

PhD program in Statistics

DSS Statistics Seminar

May 24, 2024, 12:00

In person Room 34 (CU002)

Webinar [https://uniroma1.zoom.us/j/86881977368?pwd=SWRFc](https://uniroma1.zoom.us/j/86881977368?pwd=SWRFcVFjMDZTa0lXZk05TE1zNm5adz09)

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SOIL CONSUMPTION and organized crime

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Soil is a non-renewable natural resource providing ecosystem services essential for life. Soil consumption is the increase in artificial land cover through anthropogenic activities. While standard economic variables (population and GDP growth) appear to have limited predictive power for soil consumption, the recent literature on the mutually beneficial relationship between criminal organizations (“mafias”) and local politicians/administrators suggest a role for the presence and strength of mafias at the local level. We contribute to the literature by providing direct evidence of the link between soil consumption and mafia strength in the Southern Italian region of Apulia using a rich dataset at the fine municipality level that we created by merging information from a variety of sources. We show that alternative measures of the local strength of organized crime help improve substantially our predictions of soil consumption, both total soil consumption and soil consumption in protected areas. Under a plausible instrumental variable assumption, we also provide a quantitative assessment of the causal effect of the local strength of organized crime on soil consumption.



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