



# Economics Seminars

Friday 5 December 2025 at 12:00

**Aula Anfiteatro**

Facoltà di Scienze Economiche Giuridiche e Politiche - Viale Sant'Ignazio 17

## Maria Carreri

Bocconi University

### **Political Corruption and Bureaucratic Performance. Evidence from Mafia-Infiltrated Municipalities**

**Abstract.** How does political corruption affect bureaucratic performance? Existing research has examined corruption within bureaucracies and among elected officials separately, but the interaction between the two remains underexplored. We study this relationship in the context of Italian municipalities dissolved for mafia infiltration, a rare intervention that removes elected officials and places local administrations under the control of external commissioners. Using a difference-in-differences design with matched controls based on a machine-learning index of infiltration risk, we find that dissolutions improve bureaucratic performance, as measured by shorter payment delays. We explore possible mechanisms behind this effect by leveraging the rich body of text comprising the investigative reports leading to municipal dissolutions, as well as by studying how this intervention affects bureaucratic composition and turnover. Our results show that the negative effect of political corruption on government performance is magnified by its negative impact on bureaucratic capacity.