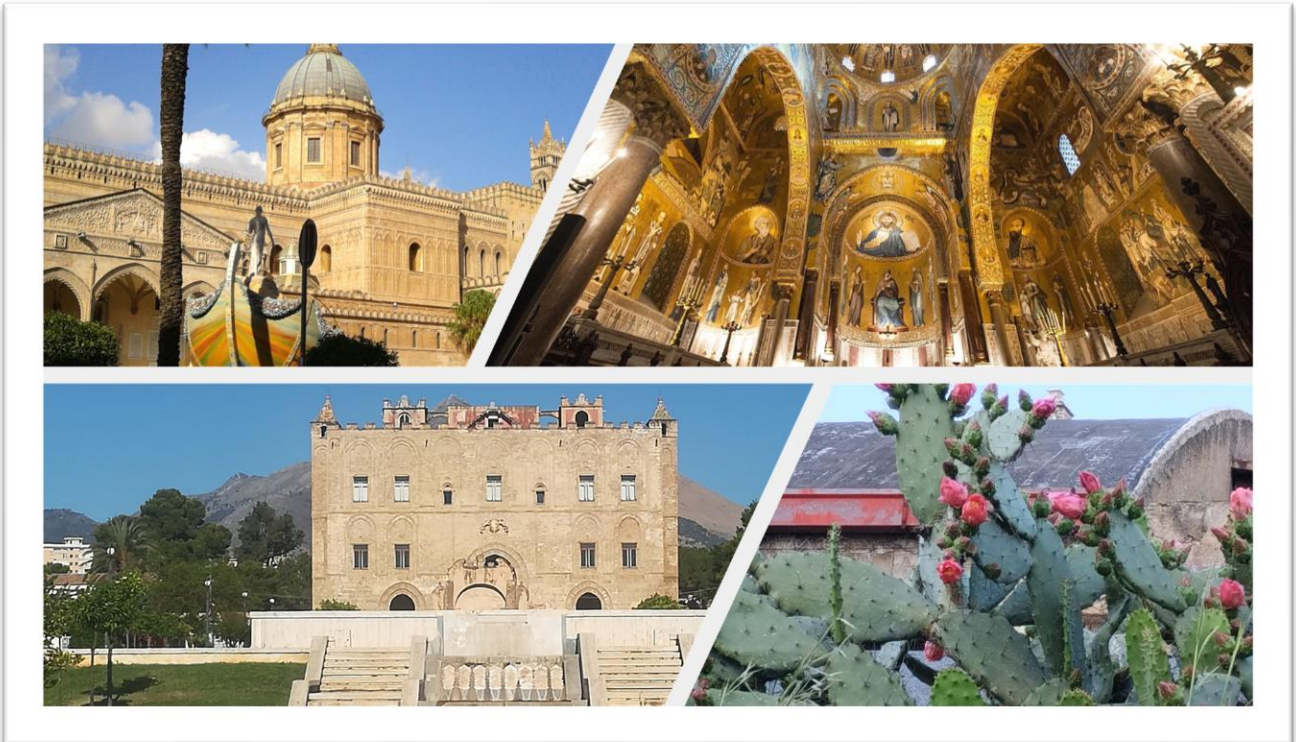


Cost Action CA21133 - Globalization, Illicit Trade, Sustainability and Security

GLITTS workshop

CIVIL SOCIETY'S RESPONSES TO ILLICIT TRADE

February 6-7, Palermo, Italy



Venue

Libera Università Maria SS. Assunta LUMSA
Department of Law, Economics and Communication
Via F. Parlatore, 65, 90145, Palermo, Italy
<https://lumsa.it/en/home>



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DI TRENTO**
Dipartimento di
Sociologia e Ricerca Sociale

WORKSHOP AGENDA:

February 6

1:30 PM – Registration

2:00 PM – Start of the workshop

- Institutional greetings
- Participant introductions

2:30 PM – First Session

- 30-minute keynote: Baris Cayli Messina
 - 1.5 hours of presentations
- 4:30 PM – End of session



BREAK

5:00 PM – Second Session

- 30-minute keynote: Carina Gunnarson
 - 1.5 hours of presentations
- 7:00 PM – End of session



8.00 PM – Dinner at Ristorante Quattromani <https://quattromaniristorante.it/> (Via Francesco Riso, 3)

February 7

9:30 AM – Third Session

- 30-minute keynote: Theodoros Rakopoulos
 - 1.5 hours of presentations
- 11:30 AM – End of session



BREAK

12:00 – 1:00 PM – Recap and future steps

- Recap, future directions, and administrative procedures (reimbursement details and further questions).



3:00 PM- Palermo No Mafia Tour

- For those who have booked the Palermo No Mafia Tour, the meeting point is Piazza Verdi, in front of the Teatro Massimo.

ABSTRACTS

Introduction: The GLITTS workshop ‘Civil Society’s Responses to Illicit Trade’ aims to critically examine civil society’s responses to illicit trade, illegal markets, and organized crime. Successful initiatives, particularly in Italy’s South and regions historically entrenched with mafia organizations, as well as internationally, include associations empowering entrepreneurs to oppose mafia extortion, encouraging consumers to support ‘ethical’ products from companies rejecting ‘pizzo’ payments, and openly challenging extortion schemes. Additionally, significant civic efforts support social cooperatives utilizing mafia-confiscated assets. These actions empower citizen-consumers to combat criminal activities, foster ethical exchanges, and promote civic responsibility. Through strategic financial decisions, they contribute to broader movements advocating justice and integrity in economic practices.

The workshop is structured into three sessions. The first session investigates civil society’s transformative role in shaping norms and countering organized crime, focusing on grassroots activism, advocacy, and the interaction between cultural norms and organized crime. The second session shifts attention to the role of consumers, exploring how political consumerism and ethical practices can disrupt criminal networks and contribute to justice and sustainability. Finally, the third session adopts a global-local perspective to analyze mafia dynamics and anti-mafia strategies, addressing sociological and methodological challenges in combating organized crime. Together, these sessions aim to provide a comprehensive analysis of civil society’s pivotal role in addressing the challenges posed by illicit trade and organized crime.

FIRST SESSION

Keynote: Baris Cayli Messina

AGENTS OF CHANGE: CIVIL SOCIETY’S ROLE IN SHAPING NORMS, CHALLENGING POLITICS, AND COUNTERING ORGANISED CRIME

Abstract: This presentation offers an in-depth exploration of civil society’s transformative role in shaping social norms, contesting political power structures, and addressing the complex challenges posed by organised crime and transnational governance. Civil society is positioned as a dual agent of change: a driver of normative shifts and a mediator in navigating the tensions between cultural norms, societal development, and established political structure. The discussion integrates theoretical frameworks by demonstrating how civil society adapts and responds to the evolving challenges in a globalised and rapidly changing world. Through exploring case studies from organised crime activities, the presentation examines the opportunities and challenges in the fight of civil society in the face of formidable obstacles such as politicisation, institutional inertia, and resource limitations. The complex interaction between grassroots activism, advocacy, and transnational engagement reveals the ways in which civil society can reshape entrenched cultural norms while challenging the dominance of political institutions resistant to change. The presentation emphasises the critical need to empower civil society by strengthening its capacity to operate effectively within local, national, and international contexts. In doing so, civil society can enact as a counterbalance to the forces of corruption, injustice, violence, and impunity, providing a pathway toward systemic social change and reform. In this respect, the mobilisation of diverse groups holds immense potential as a transformative force in the battle against organised crime and the broader global challenges of the 21st century, paving the way for a more just, equitable, and transparent world.

Chair: Stefano Caneppele

Discussant: Baris Cayli Messina

SYMBIOTIC PARADOXES: THE RECIPROCAL SHAPING OF ILLICIT TRADE AND SOCIETAL CONSTRUCTS THROUGH CULTURAL NORMS AND SOCIAL PROGRESS.

Besa Shahini (besashahini@feut.edu.al)

Abstract: This study examines the interrelationship between illicit trade, cultural norms, and social development, studying how these phenomena influence and shape each other in an ongoing dynamic. This study explores the cyclical mechanisms of interaction where cultural predispositions and developmental stages contribute to and are altered by illegal trade activities, recognizing illegal trade not only as an economic activity but also as an important cultural and social phenomenon. The research examines these interactions in different cultural landscapes and social strata, using a mixed-methods approach, including ethnographic fieldwork, comparative case studies and statistical analysis. It investigates how illicit trade is shaped and shaped by local cultural norms and levels of social development, assessing the extent to which these factors mutually influence the prevalence and nature of illicit trade. Initial findings highlight a complicated interplay where illicit trade often leads to major changes in cultural norms and social structures, challenging existing development principles. On the other hand, the study finds consistent examples where entrenched cultural and social frameworks significantly determine the extent and form of illicit trade. This analysis aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the reciprocal influences between illicit trade and social change, providing valuable insights for policy makers and researchers. The conclusions drawn from this study aim to support the development of more informed strategies for dealing with the challenges posed by illicit trade, taking into consideration the cultural and social contexts that shape and are shaped by these activities.

THE IMPACT OF CIVIL SOCIETY ON COUNTERING ORGANIZED CRIME IN THE WESTERN BALKANS.

Mirela Tase (mirelatase@hotmail.com)

Abstract: The countries of the Western Balkans are closely interconnected both nationally and transnationally. This interconnectedness is crucial for economic development; however, it also contributes to the proliferation of organized crime. Criminal groups from various countries engage in the smuggling of illicit goods throughout the region and maintain extensive connections with one another. For instance, criminal organizations in Kosovo have strong ties to those in Albania, Montenegro, and Serbia, as well as to criminal networks from outside the region, such as those based in Turkey. While the effects of organized crime are typically measured at the national level and felt locally, these criminal groups often operate within regional networks, allowing them to generate profits on a transnational scale. In terms of organized crime and corruption, the role of civil society in the Western Balkans – and globally, for that matter – is to investigate the topic, raise awareness, monitor government responses, and maintain pressure on state institutions. This way, civil society can influence the public and the authorities, by promoting initiatives to combat organized crime. Yet, this is almost impossible without sufficient resources. The aim of this paper is to maintain pressure on the authorities and have a meaningful impact, it is fundamental to strengthen the capacity of civil society in the region.

SECOND SESSION

Keynote: Carina Gunnarson

THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND CONSUMERS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST ORGANISED CRIME

Abstract: Research shows that the presence of social capital in a society – particularly generalized trust – could be decisive for economic development, democracy and the prevention of crime. There is empirical evidence that the presence of generalized trust leads to better government, more economic growth, less corruption and other positive outcomes such as personal happiness, safer neighborhoods and solutions to various problems of collective action. The presentation raises questions about the role of civil society and consumers in the fight against organized crime. Departing from my own research on the Anti-mafia in Palermo and in Sweden, I intend to address the following questions: What role could civil society have in the fight against organized crime? What type of activities can civil society engage in to fight organized crime? What are the limitations for what civil society could do? I will also discuss how citizens could be engaged in the fight against organized crime through political consumerism. With this talk, I aim to stimulate critical reflection and collaborative discussion to uncover new insights into how civil society and consumers can effectively address organized crime. I will also raise methodological questions about measuring the long-term impact of these efforts, encouraging innovative approaches to understanding and evaluating their effectiveness.

Chair: Francesca Forno

Discussant: Carina Gunnarson

CONSUMERS AS ENABLERS OF ORGANIZED-CRIME-FREE SUPPLY CHAINS

Ludovica Boelting (ludovica.boelting@gmail.com)

Abstract: Organized crime has a far-reaching influence on everyday goods, from tomatoes or other crops harvested under conditions of modern slavery (“caporalato”) to counterfeit products and coerced supply chains. Drawing from the work of Mafianeindanke, Germany’s only anti-mafia NGO, this abstract emphasizes the transformative potential of informed and conscious consumer choices. Mafianeindanke has witnessed the profound impact of consumer decisions on disrupting these illicit networks. Educating the public about the hidden exploitation behind everyday products can empower them to demand transparency and support organized-crimefree supply chains. One powerful example is the social reuse of confiscated assets once controlled by organized crime. Projects on reclaimed land – where workers are paid fairly, and products are ethically cultivated – demonstrate the tangible benefits of dismantling criminal networks. Young people who experience these initiatives first-hand often leave with a profound understanding of the value of legal and ethical supply chains, becoming advocates for systemic change. One example of raising public awareness first-hand was “Blutige Tomaten” (Bloody Tomatoes), a cultural and art event organized by Mafianeindanke in Berlin. Through visual storytelling and discussion, the event exposed the harsh realities of exploited agricultural labor connected to organized crime and its presence in German markets. The audience’s astonishment highlighted the urgent need for such awareness campaigns. However, the challenges are significant. In Germany, as in other countries, the legal framework for the reuse of confiscated assets is lagging behind and public awareness remains limited. Strengthening legislation for social reuse of confiscated assets, promoting educational initiatives, and

introducing a label to certify organized-crime-free products can empower consumers to become drivers of change, promote legality and justice in global supply chains.

UNEVEN INTERVENTIONS: COMPARING CIVIL SOCIETY RESPONSES TO ILLICIT TRADE IN ANTIQUITIES AND LUXURY WATCHES

Jänicke, Konstantin (konstantin.janicke@maastrichtuniversity.nl)

Abstract: It is well established that certain markets are prone to criminal exploitation. In response, civil society often takes initiative to introduce measures meant to combat illicit trade. These include ethical guidelines, codes of conduct, and other soft law tools. Such interventions are prominent in the market for antiquities and artworks. In this market, numerous NGOs, professional organizations, and other civil society actors make significant contributions towards combatting illicit trade. Yet, other markets that are prone to similar types of criminal exploitation experience limited interventions by civil society; for example, the market for luxury watches. In this presentation, we compare civil society responses to the (illicit) trade in antiquities to the lack of civil society responses to the luxury watch trade. The market for luxury watches is significantly larger than the antiquities market and provides similar opportunities for illicit trade. Yet, the smaller market experiences significant interventions by civil society, while the larger market does not. This presentation combines the perspectives of criminology and law to consider civil society-based soft law interventions in these potentially illicit markets followed by a reflection on why civil society actors may not intervene in certain markets, and what this tells researchers interested in illicit trade.

MARKERS OF CIVIC COMPETENCE IN YOUTH PERCEPTION OF ILLICIT TRADE

Ilona Dumanska (dumanskai@khnmu.edu.ua)

Abstract: The report is focused on the role of youth inclusion in decision-making processes as a condition for the development of civil society. The European aspirations of the Eastern Partnership countries demonstrate the importance of forming the civic competence of young people in relation to illicit trade. Markers of perception of legality and responsibility towards other individuals in society play a key role in this.

During the implementation of the virtual mobility project within the framework of COST CA 21133 «Understanding Illicit Trade: A Youth Perspective. Formation of a culture of legality» (period 01.09.2023-30.09.2023) identified markers of civic competence and problems of tolerant attitude of youth to some manifestations of illegality in exchange for possible benefits and irresponsibility. As a result, it was substantiated that it is appropriate to form a correct idea about the phenomena of illegal trade and its consequences at the stage of acquiring a future profession and/or starting an entrepreneurial activity among young people.

It has been proven that the solution to this problem is training (formal and/or informal) in the educational process and the development of fair institutions of civil society in the form of NGOs, cooperatives and professional youth associations.

THIRD SESSION

Keynote: Theodoros Rakopoulos

BOUNDING THE MAFIA: THINK LOCAL, ACT GLOBAL (AND SET ASIDE THE NATION-STATE FOR A MINUTE)

Abstract: Delving into ethnographic and historical material from my long research in Sicily, in this intervention I propose that we move away from an implicit methodological nationalism in our understanding of the mafia and indeed its combative interaction with antimafia. Replicating the metaphor of state borders onto the Sicilian landscape, the institutional antimafia (and particularly the successful confiscations experience) has made practical inroads. However, both the ethnographic reality on the ground, and the sociological reality of contemporary organized crime activity, suggest that this metaphor is far from depicting the real existing conditions of life pertaining to mafia and antimafia. I suggest instead that we will benefit from paying attention to the local experiences and to the global scale at once, to both comprehend a complicated phenomenon as the mafia, and to defeat it. Moving beyond the nation-state scale and the false dichotomies it poses on research is therefore a key point. The paper points out the methodological nuances involved in bounding the mafia, rendering it as a sociological field available to be read, and hopefully acted against.

Chair: Umberto Di Maggio

Discussant: Theodoros Rakopoulos

SOCIAL RE-USE OF CONFISCATED ASSETS, CASE OF REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

Boban Misoski (b.misoski@pf.ukim.edu.mk)

Abstract: New Law on Management of the Confiscated Assets in Republic of North Macedonia has been enacted in 2024 replacing previous Law from 2012. In the New Law on Management of Confiscated Assets several new provisions were introduced including social re-use of the confiscated properties. However, despite the fact that until 2024 social re-use of confiscated assets was not officially recognized, Macedonian authorities in fact were using confiscated assets for social re-use. In this fashion, analyzing the activities of the Agency for Management of the Confiscated Assets in the field of transferring of the confiscated assets to state bodies and state institutions the author concludes that many of the Agency's transfer of the assets can in fact be considered as social re-use of the confiscated assets. Some of the Agency for Management of Confiscated Asset's positive examples are transfers of the motor vehicles to the law enforcement agencies and state institutions. Another positive example that can be considered as social re-use of the confiscated assets is the transfer of confiscated real estate to state bodies. Further such activities were analyzed through the Agency for Management of Confiscated Asset's annual reports. However, author concludes that despite the fact that some of the confiscated assets were in fact donated or transferred to state bodies that can be considered as a social reuse of the confiscated assets, the lack of structural approach towards the social re-use of the confiscated assets coupled with the lack of legal basis for social re-use of the confiscated assets were practically diminishing the several positive initiatives that were observed in the Agency's practice over the years. Hence, author concludes that with the new legal provisions a new approach is paved towards the proper and increased practice of social re-use of the confiscated assets and considering the already existing practice we can expect further increase of the practice of social re-use of confiscated assets in Republic of North Macedonia.

GLOBAL NGO E-COMMUNICATION ON ILLICIT TRADE ISSUES

Jaroslav Dvorak (jaroslav.dvorak@ku.it)

Abstract: This research examines the electronic communication strategies of global NGOs actively combating illegal trade. The study addresses the research question: how should NGOs optimize e-communication management strategies to influence international decision-making processes effectively? The research employs content analysis, systematically examining data from the official websites of globally recognized NGOs and platforms such as Google. This approach enabled logical classification and categorization of the collected information. Preliminary findings indicate that the e-communication efforts of NGOs operating globally face challenges, such as balancing resource allocation across regions and addressing diverse stakeholder needs. Nevertheless, well-established global NGOs demonstrate the ability to amplify their influence through targeted campaigns, leveraging both advanced analytical tools and substantial financial resources. These organizations not only raise awareness of illegal trade issues but also contribute to shaping international policies and fostering cross-sectoral collaboration. The study highlights the importance of aligning e-communication strategies with the dynamic nature of global governance challenges, though final conclusions remain under development.

ORGANIZED CRIME AND LOCAL POLITICS IN ITALY: EXAMINING THE SPACES OF INTERACTION AND THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY

Rondani Clara (clara.rondani@unicatt.it)

Abstract: The cooperation of organized criminal groups with actors who don't belong to the underworld is crucial for the survival and expansion of the groups themselves. The case of Southern Italy, where mafias have long wielded power over civil society and the political sphere, is illustrative of the links that criminals create with the upperworld. While the study of the mafia-politics relationship and the resources exchanged within it has attracted significant attention, the analysis of how these cooperative relationships affect local communities has largely been limited to their financial impact on municipal budgets.

By relying on the implementation of art. 143 of legislative decree n. 267/2000, which allows the dismissal of city councils for mafia infiltration, this study examines the potential reactions of civil society to such illicit collaborations and to the subsequent disruptive State's intervention. A theoretical framework is developed to analyze the responses of the impacted communities to local political and criminal actors, based on a continuum ranging from confrontation to congruence and as a function of perceived costs of reacting. The findings aim to inform the formulation of policies leveraging social development to a) effectively dismantle the links between the mafia and civic actors and b) prevent cases of recidivism.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS



Ludovica Bölting (Mafianeindanke e.V., Berlin, Germany) is an anti-money laundering and anti-financial crime expert and in the board of the NGO Mafianeindanke. As a lawyer with a Master's degree in Transnational Crime and Justice she is a long term advocate in the fight against mafia-style organized crime groups. Her focus lays on how criminal groups launder their profits, civil society engagement in the fight against organized crime and asset recovery, in particular non-conviction based confiscation.



Stefano Caneppele (PhD, University of Lausanne, Switzerland) is a Full Professor of Criminology and the Deputy Director of the School of Criminal Justice at the University of Lausanne, where he teaches criminology courses such as Analysis of Economic and Organized Crime, Cybercrime, and Terrorism. Since October 2022, he has been a member of the Management Committee for COST Action CA21133—Globalization, Illicit Trade, Sustainability, and Security (GLITSS). He is also associate editor of the European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research.

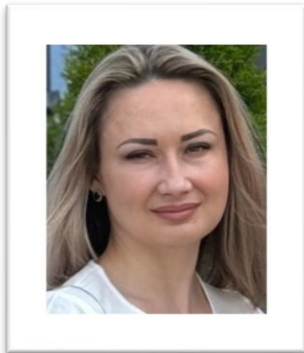
Baris Cayli Messina (University of Lincoln, UK) is an Associate Professor of Criminology at the University of Lincoln and the founding editor of the "Temple Studies in Criminalization, History, and Society" series with Temple University Press. He serves as Editor-in-Chief of the International Social Science Journal, a Wiley publication established by UNESCO in 1949. He has extensively published on crime, conflict, and violence. His works also include edited issues on protest anthropology and outlaws in Anthropological Notebooks and the Journal of Historical Sociology. He is the author of Violence and Militants (McGill-Queen's University Press) and Editor for Environmental Injustice and Catastrophe: How Global Insecurities Threaten the Future of Humanity (De Gruyter). Messina sits on The Sociological Review and the I.S. Mediterranean Studies editorial board. His career includes visiting fellowships and professorships at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Ethnic and Religious Diversity, the University of Palermo, LUMSA University, the University of Oxford, and Rutgers University. Prestigious institutes, including the British Academy, the Leverhulme Trust, the European Council, and the Arts and Humanities Research Council have funded his research projects.



the University of Palermo, LUMSA University, the University of Oxford, and Rutgers University. Prestigious institutes, including the British Academy, the Leverhulme Trust, the European Council, and the Arts and Humanities Research Council have funded his research projects.



Umberto Di Maggio (LUMSA, Palermo, Italy) is an Associate Professor of Sociology. His research interests include social theory, non-profit organisations, migrations, organised crime, and social impact assessment. He teaches courses such as Sociology of Non-Profit, Society, Globalization & Organized Crime, and Theory and Methodology of Digital Social Research. He has been involved in various international research groups, including WE-PROPOSE and PROFEEDBACK, which focus on social policies and evaluation.



Ilona Dumanska (Khmelnyskyi National University, Ukraine) is a Professor in the International Economic Relations Department. She holds MA degrees in Business Economics (2009) and Law (2013), a PhD in Economics (2013), and a Dr. of Economic Sciences (2020). Dumanska received a 2024 research grant from the American Councils for International Education in partnership with Harvard's Davis Center. She has been awarded the State Prize by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2022-2024) and has participated in several international academic programs, including those at the University of Lodz and Vytautas Magnus University. A member of editorial boards and a reviewer for journals like WSEAS and PeerJ, Dumanska has authored over 320 scientific works. Her research focuses on digitalisation of entrepreneurship, migration studies, combating illicit trade, and virtual education for sustainable development.



Jaroslav Dvorak (Department of Public Administration and Political Sciences, Klaipėda University, Lithuania) is a researcher specialising in implementing and evaluating public services and policies. He is a leading public policy expert in Lithuania, having authored dissertations, monographs, and studies on public policy evaluation. Dvorak holds an internal auditor qualification and has a long-standing research interest in citizen participation and NGO involvement in service delivery. He has led several international projects (on e-participation in local self-government and participatory budgeting in local self-government) as a group leader of Klaipėda University. Dvorak has experience working with qualitative research. He has produced publications (in the Scopus and Clarivate Analytics databases) on the use of quantitative research to examine the implementation of public service-based policies and teaches subjects related to the uses of qualitative research (evaluation of regional programs, inter-institutional organisational networks).



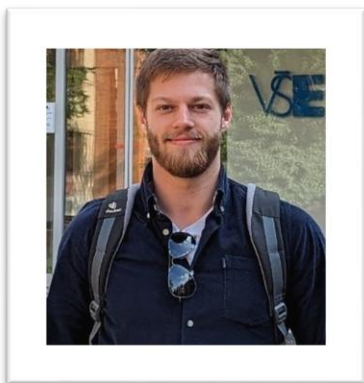
Francesca Forno (Department of Sociology and Social Research, University of Trento, Italy) is an Associate Professor of Sociology specializing in civic participation, social movements, and sustainable lifestyles. Her work explores political consumerism, grassroots innovation, and movements driving social change. Among her contributions is *La spesa a pizzo zero* (Shopping Without Protection Money), which examines how critical consumption supported the fight against the mafia, discussing the transformative potential of ethical practices.

Carina Gunnarson (Department of Government, Uppsala University, Sweden) is a senior Swedish National Defence Research Agency (FOI) researcher. Her expertise lies in security studies, governance, and societal



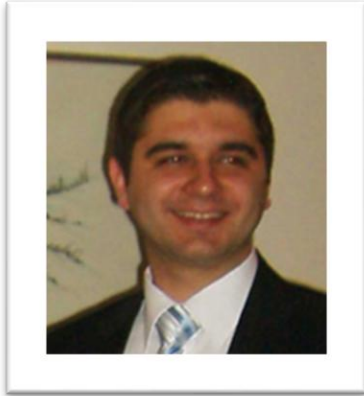
resilience, focusing on organised crime, corruption, and their impact on state institutions. Gunnarson has a solid background in political science, combining academic research with applied policy analysis. She has worked as a researcher in political science and as an analyst for the Swedish Security Services, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and the Swedish Defense Research Agency. Gunnarson has conducted extensive studies across France, Italy, and West Africa and has lived and worked in France, Italy, and Japan. In 2016/2017, she was a guest professor at Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto, Japan. During her tenure as a researcher in the Department of Government at Uppsala University, she successfully secured

funding and led multiple collaborative research projects to completion. She is the author of *Cultural Warfare and Trust: Fighting the Mafia in Palermo* (Manchester University Press, 2008), a book that explores examines how cultural initiatives can foster social trust and combat organized crime.



Konstantin Jänicke (Faculty of Law, Department of Criminal Law and Criminology, Maastricht University, The Netherlands) is a PhD Researcher in the Department of Criminal Law and Criminology of Maastricht University's Faculty of Law. He has a background in Law, Psychology, and Criminology, and specializes in the field of Economic Criminology. As a PhD Researcher, he is affiliated with the Maastricht Institute for Criminal Sciences (MICS) and the Maastricht Centre for Arts and Culture, Conservation and Heritage (MACCH). Konstantin's interdisciplinary research on ""Vulnerability for Subversive Crime in the Assetization of High-Value Watches"" is funded by the Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (NWO)

and situated within the PRICELESS Research Consortium.



Boban Misoski (Faculty of Law "Iustinianus Primus", University "St. Cyril and Methodius", Skopje, North Macedonia) is a Full Professor in Criminal Procedure Law and Head of Master Studies in Criminal Law and Legal Clinics in Criminal Law at the Faculty of Law "Iustinianus Primus". He has obtained his PhD in Criminal law in 2013 with PhD thesis titled "Bail as a measure for successful conveyance of the Criminal Procedure" at the same Faculty of Law. Boban Misoski has published 4 co-authored university textbooks and more than 50 scientific articles. His primary research filed includes Effective and Efficient Criminal Procedure and Plea Bargaining; Confiscation and Social Re-use of Confiscated Assets; Illegal Trade in Firearms. He has performed research stays at leading Universities in Germany, USA and

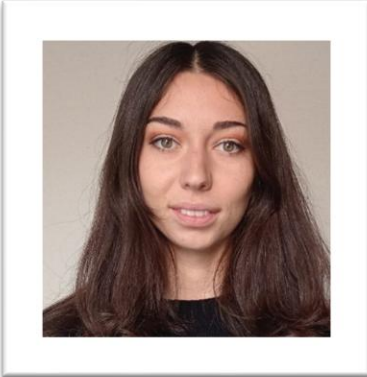
UK. Boban Misoski has been part of the Ministry of Justice's work group for drafting of the Law on Criminal Procedure and is Head of the Ministry of Justice's work group for drafting new Law on Management of Confiscated Assets.

Theodoros Rakopoulos (University of Oslo, Norway) is a professor at the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Oslo. His research encompasses economic and political anthropology, focusing on community boundaries, their transgression, and the resulting grey zones. Rakopoulos holds a



PhD in Anthropology from Goldsmiths, University of London, where he also completed a Master's in International Relations. He earned his LLB in Law from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. His fieldwork includes studies on agrarian production and anti-Mafia cooperatives operating on land confiscated from the Mafia in Sicily. Additionally, he has conducted research on solidarity economies in Greece during times of crisis. Rakopoulos has held postdoctoral positions at the University of Bergen and the University of Pretoria, contributing to projects on egalitarianism and the human economy. Rakopoulos has published numerous peer-reviewed articles and book chapters on topics such as solidarity, cooperatives, and the informal economy, contributing significantly to economic and political

anthropology. Throughout his career, Rakopoulos has demonstrated a commitment to bridging academic research and practical solutions for societal challenges, making significant contributions to the understanding of economic and political structures in various cultural contexts. He is the author of *From Clans to Co-ops: Confiscated Mafia Land in Sicily*, published by Berghahn Books in 2017, which examines the transformation of confiscated Mafia land into cooperative enterprises in Sicily.



Clara Rondani (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore-Transcrime, Italy) is a PhD student in Criminology and a researcher at Transcrime Joint Research Center on Innovation and Crime. She holds an M.Sc. in Economics with honors, specializing in Political Economics and Policy Evaluation. Her research focuses on organized crime and its interactions with politics and civil society, particularly in distorting political processes. Her PhD thesis examines the social dynamics behind political-criminal networks and civil society's responses to state intervention. Her work aims to expand understanding of the role of social ties in criminal organizations and identify effective policy areas to prevent criminal infiltration in politics.



Besa Shahini (Faculty of Economy, University of Tirana, Albania) is a Full Professor at the Faculty of Economy, University of Tirana, since 1999. Holding a Ph.D. in Economics, she specializes in finance, statistics, and socio-economic research methodologies. Her research focuses on economic development, foreign trade, and donor assistance, particularly Albania's integration into the European economy. Shahini has contributed extensively to the discourse on statistical methodologies and economic policies through international collaborations and EU-funded projects. She has authored numerous academic papers and books on socio-economic development and European integration. Shahini is recognized for her expertise in statistical data analysis, quantitative economics, and trade research. She serves on several prestigious committees, including the Management Committee of EU-funded Cost Actions. Actively involved in mentoring PhD students and chairing international conferences, she contributes significantly to trade and economic policy in the Balkans and beyond, blending research, teaching, and service.



Mirela Tase (Aleksander Moisiu University, Durrës, Albania) is the Head of the Department of Tourism at Aleksandër Moisiu University of Durrës. She has authored or co-authored several books and published over 30 articles in peer-reviewed journals, as well as presented at regional, national, and international conferences. Additionally, Dr. Tase serves as an editorial board member for several journals in Europe and the USA. Her research interests include education, migration, and tourism. As a member of civil society, she focuses on sensitive issues related to migration."

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Stefano Caneppele, University of Lausanne, Switzerland

Umberto Di Maggio, LUMSA University, Italy

Francesca Forno, University of Trento, Italy



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