

Editorial

Editorial

Felia Allum*

On behalf of the Standing Group on Organised Crime affiliated with the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR SGOC), my co-editors, Anita Lavorgna and Yuliya Zabyelina, and I are delighted to announce the online publication of the inaugural issue of *The European Review of Organised Crime* (EROC).

EROC has been on the SGOC's agenda since its inception in 2001, but it was only after a decade that the standing group was finally able to launch its own journal. Since 2001, the group slowly developed into a solid and organic research network with its own activities (a website, a regular newsletter, a blog, summer schools, conference panels, and edited volumes). In 2013, at the ECPR's 7th General Conference in Bordeaux, the group's Steering Committee felt that a dedicated journal would be an ideal vehicle for the group to build on its success as well as capture the diverse and multi-disciplinary interests of its members. In the same year, at the 31st Cambridge International Symposium on Economic Crime, a committee was formed to explore the best way to achieve this challenging goal. With the approval and encouragement of the ECPR, a new journal on organised crime was born.

During the 1990s, the study of organised crime seems to have formed a sub-discipline. Although the core subject is crime, this sub-discipline has never been a uniquely criminological subject. The broad scope of issues relating to the phenomenon has called for scholars and practitioners with different backgrounds to join in a collective effort to produce quality expertise about the topic.

The European Review of Organised Crime 1(1), 2014, 1-5

ISSN: 2312-1653

© ECPR Standing Group of Organised Crime.

For permissions please email: european.review.oc@gmail.com

It may seem like "a mad enterprise" to launch a new journal on organised crime when there already exist three well-established and reputable journals on this subject (*Crime, Law and Social Change*, *Global Crime*, and *Trends in Organized Crime*). But, there are good reasons to do so.

First, in academia, too often, different schools of thoughts develop and become stuck in their parochial ways, becoming embedded in dominant theoretical positions and thus allowing little

space for debate. While the presence of distinct schools of thought is fundamental to research, losing sight of non-conventional and alternative approaches may undermine its very foundations. From this point of view, EROC seeks to be a forum where different schools of thoughts can be presented without fear of being overlooked or ignored.

Second, we would like to break down the barriers that exist between academia and practitioners. Analysing organised crime means understanding a phenomenon that is more often than not presented and elaborated by law enforcement agencies, journalists, and NGOs activists. Our journal seeks to give them a voice, so that different perspectives, which go beyond academic discourse, can be presented. Indeed, they might raise some important questions or draw attention to issues disregarded by academic research. This is way, EROC hopes to encourage a dialogue between different parties, partners and actors working on organised crime who do not often communicate among themselves. We believe that this will not only be possible but also extremely useful, and that such dialogue will enrich emerging debates on organised crime.

Third, we believe that research on organised crime at international level is mainly dominated by the Anglo-Saxon tradition. In EROC, we want to encourage non-native speakers of English and early career professionals to submit their work in order to make their voices heard and their opinions discussed. We will seek to help and collaborate to bring their manuscripts into academic English to give them international resonance.

Last, as the current landscape of academic publishing is rapidly changing, we would like to be stakeholders in this process rather than passive bystanders. By creating our own journal we believe we can also participate in shaping the future of academic publishing, which is undergoing slow reform from subscription publications paid by university libraries towards publicly funded scientific research that is free for everyone. For this particular reason, EROC is free for authors to publish and free for readers to access; in other words, complete open access. Neither our authors nor EROC's readers have to pay a publication fee; this is its unique feature. We are also dedicated to publishing articles rapidly; we aim to publish articles within six months of submission as we are adopting a rolling deadline structure for submissions in order to maximise the potential of our digital platform and publish manuscripts as they are accepted rather than wait for a set deadline.

We hope that you will enjoy the content of our first issue, which reflects the nature and balance of articles and topics that we seek to publish. We have a good mix of original articles, practitioners' insights, research notes, and debates.

In this first issue, you will find Robert Lombardo (Loyola University, USA) who evaluates the impact of the Chicago Area Project, a juvenile delinquency prevention association based in Chicago on preventing young people from pursuing a life of organised adult crime. The research Lombardo conducted in Chicago's Italian communities provides valuable empirical details and offers support for the social disorganisation and the differential social organisation theories.

Carina Gunnarson (Uppsala University, Sweden) examines the *Addiopizzo* anti-mafia campaign started by private businesses in Palermo in 2004. Based on an original dataset collected from 277 firms that joined the *Addiopizzo* campaign and from interviews with almost 100 entrepreneurs, this article is an interesting contribution to the body of knowledge about civic movements against crime and corruption.

An in-depth comparative analysis of approaches to preventing organised crime in Australia and the Netherlands is presented by Julie Ayling (Australian National University, Canberra). This article evaluates the preventive strategies in both countries, arguing in favour of the Dutch administrative approach - an example of a situational crime prevention policy that is not primarily aimed at the perpetrators of organised crime but rather at the various circumstances that facilitate it.

We are also keen to publish research notes that raise some important methodological questions. As opposed to full research papers, research notes follow a less strict structural and methodological rigidity but nevertheless can make a valuable contribution to the literature. For instance, José Carlos Cisneros Guzmán (Autonomous University of Sinaloa, Mexico) offers ethnographic research notes on the role of women in cartels in which he describes their different profiles. This note is full of fascinating insights and details about the lives and criminal careers of women working in drug-trafficking cartels that the author has obtained from multiple field trips to Sinaloa—Mexico's northwest state. The research note by Fabio Armao (University of Turin, Italy) is a thought-provoking theoretical contribution that offers an interesting revision of the complex relationship between states, businesses, and organised crime in the era of globalisation. He seeks to understand how mafias move across borders (through two phases: 'entrenchment' and 'expansion') and contends that regardless of the myriad of risks it poses to contemporary societies, organised crime plays an important social and economic function. By satisfying the public demand for illicit goods and services, organised crime has thus secured a niche as an indispensable actor in modern political, military, and socioeconomic relations.

In addition, the readers will find a debate essay by Leticia Elias and Arco Timmermans (University of Leiden, Netherlands), in which they discuss the conceptual ambiguity of the concept "organised crime" and the consequences of this for policymaking in the EU. The authors focus on the influence of policy dynamics and agenda setting on organised crime as the latter appeared on the list of concerns of the European Council. Importantly (especially in the light of the recent European elections), their discussion relates to a wide set of European Council's policy patterns and institutional transformations that may appeal to a larger audience working on issues that go beyond the study of organised crime.

We are privileged to publish two major practitioners' insights. We have an article written by Franco Roberti, Italy's National Antimafia Prosecutor. In his piece, he reflects upon the pervasive role of Italian mafias in the global economy. Stan Gilmour, Detective superintendent for Thames Valley Police (UK), discusses a completely different type of problem, the challenges which law enforcement agencies are encountering in the policing of cyberspace.

Sadly, this issue also includes an obituary by Jana Arsovska (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, USA) of Professor William J. Chambliss, Professor of Sociology at George Washington University whose books greatly contributed in shaping our understanding of organised crime.

This inaugural issue is a great team effort. Thanks are due first to SGOC's Steering Committee, where the idea originated, for supporting it so wholeheartedly. Thanks are also due to the ECPR for their unfailing support, in particular, Martin Bull, Rebecca Knappett Gethen, and Mark Kench as well Kara Jones at the University of Bath Library (Research Services) for all her advice. But, most of all, thanks are due to my co-editors, Anita Lavorgna (University of Wolverhampton, UK) and Yuliya Zabyelina (University of Edinburgh, UK), who have so generously given their time and expertise to make this project happen. Their diligence, professionalism, and attention to detail have made it a real pleasure to work. Special thanks go to Eleonora Forte, Chris Bowkett, and Steven Wonnacott for proofreading, editing, advertising, and translating EROC's manuscripts.

Like all peer-reviewed journals, EROC is a joint project together with reviewers who give their time to comment and evaluate the quality of manuscripts submitted and we would very much like to thank them for their time and precious feedback.

I hope that EROC will serve as a unique catalyst for the advancement of the study of organised crime as well as being an interactive venue and an international meeting place for expanding and provoking new thinking about contemporary forms of delinquency, justice, and social control in a rapidly changing world.

Qu'on se le dise ! But above all, enjoy !

*Felia Allum is lecturer in politics and Italian in the Department of Politics, Languages and International Studies, University of Bath, Claverton Down, Bath BA2 7AY, UK. She is also convenor of the ECPR Standing group on Organised crime. Email: f.s.allum@bath.ac.uk