



## INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

AN INITIATIVE OF  
THE WOODROW WILSON SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS  
AND THE BOBST CENTER FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

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Series: City Management

Interview no.: B 14

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Interviewee: Professor Aldo Civico

Interviewer: Rushda Majeed

Date of Interview: 30 May 2012

Location: Rutgers University

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MAJEED: This is Rushda Majeed and Laura Bacon. We are at Rutgers University with Professor Aldo Civico on 30<sup>th</sup> of May 2012. We are here to discuss Professor Civico's experience with the Orlando administration. Professor Civico if we could start this conversation by asking you to describe the job you currently hold and some of the experiences and positions that brought you to this position.

CIVICO: *I am currently an Assistant Professor in the department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Rutgers in Newark. I am also the co-founder and director of the International Institute for Peace which is always at Rutgers University. Previously I was at Columbia University as the Director of the Center for International Conflict Resolution where I also did my Ph.D. in the Department of Anthropology both at Columbia University and Teachers' College. I came to New York in 2000 and I started as a research assistant associate at the Center for International Conflict Resolution. That is my US (United States) chapter. I have been working for the past ten years in conflict resolution especially in the country of Colombia, both doing it in ethnographic research which is still going on, on the political violence in Colombia, narco trafficking but also facilitating peace processes, especially ceasefire negotiation between the Colombian government and the second largest guerrilla in the country which is the ELN.*

*Of course I did all of this because of my experience in Palermo which was somehow the beginning. So before coming to the US I was a free-lance journalist for several years especially for German media, writing and reporting especially on social issues related to organized crime in southern Italy. [Prior] to that I was in Palermo between Fall 1991 until December 1995. Before that I was a university student and a journalist in my hometown.*

MAJEED: Could you describe your specific role in terms of your work with Mayor Leoluca Orlando and what position did you occupy?

CIVICO: *Let me first tell you, because I think it is relevant to my role there and to also understand my position, how I got to Orlando. I am not from Palermo, I did not grow up there. So I was certainly an outsider in that sense. When I was about 15, 16 years old, I remember a very prominent Italian journalist who recently passed away, Enzo Biagi, had an interview with Leoluca Orlando on national cable. It was the first time that I would see him interview this young-looking mayor of Palermo. This mayor was speaking very openly against the mafia and denouncing especially the relationship between the mafia and the politicians, the political party system in Italy.*

*That to me was very surprising and it even didn't make sense that the Mayor of Palermo would speak against the mafia. Thinking about it today it was very interesting because that tells you how the mindset of the rest of Italy, especially of northern Italy, was about southern Italy and Palermo in particular. Palermo was known as the capital of the mafia. By default the mayor had to be an expression of the mafia power.*

*The fact that now suddenly someone was speaking openly and breaking the taboo actually, by naming, as a politician and as a political leader of a city where mafia was, was completely new to me but I have to say also to Italy in general. It was certainly a novelty. That interview really, for me, was a revelation. I started trying to understand better what was happening in Palermo. My reaction was*

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*either this mayor is a great actor and is lying to all of us, or he is something of a hero somehow.*

*At the time also a television program started in Italy called Samarcanda, which was a new form of journalism at the time. It would report from the margins of Italy's society. So it would not be just interviews with politicians or the famous, the known, but it would also report stories of the every-day life of normal people living in very difficult situations. Many of those reports were from southern Italy and many of those were from Palermo. So through that TV program, [I], but also the rest of Italy, came to know about the experience of Palermo, came to know about the spring of Palermo. They would follow very closely not only what Orlando was doing but also what the city was doing, how the social movement was getting together, how civic participation mattered, how people were mobilized.*

*All of that was incredibly fascinating and inspiring and also new. Today we talk about civic participation, we talk about victims mobilizing, we have all that vocabulary. But you have to think that we were here in the '80s, in the '80s in Italy, in the thick of the cold war. All of this language, not even in the international arena, was possible. We talk today about social movements mobilizing in the city because we have Porto Alegre and all of that, but that all came later. So what Palermo was doing was completely innovative at the time, also because of the time.*

*During the cold war you would not have any one challenging the cold war paradigm. The strict division between—in Italy specifically—between the communist party and the Democrazia Cristiana, the Christian Democrat party. Those were dogmas, right. All politics, all participation was channeled through those two major parties or their affiliates. So civic participation was participating in politics through those parties. Or you would be affiliated to some church group but very much in line with the paradigm. So you would not have freedom of initiatives, spontaneity, you would not have victims coming forward and speaking out. Those were all things not only in Palermo, but in Italy, during the years of terrorism and are very important.*

*While growing up in those years all that really sounded completely new and was a paradigm shift. It was almost considered also on behalf of Orlando who finally left the Christian Democratic Party, also going against the faith, going against the Catholic Church, going against everything we really knew. What was possible, allowed, good, right, and obedient.*

*So in 1990, Leoluca Orlando was still part of the Christian Democrats. He was part of the left wing, so-called, the more left wing of the Christian Democrats party and was leading sort of a dissent movement, already challenging the party system, already speaking up against the corruption which he always defined as endemic, systemic corruption, years before the whole cleanse-hands of prosecutors in Milan happened, speaking openly against the corruption within his own party and certain leaders within his own party linked to the mafia.*

*At that time he came to my region in northern Italy for a summer retreat of somehow they were called the Democratic Catholics, which was a particular component, if you [will], within the Catholic world that was trying to do politics around social issues. During that time, during that summer he wrote the manifest of La Rete. This political movement which was really more a movement than a*

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*party, born out of the need to say we are facing an emergency in Italy which is a moral and an ethical emergency in the political life of our country. Since we are under emergency, like during the Second World War, World War II, communist and Christian Democrats and Catholics came together to fight against fascism, so today we have to come out from our own political enclaves and unite to confront together and have a strong alliance of honesty and fight the corrupt system.*

*At that point he had been already successful, the Mayor of Palermo. He was already known for that because we were coming out of the '80s.*

MAJEED: Wasn't there a time in 1990 when he had moved out of the Christian Democratic Party?

CIVICO: *That's exactly when I met him.*

MAJEED: Could you describe the circumstances?

CIVICO: *Exactly. When he launched the Manifest of La Rete he was still part of the Christian Democrats. He launched it in my city. I was a very young journalist, I was 20, 21, working there for a local radio. He launched it and signed the manifest with the mayor of my hometown, [Lorenzo] Dellai who was also of his political wing within the Christian Democrats. Other people from other parties started to join that movement. But he launched it from within the party. Originally to beyond the party but he launched it from within.*

*After a few weeks, months, what I think is one of the things he does very well which is to be the first. So I think he understood that we were at the end of the cold war. The Berlin Wall had already collapsed. He understood that the old party system was going to crumble; it was just a matter of the forces of history. Then to have just one party for all the Catholics didn't make sense anymore because of what was happening.*

*So he said—I don't know how much consciously, or unconsciously what was going on in his head but my interpretation of [what his thoughts were] was, "Sooner or later someone will get out and found something different and new. I might as well do it as the first one, be the first to actually create that process." That is what he did in the fall of 1990 if I'm not mistaken. Right after this Mario Segni did his own referenda movement. That is how the whole plural life of politics in Italy started getting even more plural in terms of ideas and thoughts.*

*At that conference where he launched this manifest in a hotel in my home town, Trento, I just stood in the front row waiting for him—what amazed me—and it is another thing that amazed me, is that he would not leave—it was a whole day meeting from morning to late at night and where delegates and people would just sign up and speak. It was not panels, organized with time. It was just everyone who wanted to say something—so it goes on until it ends.*

*I was waiting for Orlando to have a moment, a break—I didn't think he was going to stay the whole time—so I could ask him if I could interview him. So I stayed through the whole thing because Orlando didn't move from the table. I don't even remember now if he went up to go to the rest room. What I remember is that he just stood at the table, taking notes and listening to every citizen who had something to say. At the end what I remember very clearly, he had the last word.*

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*It was already 10 p.m. We were there from the morning. He would name a lot of the people, by name, who had spoken. To me that made a huge impression. He had actually listened carefully and was giving back what he had heard and empowering basically.*

*That already give me a lot of sense of the quality as a politician of Leoluca Orlando, so how he is able to be very close and listen seriously and attentively to a most normal, unknown person. So finally at 10 p.m. I got to ask him if I could interview him and I suggested that we do it live before he left. So he came to the radio station where I was working and we did this live interview for a couple of hours with phone calls and all of that. I was just amazed at the time a very prominent [figure] who was in the major media all the time, would take time and say yes right away in a small, local radio and answering the questions of this young journalist.*

*At the end he gave me his address. I told him about my desire to come down to Palermo at some point. I wrote him a thank you note to the address but he was not in there at the time. He was still going down to Palermo and somehow he got the letter and he wrote me a hand-written note. So all of this attention to details told me that for someone like me at 20, wanted to make a difference in the world and doing something, that was extremely appealing, motivating. So then as a journalist from my hometown I had moved to a regional TV station. I proposed to them to do a documentary on Palermo. But really what I wanted to do was go down and know all these people, this civil society, mobilize, and listen to their stories. So I did that.*

*As well I interviewed, I traveled with Orlando an entire day in his armored car and all of that. It was an extremely moving and for me life-changing experience. I got to know life in the periphery of Palermo. I spoke to kids who were very close to the mafia and got to know their stories, very different from my own story growing up in a small town with 4% unemployment and middle-class, Catholic—everything was fine. Compared to that it was also boring, so Palermo was much more interesting.*

*At the end of that trip I said to Orlando that I would like to move to Palermo just to work with him. He said yes. I think the reason he said yes is first of all, because I think as an attitude he always encourages positive ideas. He is not someone who turns down something. Unless it is no to corruption, mafia, it is not something he really says. So I think he just had to say yes to someone. Not even knowing how he would solve the problem of me working with him, he just said yes. Or maybe he thought I was not going to be serious about it and I would change the idea.*

*I think there was also for him something interesting as an element. Sort of in Italy we always moved from the south to the north looking for jobs, historically. The great migration was from the poor south to the rich north or to other countries in the world but never from the north to the south, never. You do that for tourism but not more than that. So there is the fact that someone from the deep north wanted to come down to the deep south because of what was happening in Palermo. That for him I think was also a sign, one more sign. It was not the sign, but it was a nice story somehow. Someone young who wanted to build his future would chose Palermo as the place to build that future because of that experience. I think that is another reason why he said yes. So I did. I just packed, told my parents, and the beginning of that fall—the summer, after I did all those interviews I left for Palermo.*

*What happened that summer of '91 actually, before I went down to Palermo is that Orlando had left the Christian Democratic Party so he had formed his own political movement. The political movement had presented itself at the regional elections in Sicily and had the first regional parliamentarian group, represented at the regional parliament, which was a major new beginning, if you will, in the post cold war. La Rete was really before Velega north which is somehow a similar phenomenon but expresses interest in the values of part of a known Italy but was also coming out from the melting of the cold war paradigm. So La Rete did from the south with a much more positive and constructive program.*

MAJEED: What was the trigger that made him leave the Christian Democrats at that particular time?

CIVICO: *The trigger I think was just realizing that it was not possible to renew from within the political party, that he had tried to do that. But because of history, you could not renew the party system from within, you had to do it from outside. Remaining within the democratic game. At the same time the system was just scrambling because of the fall of the Soviet Union. He understood also that sooner or later that would happen in any case. He is always at least ten years ahead. So knowing what was happening, he just anticipated the times, which I think is a characteristic of Orlando, even in the last elections.*

*He told me, just to jump forward to today, he told me that he thinks his running for mayor was an enlightened craziness because he really did it without money, without means, after the primaries, only one month of elections. He lost the previous one and it was really against his own coalition, the opposition. He had nobody on his side. He won but I think he understood that something is moving in Italian politics. That moods and emotions and interests of people and attitudes of people are shifting. So he captured that. That is why he won so greatly. I mean that is something always to observe in him that he anticipates times. He creates, he knows where the future is going and he anticipates and creates and makes that future possible. I haven't seen other Italian politicians really that good at that. This is why I think partly he is also misunderstood at times, because he is too ahead, besides other factors. He is uncompromising. It is not easy for those who are compromised.*

*But back to that period. That was, I think, it was history and realizing that you couldn't renew Italian parties from within, that alliances were growing. Somehow, I remember, he was coming to my region and he came to my part of Italy quite often and with friends we would travel around and get to hear the same speech over and over and never getting tired of it. But the theatres, the auditoriums were always packed and people would stay outside. He was like a rock star. It was like when you go to a concert. You don't get tickets because they are sold out. That was the phenomenon.*

*He understood that Italians were ready for something different, that people who didn't belong to the Christian Democrats would vote for him as well. Because I think that Orlando always understood also—and he is the embodiment of that in many ways—that politics is done by those who win. I mean Orlando has great values, is an idealist in the sense that he is not—he is not an idealist, he is a visionary. He always understood that you create the vision if you win in politics. It is not poetry, it is about winning. So every move he did it was also a move to win. Not a move to win at all costs, but yes to win. Not just to be a nice witness or*



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*embody some nice discourse. Because if you don't win, then that discourse in politics doesn't apply.*

MAJEED: You just said vision right now and it seems that around that time he was creating La Rete and creating this movement, taking advantage of the moment. What kind of vision did he communicate? To you, to people on his team and also to the public.

CIVICO: *It was a vision that in part he had already shown as reality. Palermo was really deeply corrupt. The public square was completely occupied, dominated by organized crime. The problem was systemic, it is not that you had a couple of mafia bosses going around and being bullies. You had the whole system, the whole economic system, the whole political system, cultural attitudes, that were shaped by a history of the presence of the mafia. He took very seriously the challenge and the vision that I think he created when he was still an adolescent.*

*He grew up in the '60s, the late '60s. That was the time of turmoil and young people wanted to change the world and the way you live. Within that movement, I think, guided also by Jesuits at the time by whom he was educated, he took up his vision and made it the purpose of his life to show that it is possible to free Palermo from the mafia. By doing that you needed to change the entire system. You needed to change with people, you needed to change cultural attitudes, you needed to change values.*

*It was done systematically. In the '70s we had the movement Una Citta per Uomo, a city for men. At the time there was no gender balance I guess as it would be today for many women. But it was a social movement that advocated civic participation from the peripheries, always forgotten, always exploited and to reactivate citizenship. This in turn was an idea that in part was taken by experiments in Italy and other two cities, Bologna and Florence that were led by very progressive—both churches and mayors, La Pira especially in Florence.*

*At the same time I think some ideas, some of the principles, some of the values certainly came from the theology of liberation from Latin America. Especially the idea of from the ground up, creating basic communities, ideas of self-organization, self-normative communities. All those ideas, even though the context, historical, political, social between Latin America and Italy are very different but I do think that the Red Brigades in Italy in the '70s were even fascinated by some ideas of the guerilla leaders in Latin America. So a lot of communists, people, a lot of engaged Catholics, took ideas from those movements in Latin America and adopted them.*

*I think Orlando is a product of those years and that history. That is when he created somehow the vision. When I meet him it is not only that he has a vision for Italy for the times, but it is grounded in a very successful story which is Palermo because he showed that it is possible to free Palermo from the grip of the mafia. That was not an announcement, that was already reality. So it was easy to believe him because that's what we had seen, that's what we had touched and what not he but the people in Palermo were saying.*

BACON: By 1990, how much progress on that had he made in freeing Palermo from the mafia?

**CIVICO:** *A lot. He was succeeding in general. In '85 if I am correct the Maxi Trial against Cosa Nostra starts which is another major event in the history of Italy. For the first time mafia bosses are actually brought to a trial. That happens because something else happens which is for the first time mafia bosses actually speak up and explain Cosa Nostra from within. It is really the work of a pool of prosecutors, Antonino Caponnetto and Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino. Especially Falcone and Gosalino, they were Sicilians themselves. So they could relate culturally. They could make a deep connection with the mafia bosses that were arrested and I think we were able to create that space of trust for [Tommaso] Buscetta to speak up and create a new front, and a very effective one.*

*So Orlando if you will, was the head figure of a larger movement that was already happening in Palermo. You had a Cardinal like Cardinal [Salvatore] Pappalardo that was the first church leader in Palermo—did you meet him? I don't even know if he is still alive. If he is he must be very old. The first church leader that actually recognized the problem of the mafia, who spoke very forcefully against the mafia when General [Carlo] Alberto Dalla Chiesa was killed. That was, I think, '82. With that killing, it's something where people say, "this is enough", this has gone too far.*

*Early '80s is also the years where a strong internal war within the mafia happens. So all of that I think propels—and again, here is Orlando understanding the times, understanding where he goes and making the move because in his experience with [Piersanti Mattarella] where he was the—I think today here in the US you would say sort of a legislative director of the governor, he [had] the experience that trying to change from within is not possible because Piersanti Matarrella tried to break with the system and got killed. So I think all these experiences prepared him and the city of Palermo to a major shift. So I don't remember now in the '80s when he was mayor, exactly the years. That was not with elections—you have it, right?*

**MAJEED:** Yes, 1985 to 1992.

**CIVICO:** *Which is exactly what I am telling you, with the Maxi trial. It's interesting because he is still appointed as a mayor by the party system, but there's no direct election.*

**MAJEED:** You mentioned just now that there was this larger movement and people within the church and the civil society were speaking out. Could you describe what your impressions were of Orlando's relationship with civil society and organizations and if that changed later on during his second term?

**CIVICO:** *There is no one civil society. There are different souls and different groups. I think that Orlando was very close to the majority of the social movements. I think his connections came a lot through the Catholic Church, a lot through the civil society, linked to the Christian Democrats at the time and to new civic experiments like the Citta per Uomo. That expanded. I think he was one of the early supporters of the Coordinamento Antimafia, the anti-Mafia coordination which was the first sort of umbrella of organizations. Most of those left [out] are outside the Christian Democrat, many of those people linked actually to a history of membership with the communist party.*



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*Orlando was always, as a mayor, a great supporter of that coalition. He gave them offices, space within the building. So I wouldn't say necessarily as we might understand it today that Orlando was coming from a civic movement or from civil society. He came from the party system because that's where his acumen was. From an early age he was a member of the Christian Democrats, but he became an important bridge, an essential one I think between that civil society that was engaged against the mafia openly—and that was a plural kind of society—and the palace of politics.*

*I think he also understood in a very clear way that in the moment where he could not rely on the party system for his political project, the only way he could get support was from these people that by coalition and by working already, communists and Catholics together, were breaking the party system, were already outside the party system and that by allying with that, that would be his base.*

*Plus his base was all the people, the connections, the network which certainly was given to him also in part by the church and in part by the party, in the neighborhoods with community leaders to whom he has been always, always very close, like a good politician has been trained to be close to the people. He would go to his barber in a simple, humble neighborhood, not to a major barber, because it was a way to connect with people. He would walk to the markets. So [he was] always very close.*

*I think the base of Orlando is very diverse. La Rete was the most diverse political experiment I can think of in Italy. You had Green Party, you had Communist, you had Catholics, you had civic society, you had priests, you had nuns. It was really something very diverse for the time. Orlando understood that that would have been the base that would have supported him and he turned that into his political project.*

MAJEED: You were with Mayor Orlando from 1990 to '95 and he became Mayor of Palermo for the second time in 1993.

CIVICO: Yes.

MAJEED: So the three years before he became mayor could you describe some of his work and how—because he was also a member of Parliament at that time—.What kind of coalitions did he make and did that help him later on?

CIVICO: *Yes, I think—when I came in, Leoluca went into the regional parliament. My first work with him was actually in the press office of that regional parliament. They started working on legislation and on regional parliamentary initiatives. The work there initially for me was mainly to do the press work related to the legislative work. But, at the same time, Orlando was working very strongly to create the national movement and the national party. So there were a lot of activities at the time involving the entire country which meant also lots of meetings around Italy to create chapters of La Rete across the country with different, very important leaders like Nando dalla Chiesa, the son of General dalla Chiesa, like the former mayor of Turin, his name escapes me, but there was a former Communist Party leader, former mayor of Turin was there, Claudio Fava and so many others.*

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*It was about creating a structure, a national structure of La Rete. That was a huge part of the activity. That propelled him then to participate in national parliamentary elections if I'm not mistaken the year after he got the regional parliament. So I told you the '91 he got the regional—I think a few months later, the beginning of '92, La Rete became a national party represented in the Italian parliament. Yes, it must have been the beginning of '92 because that was right before the killings of Falcone and Borsellino.*

*Then at that point my position changed because I was then working in Rome between Tuesday and Thursday and Friday at the press office of the Italian parliament. I worked particularly on the parliamentarian group and while Andrea Scrosati was taking more Orlando as a spokesperson for the party, for the national movement. The other thing that I was doing for him at the time more personally, because of my knowledge of German, I was taking care of his relationship with the German-speaking world of Europe, so Switzerland, Austria and Germany. So I was organizing trips for him, events and press work which was all very important. It was always about creating attention. I think Orlando was very strategic in his communication approach. When he was Mayor of Palermo at the beginning he made Palermo a national case to get support from outside Palermo for what he was doing in Palermo.*

*Then when he was working on the national level, understanding where history was going, understanding where the European Union was going, understanding that we were living in an increasingly interdependent world, he was looking increasingly for support for his project from outside as well. So always working with concentric circles basically.*

*Then I went back to Palermo for his campaign when he became mayor in '93. It was a very difficult campaign. At the time, in March, April of '92, Salvo (Salvatore) Lima, the right hand of Giulio Andreotti and the embodiment for everyone of us against the mafia, the embodiment of mafia politics regime in Sicily was killed by the mafia, so breaking a sort of pax mafiosa that was existing at the time, then the killing of Falcone and Borsellino. So extremely difficult times. Orlando himself was seriously threatened and on the list of those who the mafia wanted to kill at the time. So we did the campaign under those circumstances which only reinforced basically the need for this message of freeing Italy from corruption, from mafia. They need to continue the experiment of Palermo and to regain Palermo.*

*This time they, symbolically were very strong because it was not the compromise of parties appointing Orlando but it was the people electing him. He won it the first round I think with over 60 if not 70% of the votes.*

MAJEED: 75.

CIVICO: *It is unheard of and it is really free vote. It was like again Orlando understanding where the moods of a city were and intercepting it and gearing the city towards something else.*

MAJEED: Were you still taking care of his relationship with I guess the national government at the time? Were you still based in Rome or had you moved back to Palermo?

CIVICO: *During the campaign I was in Palermo.*

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MAJEED: How did your responsibilities change after he became mayor?

CIVICO: *After he became mayor I worked more on his international front. I was already moving more into freelancing as a journalist and I did a lot for him in Germany at the time and then I decided I needed to finish my studies. I gave into the pressure from my family and moved to Bologna and I studied.*

MAJEED: Could you reflect a little bit on the international engagement of Palermo's administration and how that played into some of his successes?

CIVICO: *I think first Orlando always had a privileged relation with the international world, especially with Germany. Orlando is someone who is deeply in tune with the German country, with the German tradition. He studied in Heidelberg. That is where, I think, where he developed, great affection and respect for the country. I was taking care of the German media in Palermo and, without exaggerating, I think it was almost every week that you would have either a TV crew or a journalist coming to Palermo and wanting to write, or portray or do a report, a documentary on Orlando.*

*For Germans also from the north Orlando was sort of a mythic figure, sort of David fighting Goliath. It had all the melodrama. He was the hero, the martyr, always close to death. You had all the ingredients if you wanted for good journalism, but it was also presenting a different face of Italy. I think for Orlando it was a way to bring attention to Palermo in terms of media, in terms of support. Also, in terms of investments, I'm not aware of the details but I think during his first term when he broke all the contracts with the public works, the way he was able to go around and to be sure to hire non-corrupt, not to have mafia money, was actually to appeal to Germany.*

*So I think the international world played an important role. Also in all these years when he was not mayor, going to Mexico and doing consultancy in Mexico City with the current presidential candidate Obrador or working with the governor of Tijuana, working in Russia, working in Colombia with Antanas Mockus and others, Sergio Fajardo and so on. It was for him always a way also to keep the model of Palermo alive which is something that Roy Gadson here in Washington I think understood in a very powerful way and adopted many of his principles and turned them into a model that his think tank is now trying to implement in different parts of Latin America.*

*Hillary Clinton came when she was at the White House. When she was First Lady. She came to inaugurate the Teatro Massimo. So Orlando always understood that Palermo is on an island but is and needs to be connected with the world and with the innovators. I think here he anticipated somehow the times. He understood that national states can be only so effective in doing certain works of diplomacy but that the city has a role. The city can connect with other cities. The work that Palermo did for example in Palestine on water issues. It is a demonstration of how you can create concrete solidarity and concrete projects, city to city. Why did he do that? Because he understood that Palermo was part of the Mediterranean region, it was not isolated. Because of the history, because of the culture.*

*There was always for him a way to understand what was happening in Palermo with the larger connection and larger dynamics and be a player in those dynamics.*

MAJEED: You mentioned that there was the spread of ideas that came after, during the years when he was not mayor. Was he himself responsible for, for example, the consultancies that you mentioned or was there any other systematic way of spreading the ideas of what came to be called the Palermo model, because he had the Sicilian Institute as well.

CIVICO: *My understanding and I think besides Orlando, Andrea Scrosati I think has the details of that story. But my understanding is that Roy Gadson played the key role here. He came across, probably because of some PR work that Andrea did with the experience of Palermo. I think Roy Gadson is the one who connected, who made the Hillary Clinton visit happen, maybe. I never sat down with him, but Roy Gadson told him you really need to make this a model, why don't we work on this.*

*So his think tank down in Washington, helped creating his memoir here in the United States, made long interviews and also organized for Leoluca Orlando, international trips where he could share his experience. I think he found here in the United States, the money to create the Sicilian Renaissance Institute. It was done initially as a part of the partnership with Roy Gadson. He, Orlando used it as a vehicle to keep his vision alive.*

MAJEED: He also wrote, I believe, or the mayors of Bogotá and Medellín also looked at Palermo. What do you think were the ideas that they thought were worth copying for their conference?

CIVICO: *I think the concept of culture of legality. See the concept of culture of legality is something that Roy Gadson I think conceptualized and made, publicized and created a method. But culture of legality is really a term that comes from Leoluca Orlando because it points to the need to change attitudes. It doesn't mean you need to obey, right? It is a much more profound meaning. It means you do different kind of experience of the state. You have a different kind of definition of the state and of democracy. That is the culture of legality. Therefore people discover that by acting legally it is actually better than doing business with the illicit market. I think that the models of Bogotá and Medellín took those concepts in and adopted them with their own creativity, with their own originality. It is not that they just copied it, but I think they were inspired by those concepts, by how you can actually mobilize civic participation in confronting systematic problems.*

*I know that Antanas Mockus still recently, when he was running for President declared Leoluca Orlando is the European politician he mostly admires. They did things together. Orlando traveled to Bogotá. They launched initiatives together, they did events together. So did Sergio Fajardo. I introduced Sergio Fajardo when he was candidate as mayor to Leoluca Orlando and they had a session on how do you deal with systemic corruption and public administration. Those were things that Sergio would have to confront.*

*I think he acted as a reservoir of ideas and he reminded people that it is possible. It is possible if you have certain principles and certain ideas, that you then adapt locally. So I think culture of legality is one concept, linked to that Sicilian cart of which you may have heard now a hundred thousand times, but it is this idea that repression itself is not enough which I think is a very profound question. It is also not—I want to make a distinction here because I don't think always people get it.*

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*Today, when you talk about security you hear about civic society involvement. It is a language that is out there. But it is really coopted in civil society for the purpose of the state, it is almost a counter-insurgency kind of idea. So citizens become informants and collaborators of the state. No. What Orlando was proposing was something radically different which is empowerment of citizens, making communities self-normative. That might be even some sort of anarchic idea within this concept. So it's something completely different. The second wheel is really that thing; it is not an extension of policing, it is really creating communities. It is strategic community building. These are the two concepts.*

*I think the other important concept that came out from Palermo and that Bogotá and Medellín and others took is the idea of a diffuse network of positive leadership where the leaders are not just the visible leaders but even in the classroom. You can have positive leadership of people who transform those environments. So it is really strategic community level building at all levels, from the classroom, from your own family, from your building to your neighborhood, to the city, to the region, to the nation to the world. I think that's the extent of the vision of Orlando. He is mayor of Palermo today but his vision is the world, it is not Palermo.*

MAJEED: Just going back for a second, one of the things I wanted to ask you is that he introduces this culture of legality, tackles systemic corruption and pushed, or tried to push the mafia out of many different aspects including procurement and so on. What kind of retaliation and what kind of problems did he face? The mafia, did it transition into something else?

CIVICO: *This is a very good question. Retaliation was mainly, at the time when he was mayor, maybe death threats. The security problem was huge and very relevant. Once he—I'm sure you know this—had to leave the country at one point early in the '80s. Then I think the mafia got smarter—the mafia is a very complex phenomenon, it is not just the boss going around. So you have phases in the history of the mafia I think. There was a time in the '90s, after '92, where the mafia understood—'92, '93 are very important years. We are hearing now—it is something we are discovering now, but basically it is a year when the mafia was threatening the state itself, as a whole because they were trying to negotiate. There were parts of the state trying to negotiate sort of a cease fire with Cosa Nostra. It looks like also that Falcone and Borsellino were killed because they opposed that kind of pact and as retaliation of certain measures then the mafia started hitting also Milan and Rome and Florence.*

*It was almost an attempt—how it is described today, interpreted today by those who were the head of the national government at the time—of coup d'état. After that you have a sort of silence, but silence in the sense that the mafia is not forceful and is not using overt violence. But those are also the years when [Silvio] Berlusconi comes to power. So those are the years then when Orlando is not able to win any more elections. He is elected [indecipherable]parliament but he loses the mayoral, very questionable how he lost but he lost. He even lost—I think he lost at one point the European parliament as well. So those are very difficult years where the whole party system is readjusting to post cold war in order that the status quo in Sicily, in Italy is maintained.*

*It is a huge cosmetic work but in order—the famous sentence from the novel, the Gattopardo, everything changes so nothing changes. Those were those years and so there was a realignment of a power system of the mafia in Sicily. So I*



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*don't think that Orlando ever said that he defeated the mafia. He always said the mafia is still there. He was very honest in that.*

*I think where he was successful is in changing the attitude of the people and that happened by making people make the experience where a different attitude is possible and it is plausible. I think that is what brings him back today after years of darkness overall in Italy. So the destiny of Palermo is also related to the destiny of larger political schemes and dynamics happening in Italy. So I think for a certain period of time, which was a long time, almost twenty years, you certainly had the mafia but in a much more sophisticated way being able to guarantee its interests again and taking control of many power dynamics in the city.*

MAJEED: I know they were in drug trafficking, in construction and extortion, did they move out of public contracts, would they go back?

CIVICO: *Back to public contracts, for sure. I think there are trials now.*

MAJEED: Also you mentioned the Berlusconi years which is very interesting because it seems that some of the people we interviewed talked about how starting in 1994, I think that is when he came to power, that he lost some support from the national government. This is what we heard. Could you elaborate a little bit about the relationship during this time as mayor of Palermo with the national government?

CIVICO: *I think in the '80s there was a very dialectical—this is my perception, my recollection—relationship with the national government but somehow Palermo was considered an interesting experiment when Orlando was part of the Christian Democrats, when basically the prime minister was the meter. There were clashes but somehow, I wouldn't say, it wasn't the worst time.*

*In the '90s I don't think that the national government gave any support to Leoluca Orlando. Who was head of the government before Berlusconi, do you remember?*

MAJEED: I don't know.

CIVICO: *In '92 when the attack to Falcone happens, then [Oscar Luigi] Scalfaro becomes President of the Republic. At the time he was not really the candidate who should have been. The President was Andriotti right? That tells you a lot about what was going on really in terms of the kind of power system and games which were going on. But it is the killing of Salvo [Salvatore] Lima and Falcone that then broke that. So already before Scalfaro for sure—Scalfaro always supported Orlando also when he was Minister of Interior, he was the one who said you need to leave because I'm not able to protect you—there is no support there when he is running for mayor and becomes mayor in '93. Then with Berlusconi forget it, it was just not good anywhere. Then I left.*

*So I am not able to tell you what the effect of this engagement of the national government with Palermo was on the city, on his government. But you could tell by the fact that he was not elected, someone who was very popular, was not elected for the European parliament though he had been elected before and after and re-elected, what was it five, six years ago. That tells you that the old system had taken control.*

MAJEED: When he left in 2000 it seems that many things fell apart. Can you reflect a little bit on that time, also why did things fall apart in terms of building sustainability. It seems that Diego Cammarata becomes mayor and Berlusconi was also at the center. Did that have an effect as well?

CIVICO: *Those are years where I didn't observe because I was here. But if you read today, what Leoluca Orlando needs to take on in the city, which is almost bankrupt, you know that happens when you have corruption. When a city goes down, not because there are no resources but because those resources are following a system of corruption. The fact that Orlando was able in those days to reallocate a few millions of oil which were just parked somewhere for the bettering of schools tells you how mismanaged, how careless. The fact that they have to restore certain cultural centers like the beautiful Zisa which he renovated, it is fantastic. He is now putting money in to renovate it. But that tells you where culture was in the list of priorities. Instead Orlando was always opening culture to everyone, it was always part of his strategy. So those were different cultures of governing, one is corrupt and the other is in favor of citizens.*

*I was struck by a small detail when I was reading the newspaper that Orlando asked all the service that are around to show up with jacket, with proper clothes. So it is about giving a certain dignity. He opened again the doors of a city building so every citizen can come in. There is no metal detector or anything, no control. You can just go in. He was appalled at the first meeting. Water was given in plastic bottles and plastic glasses. He said that he wants to change that. It is not because he wants to be sophisticated but it is because the City Hall has to have a dignity. It is expressed not only by how the mayor acts, by how also the waiters are dressed. He activates the responsibility of everyone. To everyone he is saying, "Let's take care of the city. It is not just me as the mayor; it is you who are serving me water. You are responsible. You should be proud of the place where you work." That is the kind of culture and the kind of leadership that Leoluca Orlando brings.*

MAJEED: I have just one final question. In conclusion because our program tries to get people who have been in the administration, to learn from their experience, is there any advice that you would offer others in terms of your own direct experience or things that you observed when you were working with Orlando?

CIVICO: *I don't think it is easy to follow Leoluca Orlando because you need a lot of courage and the courage is not just in terms of safety. The courage is to be loyal to a political project. Not loyal to a party, not loyal to a coalition, but loyal to a political project which is based on some fundamental ethics pillars. I say that it needs courage because that will get you against the power system from which you are working.*

*So Orlando's priority was always the alliance with the people, with the free vote. The last election, I am so happy that he won and I told Laura he was not going to win because I thought he was against everyone. But people respond to that. People respond to that especially when we feel that there is urgency. So to whom do you want to be loyal? Do you want to be loyal to the alliances of your party? Do you want to be loyal to your donors or do you want to be loyal to the citizens who you are actually representing? So there is a sort of a political pact between citizens and the politicians here.*

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*I think that is Orlando's model. This is why I think he is not very much loved by national leaders because he speaks the truth, he speaks his mind to them and he is free to do it because he has the support of the people. For almost twenty years I've known Orlando. He didn't care; he preferred to have a second row in politics rather than making bad negotiations that were compromising with his ethics.*

*But it is not ethics—sometimes I get nervous with people talking only about ethics because it looks like, "Yes, but we live in a world that cannot use ethics." So sometimes even people talking about ethics become somehow dreamers or unrealistic. No, this is an ethic that can win if you turn it into political projects that are good for people and that is really what Leoluca Orlando is about.*

*He is not connected to any major lobby. He is not connected to any major economic power. He is not connected to any major political power. He is connected to the people and with God knows how little money he had for his campaign and he won in the second round with 73%. It tells you something. But it takes lots of courage. The courage is knowing at times, keeping honest with this, you will not be relevant and it might be a long time. But I guess he decided to be able to look at himself in the mirror every day and to his nephews and be proud of himself rather than being power. But that is his power. So yes, courage, a lot of courage.*

MAJEED: Thank you so much Professor Civico, we appreciate your time.

CIVICO: You're welcome.