

Universities and Local Communities: Research, Training and Networking in the Field of Legality and Mafias, for the Right to Informed Knowledge

PEER REVIEWED

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1. State of the Art.

Despite a broad production from scholars on the topic of mafias,² the issue of where the Italian academic world is positioned in the antimafia system has not been consistently dealt with to date. In particular, an interdisciplinary and interinstitutional approach to the matter seems to be lacking. Therefore, this paper aims to formally outline the role of Universities as co-protagonists in the areas of contrast and prevention, on par with antimafia bodies and entities both at institutional level – i.e. the Antimafia Parliamentary Committee, the National Antimafia Directorate (DNA), the Antimafia Investigation Division (DIA), prefectures and courts of law – and at societal and activism level alongside local organizations and third-sector entities.

The main objective of the research whose results are hereby illustrated is to investigate the contribution that Italian Universities adhering to CRUI have given in the field of higher education and scientific research to the topics of legality and organised crime. The research has been conducted by 29 scholars from different academic disciplines, across 11 Italian Universities, in collaboration with CRUI and the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry into mafia and other criminal organisations

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² F Dalla Chiesa, *Manifesto Dell'antimafia*, vol. 92 (Einaudi, 2014); Vittorio Mete, "La Lotta Alle Mafie. Tra Movimenti e Istituzioni," in *L'Italia e Le Sue Regioni: L'età Repubblicana-Vol. IV Società* (Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 2015), 305-22; Rocco Sciarone, *Mafie Vecchie, Mafie Nuove: Radicamento ed Espansione* (Donzelli editore, 2021).

including foreign ones, implementing a Memorandum of Understanding between these two entities.³

This MoU was aimed at enhancing the role of Universities as places of training in terms of knowledge and skills, but also as ideal social environments where ethical and cultural principles in defence of institutions and society may take root.

The data that will be discussed in these pages are part of a *Review of university research and training activities* (henceforth *Review*), produced as a result of efforts coordinated by the Interdisciplinary Laboratory of Research on Mafia and Corruption (LIRMAC) of the Federico II University of Naples. The role played by Universities in the fight against organised mafias is particularly emblematic in the interpretation of the relationship between Universities and territories, especially with respect to two interlinked aspects.

The first aspect relates to the University's forms of engagement, how diversified these can be and how closely they are linked to the educational and scientific research mission. In recent decades there has been an increase in the contribution of academics and Universities to the processes of change in the economic and social context where these institutions operate. At the same time, expectations have also grown on the part of the local communities, for a more institutionalised involvement of Universities in the processes of economic and social innovation.⁴ The umbrella concept of the Third Mission encompasses many of the actions introduced by Universities in this sense, particularly those that take the form of a systematic commitment to support the development of territories. The connection between academia and the territories increasingly shapes permeable networks,⁵ which are more consistent with the development of innovation understood as a social construction that develops in dialogues between complementary types of knowledge. The 'long' links (in spatial and social terms) that Universities are able to weave allow actors from external contexts to come into contact with knowledge hot-spots (research centres, laboratories, other Universities, etc.) and thus to produce significant innovations, as well as to harness instrumental resources, including economic ones.⁶

The second aspect sees the University community at the centre of ethical commitment, with special regard to younger students considered as the future leaders of the country. It is clear that every step taken in the direction of better knowledge of phenomena from different points of

³ The complete results of this research are illustrated in D'Alfonso & Manfredi (eds.), 2022.

⁴ Carlo Trigilia and Marino Regini, "Università e Innovazione. Il Contributo Degli Atenei Italiani Allo Sviluppo Regionale," 2019.

⁵ Harald Bathelt and Patrick Cohendet, "The Creation of Knowledge: Local Building, Global Accessing and Economic Development—toward an Agenda," *Journal of Economic Geography* 14, no. 5 (2014): 869–82.

⁶ Pier Luigi Sacco, Guido Ferilli, and Giorgio Tavano Blessi, *Cultura e Sviluppo Locale: Verso Il Distretto Culturale Evoluto* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2012).

view, affects the way such phenomena are perceived, understood and dealt with.

In this framework, mafias as a systemic phenomenon occupy a prominent place, and must be tackled as such in terms of prevention and contrast with equal systematicity. In this perspective, the role of the University stands as complementary (and necessary) to the repressive and contrasting one undertaken by the judiciary and law enforcement, while taking the form of a preventive action brought about by training in informed knowledge and by education to legality. Especially in the last thirty years there has been an increase in widespread awareness of the mafia presence in national territories and, in view of the development of illegal market networks, in international ones. This is thanks not only to the pressing counter-action (with significant results) of the judiciary, but also (perhaps above all) to the 'staging' of organised crime: from literary production (e.g., *Gomorra*, by Roberto Saviano) to graphic novels; including television series and film productions, as well as journalistic reports and media products centred on criminal profiles. While all this has undoubtedly brought to the fore a universe which had too often been denied and/or obscured, it has also produced various representations that do not always adhere to reality, and which have sometimes even run the risk of altering it or even mythologising certain aspects of it.

In this context, Universities can act as guarantors of the right to 'informed knowledge', offering cognitive approaches to the mafia phenomenon, with precise and rigorous theoretical and methodological points of view. In various areas of Italy, especially in the south, Universities represent for the younger generations one of the places of educational opportunities and professional and civil growth. These institutions take on the appearance of a 'garrison of legality on the territory' in opposition to criminal phenomena that have long been rooted there; they offer the tools and skills for knowledge and understanding of these phenomena. The work undertaken by University researchers in this sense offers the most appropriate tools. Furthermore, it can boost the effectiveness of policies, interventions and actions of prevention and contrast.

The *Review* therefore represents an opportunity that allows us to highlight the presence of specific training pathways and of experts or research teams operating in each University or across different Universities, and who represent the access points for scientific knowledge of the mafia phenomena.

More generally, the data we will see shortly offer stimulating food for thought as regards the relationship between teaching and research on the one hand, and between Universities and geographical-territorial contexts on the other. Regarding the latter, there are many studies that have shown the relevance of the spread of tertiary education institutions and their level of territorial embeddedness in fostering local development.⁷ We will

⁷ John Harrison and Ivan Turok, "Universities, Knowledge and Regional Development," *Regional Studies* 51, no. 7 (2017): 977–81.

see how some variables, including location and size of Universities, disciplinary specialisations, the type of relationship with the territory, available resources, are crucial in defining the forms through which Universities can express their commitment to legality, in the local contexts where they are located and beyond.

2. The Review of Research and Training Activities Methodology.

The *Review* is the only database available today in Italy that enables us to draw a map of research, training and third mission activities carried out by Italian Universities. This database can be queried through the CRUI website.⁸ The *Review* will be constantly updated, especially thanks to the contribution of LIRMAC.

The idea of investigating the role of Italian Universities in the fight against mafias, organised crime and corruption was conceived in 2017, in implementation of a Memorandum of Understanding adopted by the CRUI and the Parliamentary Anti-Mafia Committee.⁹

To this end, the CRUI carried out a study, updated to the academic year 2015/2016, aimed at surveying the educational activities offered by Italian Universities, as well as dedicated facilities and events organised on these topics. The survey was conducted through the submission of an online questionnaire for 66 Universities, and the results were presented at a hearing before the Committee in November 2017.¹⁰

During the first phase of the project, three macro-areas of training offer were identified:

- Courses delivered and dedicated to the study of mafias and organised crime, as part of degree programmes or higher education programmes;
- Facilities or teams of researchers dedicated to scientific research on the topic;
- Events and/or initiatives organised by Universities for the promotion of the culture of legality.

Taking into account the evolution of studies and research on mafias in the years following the period covered by the survey presented in 2017, it was

⁸ Stefano D'Alfonso and Gaetano Manfredi, *L'università Nella Lotta Alle Mafie: La Ricerca e La Formazione* (Donzelli editore, 2021); Stefano D'Alfonso and Gaetano Manfredi, *University in the Fight against Mafias: Research, Teaching and Training* (FedOA-Federico II University Press, 2022).

⁹ "Parliamentary committee of inquiry into mafia-related and other criminal organisations, including foreign ones", established in the 17th legislature by Law no. 87 of 19 July 2013; the project was then also adopted by the Parliamentary Anti-Mafia Committee established in the 18th legislature by Law n. 99 of 7 August 2018 and by the Ministry of University and Research.

¹⁰ The results were presented on 7 November 2017 by the then president of the CRUI, Professor Gaetano Manfredi, and Professor Anna Maria Zaccaria, member of Lirmac. The stenographic record of the hearing can be downloaded at the link on the website of the Chamber of Deputies, https://www.camera.it/leg17/1058?idLegislatura=17&tipologia=audiz2&sottotipologia=audizione&anno=2017&mese=11&giorno=07&idCommissione=24&numero=0230&file=indice_stenografico The full hearing in video format can be viewed at [https://inchieste.camera.it/inchieste/mafie/video.html?leg=17&legLabel=XVII %20legislatura](https://inchieste.camera.it/inchieste/mafie/video.html?leg=17&legLabel=XVII%20legislatura).

deemed appropriate to proceed with a new survey that, while retaining the same objectives as the previous one, would allow for an update of the data and a broader and deeper analytical reflection. Firstly, a methodological adjustment was necessary. On the basis of the list of Italian Universities belonging to the CRUI, we proceeded with a thorough consultation of their websites in order to detect the presence and activities of bodies or courses of study dedicated exclusively to the mafia and corruption phenomenon and to check their activation over the five-year academic period 2016/2017-2020/2021. The reasons for this choice lie in the timeliness of the information: the direct collection of the data useful for the survey, in fact, made it possible both to shorten the time (inevitably longer in the case of using a questionnaire) and to mitigate the limitations that such a large unit of analysis could have generated (e.g. drop in the number of answers to the questionnaires, possible ambiguity of the questions/analytical dimensions, etc.). Thus, the websites and curricula of all the Universities belonging to the CRUI were consulted, maintaining a constant comparison with the previous survey. The data collection was carried out by comparing it with the previous survey and by querying the search engines of the individual Italian Universities using the following specific keywords in Italian: *antimafia, anticorruzione, camorra, camorrista, corruzione, Cosa nostra, criminali, criminalità, criminalità organizzata, crimine, devianza, mafia, mafie, mafioso, mafiosa, riciclaggio, 'ndrangheta, violenza*. (in English: anti-mafia, anti-corruption, camorra, corruption, Cosa Nostra, criminals, crime, organised crime, crime, deviance, mafia, mafias, mafia-related, money laundering, 'ndrangheta, violence).

In particular, the survey focused on the tracking and identification of:

- Teaching activities: courses and workshops
- Dedicated facilities: labs, observatories and research centres
- Higher education: PhDs, MAs and higher-education courses
- Third mission activities: summer and winter schools.

As a further part of the aforementioned Memorandum of Understanding, CRUI and LIRMAC created the *Review of research* through a survey of scientific publications about mafias. In this case the data collection method was different. The Universities provided their data by extracting it directly from the IRIS database, under the guidance of specifications produced by the CRUI and LIRMAC, thus avoiding manual data entry. The Universities that responded by indicating products of interest for the research are 64; two do not have products responding to the submitted request and two others were entered through autonomous access to the University IRIS system.

By means of a simple keyword search, this database makes it possible to identify Universities and faculty who have tackled and/or are tackling - in various ways - specific issues concerning the mafia phenomenon. This can be a useful support for scholars themselves, as well as for institutions, citizens and various stakeholders interested in identifying and

reconstructing the scientific commitment produced by Universities over the years. More importantly, however, it is also useful for students who - regardless of their educational background - wish to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. In fact, this platform also allows an immediate identification of sector experts and teams (e.g., laboratories) to which they can refer in the presence of the most diverse needs for in-depth study (e.g., for legislative production). Finally, it makes it possible to focus on the various research groups present in each University or even across different Universities: a useful mapping for the promotion of further interdisciplinary collaborations and activities, which are increasingly necessary when facing a topic with a high social, economic and legal impact. This is therefore an important starting point for building strategies that place the University community at the centre of ethical commitment, with particular regard to young students, as citizens and future ruling class of the country.

In this contribution, we will present the main data on the training and research activities of the Italian Universities surveyed, putting forward some reflections that emerge from this data on the relationship between Universities and local communities.

3. Teaching Activities.

Among the Universities surveyed, there are 37 presenting teaching activities on the topic of mafias, with 17 located in southern regions, 12 in the north and 8 in the centre. As far as size is concerned, the 37 Universities are evenly distributed across the 4 size categories with a slightly greater share of 'large' ones.¹¹

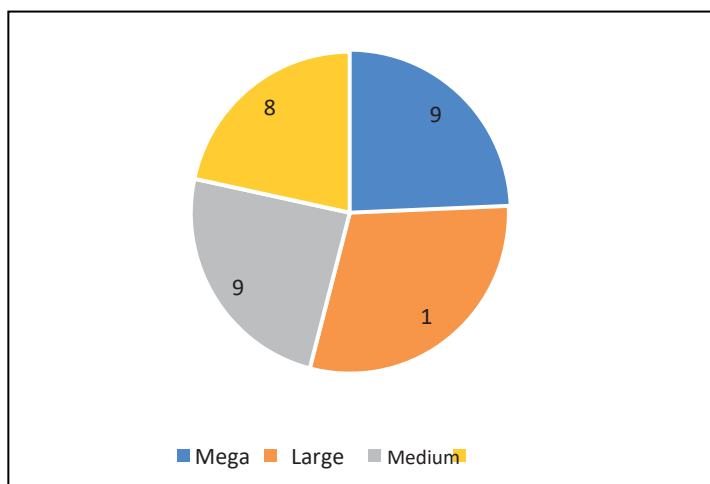


Figure 1| Distribution of Universities by size.

¹¹ These categories have been established on the basis of criteria set out by Censis in 2020, according to which the Universities with more than 40,000 students are called 'mega', while those with 20,000 to 40,000 students are 'large' and those with 10,000 to 20,000 students are 'medium-sized'. Finally, 'small' Universities are those with less than 10,000 students.

Credits: Stefano D'Alfonso, Gaetano Manfredi.

With reference to the offer of specific activities and courses, in the Universities considered there has been a gradual increase in the number of workshops and courses focusing exclusively on the study of mafias and corruption since the 2016-2017 academic year: in 2020-2021, there was a positive change of around 47% compared to the 2016-2017 academic year. In practice, the offer has almost doubled over five academic years. There are still some territorial differences which had already emerged in the previous survey, with a higher concentration of availability in the northern regions.



Figure 2| Distribution of teaching programmes in Italy as of A. Y. 2020-2021¹².
Credits: Stefano D'Alfonso, Gaetano Manfredi.

In fact, slightly less than half of the total 50 courses dedicated to the phenomenon are offered in Universities in the North (24 courses), concentrated in the Universities of Lombardy and Piedmont. As far as Southern Universities are concerned, the teaching offer increased from 14 teachings in 2016 to 18 in 2021; in the central regions there are 8, of which 6 in Lazio. The general picture of the time trend by geographic macro-area of the dedicated teaching offer [Figure 3] shows that in the northern regions there has been a constant and rather significant increase over the last three years, while the trend for the Universities of Central Italy is fluctuating; the Universities of the South record an increase in teaching concentrated in the last two years considered.

¹² Regions shown in black are those where Universities do not offer any of the three facilities/activities that form the core of this investigation (laboratories/workshops, higher education courses or subject-specific programmes). The blue regions (Sardinia and Marche) are those where at least one of the three aforementioned facilities/activities can be found although, in this case, they do not offer courses dedicated to the subject of mafias which explains why in this category they are allocated a value of zero.

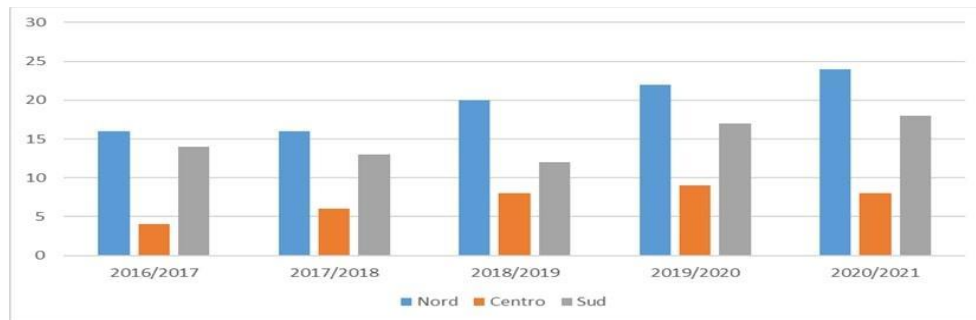


Figure 3| Distribution of courses by geographical macro-area.

Credits: Stefano D'Alfonso, Gaetano Manfredi.

Blue = North; Orange = Centre; Grey = South

Several factors may contribute to explaining these differences, which, among other things, reveal an incongruous fact: the relatively limited contribution of Southern Universities, which are located precisely in the territories where the so-called traditional mafias originated. First of all, in recent years, the social alarm generated by the presence of mafia organisations in the northern regions has grown considerably, questioning various social actors at various levels.¹³ Such external solicitation undoubtedly acts as a stimulus for the academic environment, inasmuch as this 'listens' to the territories and activates itself, with the tools of its specific competence, in the fight against illegality. This hypothesis can also be confirmed by the trend of the data referring to the teaching offer recorded for the Universities of the central regions, an area in which the risk of mafia presence has long been perceived as negligible; for instance, lower Lazio has been regarded as a safe haven, despite its proximity to the Caserta area, which has been a site of Camorra settlements and encroachments for at least thirty years.¹⁴ In contrast to other regions of Italy, the *Mezzogiorno* has a long and well-established history of mafia syndicates, which is widely acknowledged by the public and civil society. However, simply recognizing the presence of the mafia and its impact on the region's economy, society, and culture is not enough to explain the disparity in educational outcomes among Universities. There are several factors that should be considered, such as structural, environmental, economic, scientific, and organizational aspects. For example, the mobility of lecturers and Universities' ability to propose extra-local training projects can have an impact. To better understand these issues, further investigation is needed to identify the constraints that prevent Italian Universities from taking more widespread and effective action against organized crime.

Looking at the review data again, the courses dedicated to mafia and corruption are mostly active in mega and large Universities, although

¹³ Rocco Sciarrone, "Tra Sud e Nord. Le Mafie Nelle Aree Non Tradizionali," in *Mafie Del Nord. Strategie Criminali e Contesti Locali* (DONZELLI, 2019), 5-43; Gianni Belloni and Antonio Vesco, *Come Pesci Nell'acqua. Mafie, Impresa e Politica in Veneto*. (Milano: Donzelli, 2018).

¹⁴ Vittorio Martone, *Le Mafie Di Mezzo: Mercati e Reti Criminali a Roma e Nel Lazio* (Donzelli editore, 2017).

their number has been consistently growing over the last two years in small and medium-sized Universities. Among the mega Universities, the most significant contribution is given by the ‘Statale’ Universities of Milan and Turin, where in A. Y. 2020/21 the number of specific courses was 9 and 5, respectively. Courses appear to be rather evenly distributed across large Universities in Italy and their share seems to follow a stable trend.

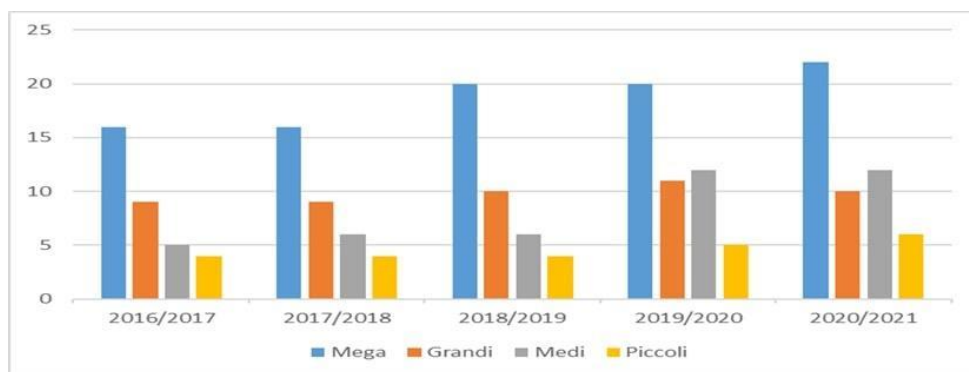


Figure 4| Distribution of courses by University size.
Credits: Stefano D’Alfonso, Gaetano Manfredi.
Blue = Mega; Orange = Large; Grey = Medium-sized; Yellow = Small

Courses are concentrated in four scientific macro-areas [Figure 5].¹⁵

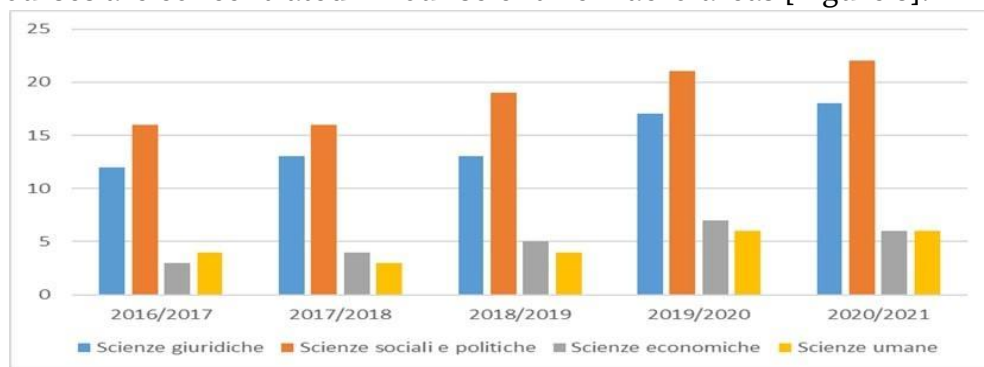


Figure 5| Distribution of courses by scientific sector.
Credits: Stefano D’Alfonso, Gaetano Manfredi.

Blue= Law and related courses; Orange= Political and Social Sciences; Grey= Economics; Yellow= Human sciences

Over the period analysed, their number progressively increased in the area of Law and above all in that of Political and Social Sciences; conversely, a more limited diffusion can be found in the sectors of Economics and Human Sciences. In addition, the courses are mainly

¹⁵ The disciplinary macro-areas considered refer to the Miur classification. On the basis of the survey, it was possible to trace the subjects to the following macro-areas: a) legal area: law and related courses; b) area of political and social sciences: political science, international relations, science of administration and related courses, sociology and related courses, anthropology, communication sciences; c) area of economic sciences: degree programmes in economics and business and company organisation; d) area of human sciences: also includes historical sciences, learning and educational sciences and psychological sciences.

distributed across MAs and single-cycle degrees, with the former showing a significant increase over the last three years.

On the other hand, there is a more limited number of undergraduate degree courses, with the majority of them being concentrated in the area of historical disciplines. What is also interesting to notice is the figure relating to optional courses which are interdisciplinary and placed at the crossroads of various curricula and academic fields. In particular, these are often represented by interdisciplinary workshops dedicated to students of social and educational sciences. Despite a significant production of scientific research, the so-called hard sciences do not show an offer of courses dedicated to the subject of mafias and corruption.

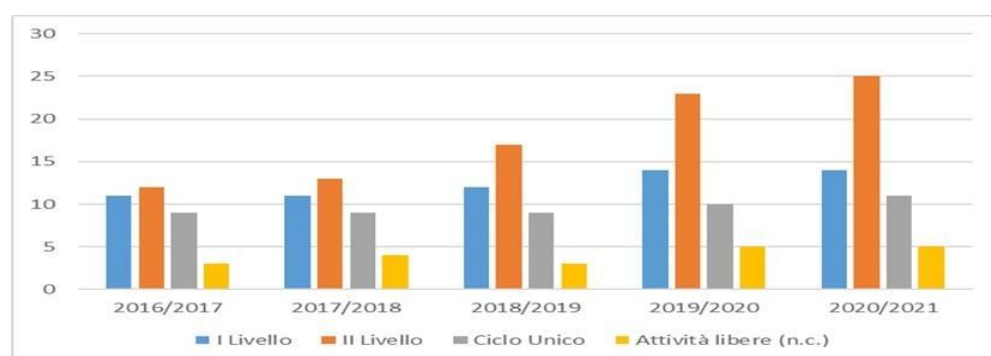


Figure 6| Distribution of courses by level of degree programme.

Credits: Stefano D'Alfonso, Gaetano Manfredi.

Blue= undergraduate; Orange= MAs; Grey= Single cycle; Yellow= Electives

As highlighted earlier, the majority of these courses are concentrated in the north of Italy and in mega Universities. Analysing higher education we can see how this distribution is rebalanced.

The total number of higher education activities in the Universities surveyed is 21, i.e., 6 more than the previous 2017 survey. The higher-education offer is distributed across 14 Universities, with varying figures depending on the academic year considered. In particular, our data show that in 2016/17 the most significant concentration of higher education offer could be found in the South, while in the following academic year the offer increased in the north, while remaining stable in the centre and declining in the south. Finally, in the 2018-2020 period, growth could be observed in higher education offer in the Universities of Central and Southern Italy. On the other hand, in the two-year period 2020-2021 there was a similar level of offer across the three geographical areas [Figure 7].

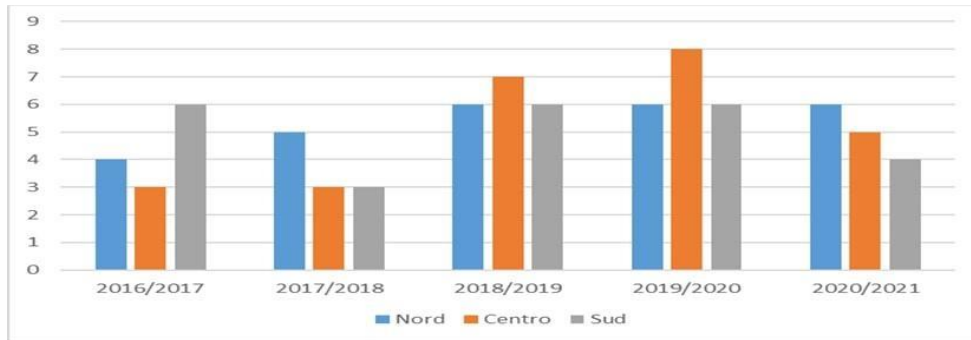


Figure 7| Distribution of higher education offer by geographical area.
Credits: Stefano D'Alfonso, Gaetano Manfredi.
Blue = North; Orange = Centre; Grey = South

Looking at the distribution of higher education courses in relation to University size, we see that the offer is ample in mega and large Universities, but rather limited in medium-sized ones. In small Universities, since 2018-2019, the trend in higher education activities dedicated to the subject of mafias and corruption has been stable.

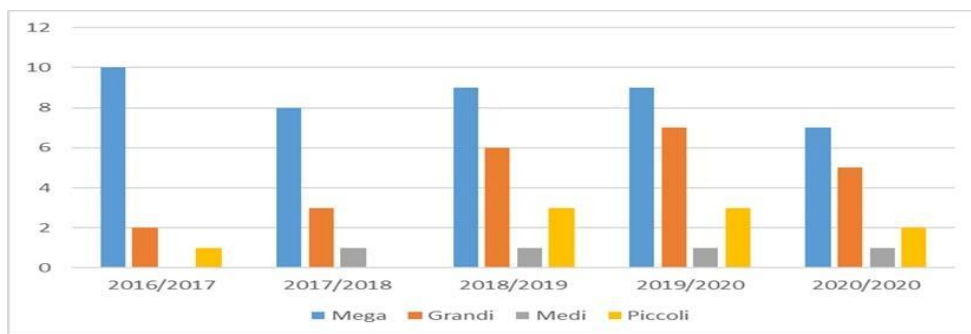


Figure 8| Distribution of higher education activities by University size.
Credits: Stefano D'Alfonso, Gaetano Manfredi.
Blue = Mega; Orange = Large; Grey = Medium-sized; Yellow = Small

Another significant piece of information, which also sheds light on the relationships between Universities and other local stakeholders, is represented by the partnerships with external organisations or institutions which are quite frequent in the sector of higher education [Figure 9].¹⁶ Out of the total number of MA courses surveyed, in fact, 10 avail themselves of the collaboration of Anac and/or Inps, Courthouse departments or law enforcement agencies, foundations and/or citizen associations, public and private organisations.

¹⁶ We have hereby taken into consideration Master's degrees and higher education courses in which at least one external partnership was registered. It has to be pointed out that a master's degree can include more than one partnership from outside the academic world (e.g. the 2nd level master's degree on *Public tendering and prevention of corruption*, University of Ferrara, involves: Anac, Legacoop Estense, the province of Ferrara, Confartigianato di Ferrara, the Emilia-Romagna region, Confindustria, Consorzio nazionale servizi (Cns), Associazione italiana trasparenza e anticorruzione, municipality of Ferrara and Anci Emilia-Romagna).

The collaboration with "external" players is generally aimed at providing support both in terms of active training and in economic terms (most frequently in the form of scholarships for participants).

4. Scientific Research Activities.

Before analysing the most significant data concerning scientific production, a methodological note is necessary. As mentioned, our data were extracted from the Iris research repository, and this choice is not devoid of criticalities. One such criticality refers to the problem of uploading products to Iris, an institutional archive that implies a 'selection' of products (e.g. retired and non-regularly employed scholars cannot upload products; moreover, products by authors from outside the academic world are not included). A second critical point concerns the selection by keywords, which undoubtedly has its limitations. This method only allows us to detect part of the products. Using this procedure does not give the certainty of surveying the entire corpus of research products, as some titles may not contain the selected keywords.

The decision to proceed in this way was based on the consideration that including a wider range of terms would have been far more critical than the usefulness of the extra information it could have produced. Finally, it should be borne in mind that the products surveyed are very heterogeneous and differ significantly in terms of type and scientific approach. Despite these critical issues, the repository has enabled interesting reflections on the scientific commitment of Universities in the field of mafias and corruption. A total of 2,273 original products published between 1999 and 2018 were identified and collected: the average annual production is more than 110 products distributed throughout the country. Across time, the scientific production concerning mafia studies has significantly increased across all sectors and territorial areas. There was a leap in the distribution of research products starting in particular from 2009: the incidence went from an average of 6.1 products/year to an average of 17.1 products/year. The 2013 peak of 196 products was followed by a slight decrease in production [Figure 9].

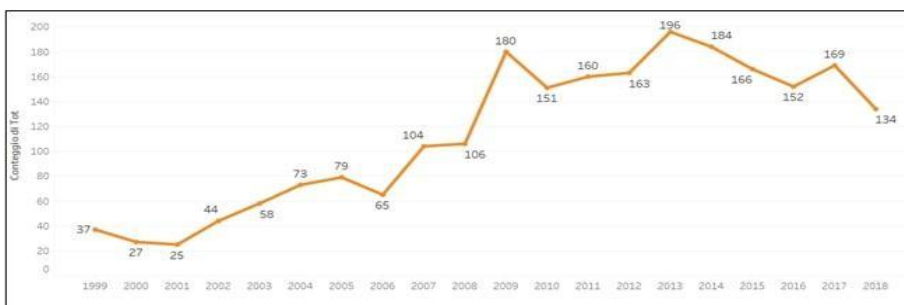


Figure 9| Annual trend of scientific products.
Credits: Stefano D'Alfonso, Gaetano Manfredi.

As regards territorial distribution, significant differences emerge [Figure 10]. Slightly more than half of the papers, in fact, were published in the Universities of the South (53%), and about one third in those of the North (30%), while the remaining 16% were published in central Italy. Temporally, however, a progressive increase can be observed in the contributions of northern Universities. Their share grew from 26.7% in the first five-year period (1999-2003) to 35.3% in the most recent one considered (2014-2018). This can undoubtedly be attributed to a large extent to the judicial investigations that have been initiated recently in the northern regions.

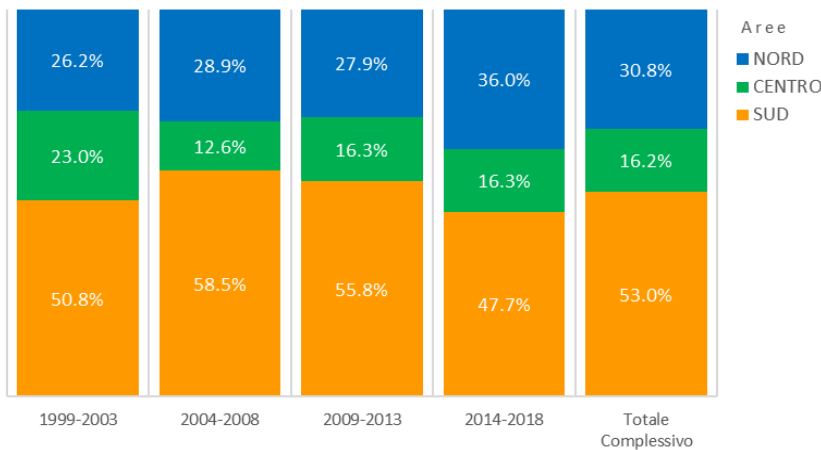


Figure 10| Percentage distribution of products by macro-area.

Credits: Stefano D'Alfonso, Gaetano Manfredi.

Orange= South; Green= Centre; Blue= North; Totale complessivo= overall total

The most significant contribution in terms of number of products came from seven regions (two in the South, two in the Centre and three in the North), who account for over 85% of the total number of products: Sicily 31.3%, Campania 14.3%, Lombardy 12.9%, Lazio 7.4%, Tuscany 7.4%, Piedmont 7.1%, Emilia-Romagna 5%. The Sicily figure certainly stands out; in fact, this region accounts for almost a third of the overall number of products. When including Campania, these two regions cover almost the entire scientific production of Southern Universities in this field.

Social and Law disciplines together account for more than 50% of overall scientific production. Psychology, Economics, History also give a significant contribution, together representing more than a quarter of the total. Another significant share is accounted for by political and medical sciences. More than 75% of the production of psychologists, more than 50% of political subjects and about a third of the work of historians and economists was published in Sicily. Law Studies account for 27% of the total, while Sociology only reaches 22%. In Campania, the production of Economics and History scholars stands out, with 30 and 27% respectively of the total national figure. A significant share of the production of legal disciplines is also concentrated in Campania's Universities (14.7%). In Lombardy and Piedmont, sociologists stand out with percentages above

20% in the first case and 15% in the second. Political sciences (17%) and History (17%) are strongly represented in Tuscany.

Articles published in the selected time period were written by 930 authors. Analysis of the data shows that more than one third of the research products (37%) are the result of collaboration between two or more authors. Over the twenty years considered, the number of co-authorships increased by more than twenty percentage points: from 21% (1999-2003) to 43% (2014-2018). A figure that may reflect the consolidation of intra/inter-university collaboration networks. Mainly law scholars collaborate (31% with an average of 2.2 products per author), while sociologists, the most productive researchers with 6.7 products per author, are only 14.5% of the total [Figure 11]. This is followed by economists (11.6%), historians (6.3%) and psychologists (5.3%, with a production also in this case above the average of 5.6 products per author).

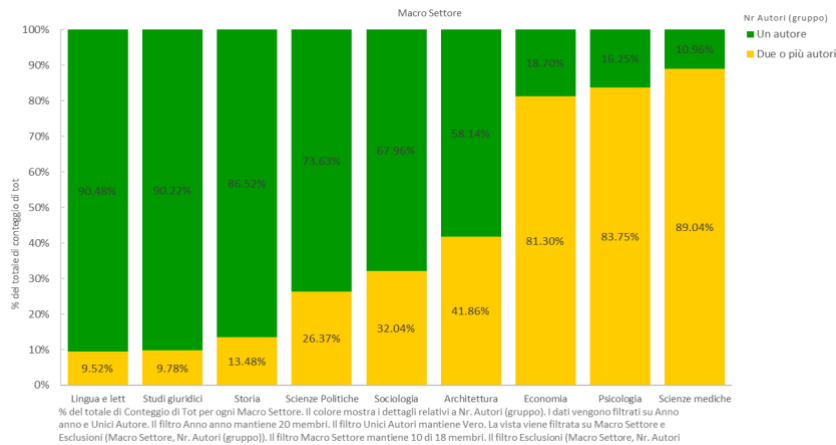


Figure 11| Percentage distribution of products with one or more authors by academic macro-sector.

Credits: Stefano D'Alfonso, Gaetano Manfredi.

Lingua e letteratura= Language and Literature; *studi giuridici*= Law Studies; *Storia*= History; *Scienze Politiche*= Political Sciences; *Sociologia*= Sociology; *Architettura*= Architecture; *Economia*= Economics; *Psicologia*= Psychology; *Scienze mediche*= Medicine; *totale complessivo*= Overall total

When it comes to gender distribution among authors, there is a clear gap: 64% are men and 36% are women. However, the gap decreased by over 9 percentage points over the years, with the share of female authors growing from 29.5% (1999-2003) to 38% (2014-2018). This rise was more marked in the north, with women making up 40% of the total in the north, compared to only around 30% in the south and centre. Looking at gender data by academic discipline, only two fields have more women than men: architecture (52% female) and psychology (61% female). However, it is important to note that these observations do not consider the overall gender distribution within each academic discipline.

5. Third Mission.

The density and variety of actions and products included under the Third Mission label today, made the results of the mapping undertaken for the

purposes of the *Review* less meaningful. For example, for summer and winter schools, a survey was carried out using the Google search engine and the engines present on the websites of the individual Universities, but the confusing data output made it hard to define an exhaustive mapping for the period under consideration. Therefore, it is probably necessary to recalibrate the methodologies in order to fill this gap in the review. More generally, these difficulties—connected to the difficulties faced by Universities when constructing databases on their third mission activities—highlight the need for a systematic and institutionalised collection and organisation of this type of information. The current uncertainty of the data prevents an accurate assessment of academic commitment on this front, which, in our opinion, runs the real risk of being underestimated. Such commitment emerges in all its relevance from the *Review*; above all, it is based on the increasingly leading role played by lecturers and researchers, who involve new recruits (PhDs, research fellows and PhD students), activate laboratories, observatories and research centres, and are involved in systematic public and civic engagement actions, as well as scientific communication and dissemination. Unequivocal strengths from this point of view are interdisciplinarity and the trend towards the development of inter-university collaborative networks. Above all, it is precisely the third mission activities that provide a more immediate visibility of the contribution that Universities can make to the study and understanding of mafia phenomena and corruption: a direct litmus test of their ability to respond to the students' (but not only) right to informed knowledge.

In this context we can place a recent initiative, developed in the University context and aimed at 'systemising' the University's scientific, educational and third-mission commitment on the subject of mafias, within the framework of the transmission of knowledge between soft-skills and lifelong learning. This initiative aimed to provide further room for the right to informed and continued knowledge, especially for those students who will become professionals, managers and decision-makers in the public sector. The initiative was developed within the Anti-mafia parliamentary committee and revolved around the relationship between professionals and mafia organisations.¹⁷ An ad hoc analysis has shown not only the dynamics characterising the phenomena of compromise between some professional categories and mafia groups, but also various critical points in terms of the deontological references and values of professionals, in particular those in the self-employed sector. In the light of this, specific fields of action were identified in which Universities could make their contribution, starting from the awareness of its role in the training of young students as future professionals, and of the potential cognitive support for the professionals themselves, within the deontological training courses planned by professional orders and

¹⁷ Stefano D'Alfonso, Aldo De Chiara, and Gaetano Manfredi, *Mafie e Libere Professioni: Come Riconoscere e Contrastare l'area Grigia* (Donzelli editore, 2018).

colleges, particularly those most interested in the phenomenon. In terms of University mission, therefore, the action straddled the gap between the three types of mission. This led to two online freely accessible *Moocs* (Massive Open Online Courses), *Mafie e libere professioni e Le sfide della Legalità*.¹⁸ Two teaching models were chosen that can be described in terms of soft-skills and lifelong learning. The transversal dimension of the topics dealt with in the online course justified the choice of not framing it in a specific discipline or teaching field. This choice was also supported by the aforementioned survey, which showed that compromise (or collusion), ascertained for example through convictions of mafia crimes in the courts or disciplinary proceedings by professional bodies, affects various professional categories: accountants, lawyers, doctors, engineers, architects and notaries. Therefore, the soft-skills approach may potentially lie in the area of interest of several degree courses, possibly chosen by Universities that are located in territories where mafias operate and where a higher 'job risk' has been detected. The lifelong learning perspective can respond to a demand for information and in-depth study for the entire span of (professional) life. This is an experiment, testing a foundation upon which one can imagine a dynamic contribution that the academic world could offer to students, the world of the professions and society as a whole, enhancing its role in transmitting the values of legality, with a competent and specialised focus on professional activities. An experiment which is replicable in other dimensions, albeit after applying the proper adjustments.

6. Conclusions.

The *Review of university teaching and research on mafias*, some essential aspects of which have been illustrated here, is aimed at:

- Promoting awareness of the contribution of Italian Universities, through education and prevention, to the fight against mafias and corruption;
- Highlighting forms and elements of the relationship that these institutions can build with local communities;
- Providing students and other subjects with the framework referents and expertise needed to study and understand mafia-type and corruption phenomena.

A few concluding remarks about these points can be summarised as follows.

Firstly, it seems clear that there is a mismatch between the intense research activity on the subject of mafias and corruption and the low presence of specific courses within degree programmes. This mismatch seems to suggest that Universities are focused on their role as containers of activities performed by their lecturers rather than on their function as

¹⁸ Available on the Federica Web Learning platform of the Federico II University, which can be accessed at this URL: federica.eu

organisations capable of deploying instruments and strategies for the fight against mafias and corruption. This can be explained by looking at “endogenous factors” which are dependent on structural components of the University system such as regulatory aspects, the organisation of teaching, the organisational choices of each University. However, only a more detailed analysis considering other aspects could shed more light on this sort of divergence.

Additionally, as has been pointed out, there is a low degree of territorial distribution of Universities that gear their teaching offer towards the subjects hereby considered. On the one hand, these activities are concentrated in mega and large Universities while on the other, this concentration is more substantial in the Universities of the North. Also in this case, several factors come into play, with endogenous factors intertwined with exogenous and agency-type ones. In particular, two factors seem to play a key role, namely the visibility of Universities and the specific features of local contexts. Assuming that the presence, in a certain University, of teams of scholars linking their research and studies to the subjects of mafia and corruption undoubtedly represents a strength, the data collected tell us that these teams are connected to mega and large Universities located in big cities. This is a position of relative advantage, at least in terms of infrastructures and services available and centrality of collaboration networks at the crossroads between different disciplines and research strands. All of the above generates a virtuous cycle which, on the one hand, increases visibility for these Universities and research groups and on the other facilitates the growth of the research networks. This represents a sort of cumulative advantage implying that the various opportunities for scientific research tend to accumulate in certain scholars or scientific organisations. This also concerns the identity of a University which may define itself as more or less local, national or international, with a subsequent fallout on its visibility and external perception by the outer world. Local contexts, as previously mentioned, have a certain weight not only in terms of socio-cultural features but also with regards to the demand for knowledge produced by Universities and potentially expressed by social or public organisations who may use it as a tool for the fight against illegality.

In conclusion, the data from the Review generally show a growing awareness on these issues among Italian Universities, but also increased awareness towards the needs expressed by local communities. More recent initiatives also show signs of this. For instance, the University of Milan, followed more recently by the University of Naples Federico II, have provided for specific delegations assigned by their Rectors, namely: Delegation on organised crime and education in anti-mafia culture; Delegation for activities aimed at disseminating anti-mafia culture. This testifies to the evident will to institutionalise the University as an autonomous research body knowingly positioned within the anti-mafia system, as a guarantee of constitutional rights. It also expresses the will

to establish liaison figures with the local communities, figures who are specifically committed to the dissemination of a properly informed anti-mafia culture.

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