, the adult children, Alessia and her brother, Giacomo, were encouraged to make themselves scarce when there was an event in the office. Both 'children' were in their early twenties and lived with their parents in the apartment behind the main office. When just Chiara and I were present, the children made appearances often, scampering to the kitchen to eat breakfast or to make coffee. When I spoke with the owner's daughter, Alessia, she told me that she hated it when the space was used for training for outsiders because it meant she couldn't leave the back apartment or come home if she was already out. When I asked why she couldn't return she explained that it was 'business' and it wasn't her place to interrupt it.

At the same time, the adult children engaged with employees about their workspace, which was a domestic space for the children who did not work in the business, and a place of work for the manager, Chiara. Because of this, control of space often led to conflicts between the owner's family and non-family workers, best evidenced by my fieldnotes in which I recorded the following incident:

'Help me move this,' Chiara, the administrator at Food Italy's parent company, said as we pushed boxes back from the main table where the Food Italy's parent company runs courses. She and I are usually the only ones working in the Milan office. We moved the large television screen closer to the couch, where the space was divided by a partial wall. A few minutes later Alessia came out from the back apartment and said unapologetically, 'Excuse me, if you are going to move things you have to let me know.'

Chiara, who is also a lawyer, had to manage the owner's household because this was also her workspace. She was expected to complete tasks to support his family, including arranging the cleaning

schedule with the janitor, organising boxes in the basement (a storage space used for both the home and business), and ensuring that the office and therefore the owner and his family, have coffee.

Communal space as value-add

I was working when the doorbell to the Halal Italia office rang. Mohammed slipped out and returned with a young woman. I introduced myself to her, and she and Mohammed sat at the large co-working table in the office. Listening to their conversation, I heard that she had grown up Muslim but had stopped practising. She was now seriously dating an Italian Catholic and considering having a family with him. As a Muslim woman she was aware that Islamic Law (sharia) forbade her from marrying a non-Muslim. She was interested in learning about the conversion process for her partner.

After she left, Mohammed turned to me and said, 'It happens a lot that we have people converting for marriage, but they don't really mean it.' In response I asked, 'Because it needs to be for other motives?' He said, 'No, it's just difficult because the community puts a lot of energy into potential converts.' He said at the moment they had three new potential converts, but he expressed some uncertainty about them: one was too strict, the other didn't study enough, and the third was still at the very beginning stages of the process.

This example shows two important elements of the communal space. First, that accepting new converts can be risky because they, too, would participate in many spheres of the community. Second, the space serves as a community resource for many Muslims, not just those who belong to the community. Many members of the community work in different businesses and are also responsible for offering advice to Muslims who do not belong to the community. The workspace is also an Islamic community resource, where education is provided for those outside the community and Islamic needs are promoted through their businesses. Children are allowed to be present as a way to show the commitment to being a religious community first.

Family explicit and obscured

In the case of Food Italy, the family forms the basis of the relations within the office, though, as I have shown, the interaction between family and non-family members can be challenging. In a similar way, family members who work in the business use kinship ties to push their own agendas with non-family workers. This family strife is not a new phenomenon for Italian businesses; it has been well-documented by Sylvia Yanagisako (2002). I expand the challenges recorded by Yanagisako to talk about strife between the owner's family and non-family workers. In the case of Food Italy, the issues that arose most often were between family and non-family workers. This was especially clear at the end of May when I helped with a major event for Food Italy.

Six workers from the Catania office made the trip to Milan, including the daughter of the owner's brother-in-law (his niece). Chiara, the Milan office manager, made dinner reservations for the speakers and the office staff at 10pm. The owner's niece, Ana, believed the reservation to be too late. All the workers were crammed in Chiara's tiny office, and Ana strategically brought in the owner's wife (her aunt) to discuss the timing of the dinner. The owner and his wife said they would attend if Chiara moved the dinner reservation to 9pm. Chiara begrudgingly but immediately obliged because, as she said later, Ana is 'related to my boss'. The boss and his wife did not come to the dinner and Ana did not arrive at the restaurant until 10.30pm. When I asked Chiara about this, she told me that 'she is the boss's niece. What can he do? . . . They argue a lot, but he can't fire her . . . she is family.' In the tight quarters of Chiara's office, Ana played up her family relations; without bringing the owner's wife into the small office space, she likely would have lost the argument.

Although kinship ties are integral to Food Italy's daily operations for both family and non-family members, it is striking that the owner's daughter Alessia had to remain hidden when those not working in the business visited the office. I had thought an emphasis on family would likely be an added bonus for many of the producers that they work with. I once made a comment that many of the producers who were in the process of certification had '*fratello*' ('brother') in the company name: I was told this is because most companies are family owned. In addition to asking Alessia, one of the ways I came to understand this was that the owner wanted to make it appear that the business was not entangled in family relations, in part because the owner himself was from the south of Italy. The south of Italy – as a result of academic work (as discussed in Birindelli 2019) and popular culture such as movies (see for example Miniero 2010) – is seen as a place enmeshed in nepotism. From the conversations I overheard, the Food Italy team never used either their southern Italian identity or stereotypes about families in the South to forge relations. I was told many times that southern people are different from northern people in that they work as though they are with their family. In contrast, with producers and distributors, Food Italy explained that they are an impartial entity.

From what I came to understand, Food Italy wanted to appear impartial in their certification methods and an important way to do this was by hiding familial ties. Their objective was to 'select the best of Italy', which was conceptualised as an objective undertaking, one that was *not* influenced by relationships, even though these plainly structured the daily running of the business. This was made especially clear to me when the owner he said he had a good friend who made pasta and he wanted Food Italy to certify it. When the owner took it home to cook it, it disintegrated. The owner, in good conscience, could not certify the product and told his friend this. Food Italy must appear impartial, devoid of relational entanglements, to claim that their project is objective.

Members of Food Italy, while relying on a form of social relations common in work life in Italy, publicly emphasise their impartiality, in ways in which office space is predominant. As illustrated by the Food Italy case, companies transform their relations based on values promulgated by the specific form of work. For Food Italy, this is never discussing family ties nor having children visible to those outside of the business, even though these relations have an impact on everyday work life.

Conclusion

My emphasis on how space operates represents an attempt to address the many influences that form economic life in Italy. Such an approach illuminates how value in capitalism '... move[s] back and forth between non-capitalist and capitalist forms' and how 'these forms shape each other and interpenetrate' (Tsing 2015, 65). It is in the encounter between spaces and people that categories of work, home, and family are valued.

Space greatly influences the socio-economic configurations of the Italian service-oriented businesses investigated here. By focusing on the service sector in Italy, I mean to expand theorisations of economy, space, and family to understand how spatial patterns operate in business relations both within organisations and to outsiders. While the two workspaces considered in this study look similar, the multiple functionalities of each determine different forms of sociality. These differences are governed by the perception of space ownership. In the case of Food Italy, the space is owned and dwelled in by the owner of the business. The familial aspects of work remain unsaid to protect an image of impartiality, which might be questioned if the owner made his familial ties explicit or employees and the owner emphasised their southern Italian identity.

In contrast, Halal Italia business spaces are seen as community property and ties are made explicit. The Halal Italia space allows women and men to participate in a wide range of activities such as childrearing and providing spiritual advice. The space as community resource legitimatises Halal Italia's position within the larger Muslim community. Through space they make explicit the company's role as a spiritual, religious, and educational resource for the broader Muslim community. In this way, both businesses convert spatial relations into value.

Spatial patterns in Italy shape two interrelated elements of economic life. First, spatial patterns influence decision-making on a daily basis. The owner of Food Italy's niece, Ana, strategically navigates this space to influence decision-making. She uses her familial ties to decide the scheduling of the organisation's dinner. Also, in this context, members of the Islamic community decide that they can devote time to personal needs, such as taking breaks, going to the bank, or checking on their children. Decisions are inflected by the understanding of space in both contexts. In Halal Italia, space is treated as community property, and women and children fluidly cross material and symbolic thresholds between home and work.

Second, space informs a labour hierarchy but perhaps not as expected. In Halal Italia, the walled-off corner office that separates the supervisor from his supervisees does not exist. Rather, the hierarchy becomes clear around who can transgress the boundaries between work and home. For example, Noor brings her son into the office when he is sick, and all workers pitch in with childcare. In contrast, those in the Food Italy space, whether affiliated with the business or not, do not bring their children into the office, and the adult children remain hidden to outsiders but participate in the daily running of the business; the adult children have a say in what Chiara can do to her workspace.

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Notes

1. All translations are by the author.
2. This differs significantly from the spatial separation that Karen Ho (2009) identified in Wall Street firms. As Ho shows, the back-office space, where most women and people of colour work, is a place where employees bring their own lunch, and work 9 to 5. To the front office staff this assumed frugality and lack of commitment to work is why front office staff are compensated more and are considered 'smart'. This spatial separation structurally reinforces the notion that back-office workers do not produce anything of value through their labour.
3. All names are pseudonyms unless otherwise noted.
4. Shortly after my interview, Noah changed roles and was no longer an auditor with Halal Italia. He remains active in the community.

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Italian summary

In Italia vivere vicino o addirittura all'interno di una sede di lavoro non è un cosa inusuale. Le forme di alloggio in Italia sono simili a molti altri paesi europei in quanto le persone vivono principalmente in spazi ad uso misto. Di solito, nelle città italiane, ci sono appartamenti sopra i caffè, i bar e le panetterie. In questo articolo, esamino come questa forma di residenza (uso misto oppure polifunzionale) modella le pratiche di mercato, il processo decisionale e le relazioni di lavoro tra proprietari e lavoratori. Sostengo che gli spazi in cui i dipendenti partecipano all'economia di mercato rispecchiano anche i loro impegni verso la famiglia. Attraverso gli spazi di lavoro nelle due certificazioni alimentari a Milano: una certificazione Made in Italy (Food Italy) e una certificazione halal (Halal Italia), si vede che le reti di parentela italiane strutturano il modo in cui operano i lavoratori di ciascuna azienda. Questo intervento contribuisce ad una più ampia letteratura sulle dimensioni culturali del capitalismo.