Facts about the field of study

• Anti-mafia sentiments in Italy have been expressed collectively since the mid-nineteenth century.
• Differently from previous waves of anti-mafia protest, which were clearly class-based and often followed murders of activists, today’s panorama is characterised more by everyday disruptive practices than by mass protest events.
• Confiscating mafia assets (buildings, businesses, cars) has been preventive and punitive measure that has been in place since 1982.
• After a mass petition in 1996 it became possible, as ordinary citizens, to reutilise these assets to realise social projects.
• In the past 35 years 27,000 mafia assets have been frozen or confiscated from organised crime, and are now state property. 11,000 of these have been re-allocated to the collective and used for welfare projects.

About Christina Jerne

Christina Jerne is a political scientist with an MSc in Human Security. She wrote her PhD dissertation at the School of Culture and Communication, Aarhus University, where she has been part of the research programme Cultural Transformations and the unit on Body Politics. Her research focuses on political economy and social movements.

Time and place for defence

Monday 4 December 1pm, Twillingeauditoriet, Building 1324, room 011, Bartholins Allé 10, DK-8000 Aarhus C

Contact

Christina Jerne
Mail: cjerne@cc.au.dk
Tel.: +45 50306264

Photo: Copyright Mauro Pagnano
increasingly affective, it is a prerogative to better understand how to work with desire (rather than trying to repress it) to shape novel political projects.

**Mafia power is an array of weaknesses, not a strength**
Mafias are heterogeneous organisations that thrive because certain objects (e.g. corrupt officials, abandoned land, waste legislation) are arranged and expressed in a way that increases its movement and influence. Anti-mafia politics is thereby concerned with pragmatically rearranging the relationships between humans and non-humans in ways that decrease the possibility of the actualisation of mafia-type bonds on a given territory (e.g. monopoly of labour relations, land usage, reputation).

**Collective action should be conceptualised without predetermining where, with whom and how it should take place**
Most often, collective action is associated to a particular space and is thought of as being carried out by certain types of actors. These are for example street demonstrations, petitions and riots that are directed at those who are in power: the politicians. Yet anti-mafia politics can take place on the technical reconfiguration of stickers, inside jars of marmalade and in musical psychiatric wards. This is not only the case of the anti-mafia movement. Contemporary politics calls for a novel language and horizon of imagination that does not confine politics to specific sites and classical representations.

**Perspectives**
The dissertation enriches social science approaches to collective action (sociology, political science) with methodological, analytical and theoretical tools drawn from humanistic disciplines (philosophy, cultural studies, aesthetics). These bridges propose novel directions for the study of contentious politics, suggesting the need to move beyond rigid disciplinary boundaries in order to think and do politics differently.

**The empirical basis of the dissertation**
The work is based on 3 years of ongoing fieldwork in Campania, Sicily, Apulia and Emilia Romagna (Italy), where I worked on mafia confiscated assets, organised workshops, took part in anti-mafia tours, and participated in demonstrations and commemorative ceremonies. I used qualitative methodologies to record my interactions with 147 anti-mafia activists, in the form of participant observation, interviews, volunteering and auto ethnography.