

C.R.I.M.E. Countering regional Italian Mafia Expansion

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ESRC IMPACT ACCELERATION FUND

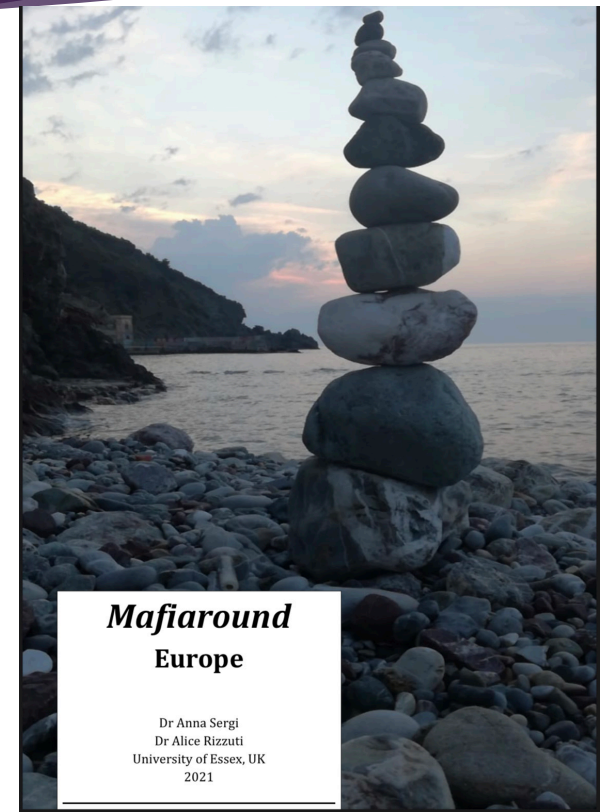
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The project

- ▶ C.R.I.M.E (Countering Regional Italian Mafia Expansion) is a research funded by the UK ESRC Impact Acceleration Account at the University of Essex. The project - led by Dr Anna Sergi (Senior Lecturer – Associate Professor - of Criminology at the University of Essex) received funding in December 2019 for a start in April 2020 and a projected end in October 2020 – then extended to June 2021 due to Covid.
- ▶ A Research Associate – Dr Alice Rizzuti, also UoE
- ▶ Eurojust Italian Desk and Europol Italian Organised Crime unit are privileged participants and partners of this project. These institutions,
- ▶ Dataset:
 - ▶ Secondary data (open source and archival documents)
 - ▶ Primary data (interviews with key experts, law enforcement etc).
- ▶ Focus:
 - ▶ Six countries out of Eurojust/Europol Selection: Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Netherlands, Belgium, Romania
 - ▶ Italy
 - ▶ Brexit Britain

The final open report MAFIAROUND-EUROPE

- ▶ To summarise the **current criminological map** of the presence of Italian mafias in seven countries in Europe (Germany, Switzerland, Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Romania and the UK), prioritised as those requiring more support in judicial cooperation. *Adding Italy for completeness.*
- ▶ To present applicable **substantial criminal law** in these countries specifically in relation to the following offences: a) participation in organised crime groups (conspiracy, membership, participation) b) drug importation / trafficking and c) money laundering. Focus will be on transnationality as aggravating factor.
- ▶ To identify some specific **challenges in judicial cooperation** across European countries.



Mafiaround
Europe

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2021

Countries at a glance

Germany

predominance of the 'ndrangheta; 2nd generation migrants; developed investigative activities; difficult national coordination; new legislation

Switzerland

predominance of the 'ndrangheta; money laundering is key due to banking sector; relationship with EU institutions and Germany

Netherlands

Transit country (port) and 'fugitive haven'; infiltration in the legal economy made a big impact; new focus

Belgium

Black hole; cosa nostra historical presence and transit country (port); good cooperation as centralised LE structure; mafia-type law

Spain

Predominance of camorra; transit area (ports); tourism infiltration; good cooperation with EU institutions

Romania

old presence but new focus; waste management & companies; centralised structure

UK

black hole; believed ML activities; few investigations; ppor cooperation

Convergences & Divergences

Territories

- Venture
- Consolidation

Structures

- Individual Mobility
- Clan-on-Clan Cross-Border Interconnectivity
- Clan mobility and settlement

Activities

- Small scale/local
- Cross-border (poor diversification)
- State-level

Framing the data conceptually

Conditioned Opportunism

- All mafia groups in the data move because of opportunity
- We can use the economic conceptualisation of **opportunism**: acting with guile and timing calculation, of either a personal/social or an economic nature.
- Some have more success than others because their conditions of start/origin also enable them to overcome the uncertainty of arrival in the destination countries.
- Conditioned Opportunism indicates the **ability** of clans/affiliates to seize available opportunities thanks to - or despite of - specific factors - both constraints or enablers - of their conditions of origins and in destination countries.
- Conditioned Opportunism is also inherently **contextual**

These factors can include:

- Favourable location for a specific business (i.e. Spanish coasts for tourism); Existing infrastructures (ports); Financial benefits (i.e. Swiss banking system); Type of trade (e.g. cocaine routes in Spain and to Antwerp); Existent expat community (enabling connectivity for business, immunity, hiding etc & changing in density) - both Italian and of the destination country in Italy; Lack of awareness/knowledge of mafia-type organised crime; Poor regulation of certain sectors (including pre-existing corruption); Legal Asymmetries (e.g. money laundering or antimafia regulations); Organisational imprinting (e.g. specific group's behaviours, rituals or skillsets including recruitment strategies, reputation and brand name, pre-existing business, cultural specificities).

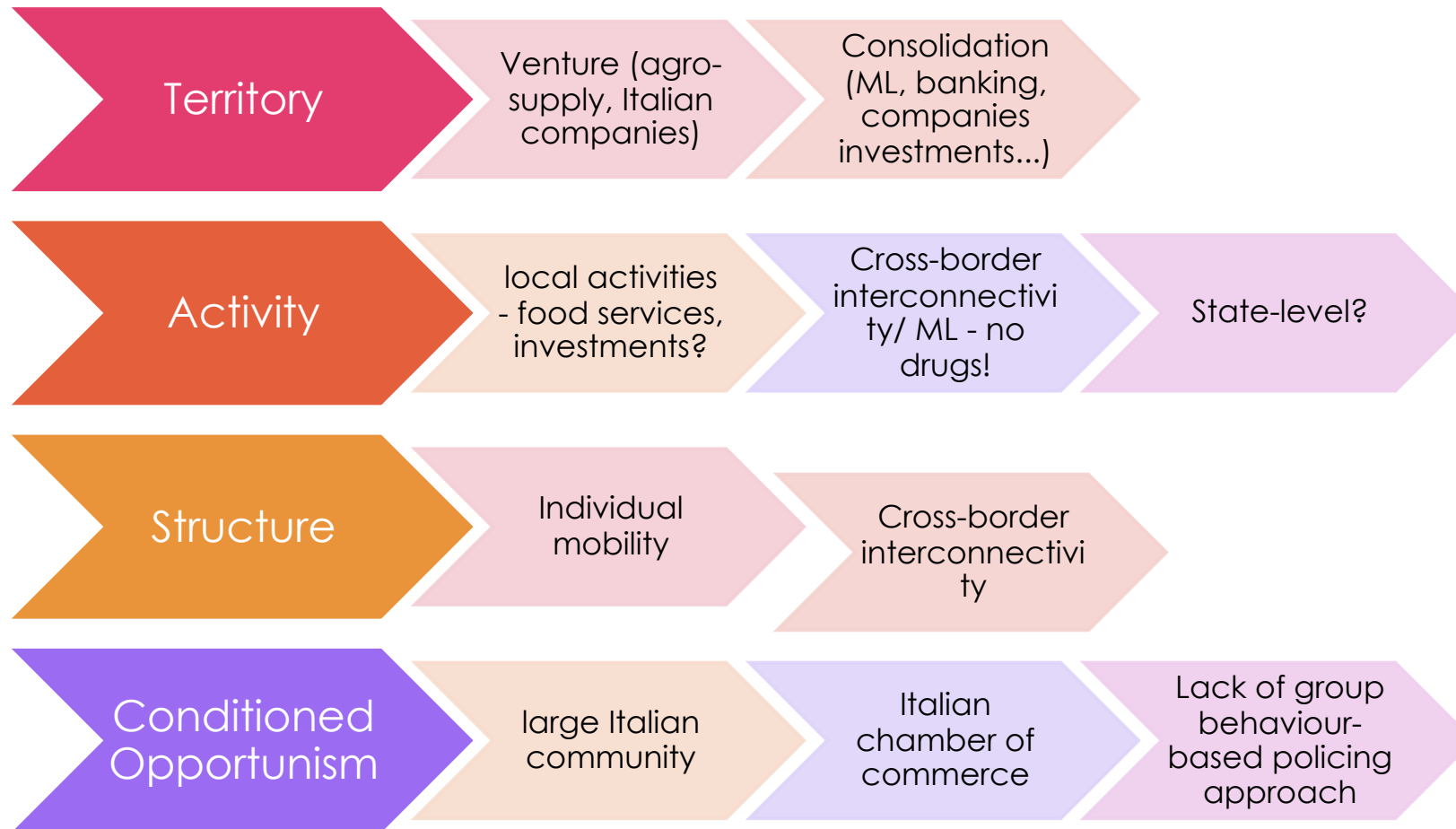
For example...Romania

Conditioned Opportunism

The specific location of the country, the relatively low language barriers and the diaspora of Romanian individuals in Italy all seem to facilitate mobility. Also, the shift from a controlled economy to a liberal market has attracted early on clans like cosa nostra looking in early 90s to reinvest profits in the legal economy. The possibilities for trafficking different commodities have attracted trafficking clans (especially camorra and 'ndrangheta), while the relaxed rules on certain sectors, i.e. real estate and gambling, have attracted other networks.

What about Brexit Britain?

Mostly risk assessment, little data...



Some conclusive reflections

What seems like hypermobility to authorities and media, is actually high-frequency

The internationalisation of the 'ndrangheta for example, seems more dependent on markets and push/pull factors than "spirit of conquest" (as it has been described)

Mafias abroad almost never behave as such, dilution towards "simpler" organised crime.

Split between activities (abroad) and structures (home-based)

Intentionality is often mistaken for intent, but intentionality remains perhaps solely in the opportunistic element of mobility.

THE END

QUESTIONS?

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