



The European Union and Organized Crime

The Securitization of Organized Crime and its Embedment in the Construction of a risk-based Security Policy

Helena Costa Carrapiço
PhD thesis defence on 14th June, 2010

Abstract

In its current discourse, the European Union depicts organized crime as a growing threat to democracy, to the functioning of markets and to the safety of its citizens. The EU's discourse presents this phenomenon, in particular, as an external aggressor that is taking advantage of the free circulation and establishment entailed by the Single Market, of the globalization in general and of technological advances. European societies, on the other hand, are understood as helpless victims, as their traditional responses are no longer able to cope with the recently acquired transnational dimension of organized crime.

Following this reasoning, the EU has been developing protection mechanisms- in order to safeguard the citizens and the society in general against organized crime-, based on a so- called common understanding of this phenomenon. Because of this effort, we have been witnessing the strengthening of police and judicial cooperation, the development of comprehensive strategies and programmes, and the creation of new bodies and working groups to face this problem, all in the name of a greater efficiency. This trend has gradually been accentuated through the introduction of new legislation and the pressure of particular events such as the Falcone and Borsellino assassinations in 1992 and the terrorist attacks of 2001, 2004 and 2005. The outcome of this process has been the setting up of a complex structure made of numerous repressive and preventive instruments, where law enforcement agencies have gained increased powers and the emphasis has been put on security rather than on the liberty of European citizens.

Bearing this background in mind, this research project aims at understanding how organized crime came to be considered by the European Union as such a serious threat. Departing from a social constructivist approach, it wishes to gain a deeper knowledge of the European Union's understanding of organized crime and to underline its constructed character. In particular, the project attempts to look into the securitization of organized crime through the specific cases of three EU agencies: Europol, Eurojust and Frontex. The Copenhagen School's theoretical background, together with discourse analysis, are used to trace how each of these three institutions contributed to the securitization of organized crime and the constitution of the current discourse on organized crime



Jury: Friedrich Kratochwil (EUI) (Supervisor), Helena Carrapiço (candidate), Sven Steinmo (EUI), Jef Huysman (The Open University), Monica Den Boer (VUA/Police Academy)

Helena Carrapiço currently holds a post- doctoral fellowship at the Institute for European Integration Research of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, where she is conducting research under the orientation of Professor Gerda Falkner. Helena has recently concluded her PhD thesis at the European University Institute, in Florence, under the supervision of Professor Friedrich Kratochwil. The defence is scheduled for the 14th of June 2010. Since 2005, she has become increasingly interested in European internal security from a Critical Security Studies perspective, specifically in the development of the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice and the policy area dealing with organized crime. Her previous position, prior to starting her PhD, was as a researcher at the Portuguese Ministry of Defense. Helena also holds a Master of Science in Political Sciences (Strategic Studies) from the Portuguese Catholic University (2005) and a Master of Arts in European Studies from the College of Europe (2003).