

Riccardo Martinelli

RESEARCH FELLOW - PHD CANDIDATE

Contacts

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Research Profile

My research examines the end-of-life trajectories of photovoltaic modules across Europe and Ghana, focusing on how classification and valuation processes performatively constitute panels as reusable commodities, waste or sources of secondary raw materials. Through multi-sited, mixed-methods research, I investigate recycling, repair, reuse, informal material recovery and the transnational circulation of second-hand solar technologies. More broadly, I explore how the boundaries between waste, commodity and resource are produced and contested, and how green capitalism reorganises material flows and generates uneven social and environmental consequences.

Current employment

Research Fellow

Italian National Research Council – IRPPS, CNR Rome, Italy

June 2024 - present

Collaborating in the ERC “Project Illicit Labour: Unveiling the Dark Sides of the Global Photovoltaic Industry”

PhD Candidate in Sociology & Applied Social Research

Sapienza University of Rome

November 2024 - Present

Supervisor: Dr Carlo Inverardi-Ferri (Queen Mary University of London / CNR)

Thesis: “Recycling as a Dispositif The Cultural Political Ecology of Devaluation and Revalorisation in the PV Industry”

Past employment and visiting fellowships

Visiting Researcher (PhD Visiting Student)

University of Oxford, School of Geography and the Environment

Oxford, United Kingdom

November 2025- March 2026

Research Assistant

Institute for Research on Population and Social Policies - CNR

Rome, Italy

November 2023 - June 2024

Research Assistant

University of Turin, Green Office UnitoGo - Dora District Cultural Revitalisation Project

Turin, Italy

June 2023 - July 2023

Visiting Fellowship

Universitatea Babeş-Bolyai

Cluj Napoca, Romania

March 2023 - June 2023

Master's Research Intern

Institute for Research on Population and Social Policies - CNR

Rome, Italy

November 2022 - December 2022

Freelance Data Analyst

Fiverr

Remote

January 2022 - March 2022 & September 2022 - November 2022

Research Assistant

Research Institute Carlo Cattaneo

Bologna, Italy

March 2019 - September 2019

Undergraduate Research Intern

Research Institute Carlo Cattaneo

Bologna, Italy

January 2019 - March 2019

Education

University of Turin

Master's Degree in Sociology and Social Research

September 2020 - July 2023

Thesis: "Lives in the Gallery: Participant Observation with Homeless People in Turin"

Final Grade: 110/110 cum laude

Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna

Bachelor's Degree in Sociology

September 2016 - March 2020

Thesis: "Analysis of the Evolution of the Northern League: From *Senatùr* to Captain"

International Summer School in Political Ecology

University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana (Slovenia)

30 June – 4 July 2025

Intensive programme focused on political ecology, environmental justice, and governance frameworks.

Scholarships and Grants

ERC PhD Scholarship – European Research Council

Illicit Labour: Unveiling the Dark Sides of the Global Photovoltaic Industry (Grant ID: 101077766)

July 2024 – July 2028

Amount: €27,000 gross/year (total €108,000 over 4 years)

Mobility Grant – Sapienza University of Rome

Funding for international research stay (University of Oxford)

November 2025 – March 2026

Amount: €5,400

Project Excellence Scholarship - University of Turin

Project Title: "Gender Gap in Voting"

September 2022

Amount: 1,500€

Publications

Peer-reviewed journal articles (under review)

Martinelli, R., Lovreglio, J., Anwesha, A., Inverardi-Ferri, C. (2026). Recycling as a Dispositif: The Cultural Political Ecology of Devaluation and Revalorisation in the PV Industry. Under review at *Economy & Society*.

Peer-reviewed journal articles

Lovreglio, J., Martinelli, R., Aditi, A., & Inverardi-Ferri, C. (2026). Solar imaginaries: territorial enclosures and renewable energy politics in Puglia. *Geoforum*, 175, 104751.

Book Chapters

Martinelli, R. (2024). Da writer ad artista: verso un'estetica autorizzata. In S. Turcio & C. Pennacchiotti (Eds.), *La società italiana nelle interperie del nuovo millennio* (pp. 161-177). IRPPS - CNR.

Valbruzzi, M., Martinelli, R., Panaro, A. V., & Soliman, S. (2019). Che programmi avete per le europee? Un'analisi delle proposte politiche dei partiti. In M. Valbruzzi & R. Vignati (a cura di), *L'Italia sovranista e la sfida all'Europa: Le elezioni europee ed amministrative 2019*. Bologna: Istituto di ricerca Cattaneo.

Edited Volumes

Cuoco, G., & Martinelli, R. (Eds.). (2024). *Pace, guerra e democrazia. Carteggio Norberto Bobbio–Daniele Archibugi 1984–1999*. Quaderni di Scienza & Politica, 15.

Reports

Valbruzzi, M., & Martinelli, R. (2019). *Elezioni amministrative in Sicilia 2019: Chi ha vinto, chi ha perso*. Bologna: Istituto Cattaneo. Available at: <https://www.cattaneo.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Analisi-Istituto-Cattaneo-Elezioni-amministrative-in-Sicilia-2019-Valbruzzi-e-Martinelli-1.pdf>

Academic conferences and seminars

Riccardo Martinelli, Julian Lovreglio, Anwesha Aditi & Carlo Inverardi-Ferri, *Illicit Solar Waste Flows: How Definitions Shape Value and Risk*, GCEG 2028, Worcester (MA), US, 4th June 2025

Julian Lovreglio, Riccardo Martinelli, Anwesha Aditi & Carlo Inverardi-Ferri, *Solar territories: Geoeconomics, land enclosures, and the contradictions of renewable energy in Puglia*, GCEG 2025, Worcester (MA), US, 4th June 2025

Riccardo Martinelli, *Illicit Solar Waste Flows: How Definitions Shape Value and Risk*, John Cabot University, Rome, Italy, 25th March 2025

Conference and seminar series organisation

Organising Committee Assistant - 8th Global Conference on Economic Geography, CNR & Sapienza, Rome, September 2028.

Co-organiser and Moderator – Book Presentation: *The Politics of Migrant Labour*

Authors: Gabriella Alberti (University of Leeds) and Devi Sacchetto (University of Padua), CNR-IRPPS, Rome, 1 April 2025.

Editorial work

Peer Reviewer - *Territory, Politics, Governance* (Q1 journal) — since 2025

Teaching

Guest Lecture – Environmental Economics and Sustainable Development, MA Programme in Industrial Engineering (Professor Daniele Archibugi and Professor Dominique Lepore)
Universitas Mercatorum | 23-24 March 2026 & 29-30 October 2025

Guest Lecture – Thesis Project Working Lab, MA Programme in Sociology for Sustainability and Global Processes (Professor Giulio Moini and Professor Edoardo Esposto)
Sapienza University of Rome | 15 April 2025

Software

Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis: NVivo, Stata, Python, R
Productivity and Visual Communication: Microsoft Office Suite, Canva, Mailchimp

Language skills

Italian: Native
English: B2 - Upper Intermediate
German: A2 - Elementary Proficiency

Academic references

Dr Carlo Inverardi-Ferri

Senior Lecturer in Economic Geography
Queen Mary University of London / National Research Council of Italy (CNR)
Email: carlo.inverardiferri@cnr.it
Role: PhD Supervisor

Professor Giulio Moini

Professor of Political Sociology
Sapienza University of Rome
Email: giulio.moini@uniroma1.it
Role: Academic Mentor

Professor Daniele Archibugi

Professor of Innovation, Governance and Public Policy
Birkbeck, University of London / National Research Council of Italy (CNR)
Email: danielle.archibugi@cnr.it
Role: Past Reference

Dr Tiziana Nazio

Associate Professor of Sociology
University of Turin
Email: tiziana.nazio@unito.it
Role: Past Reference