

CRIMINALITY, POPULATION AND POLICE. SOME BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SUGGESTIONS FROM A CASE STUDY

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Abstract: *The author of this article has been committed for several years to the study of a comparative history which focuses on the presence and influence of illegal networks in the working-class neighbourhoods of twentieth-century cities. From this analysis has emerged the necessity to explore the characteristics of, and the reasons for, the alternation of conflictual and sympathetic behaviours among 'working-class cultures' and those expressed by marginal social strata. More specifically, this study is being carried out by comparing the cases of the three cities of Barcelona, Milan and Marseille in the period between the end of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century. Starting from this comparative study, then, this article will suggest a series of readings while showing three important themes in the bibliographical panorama: the "ultimate causes" of criminality; what is and what is not "organised criminality"; the quantitative theme.*

Keywords: Criminality, police, population, social history, neighbourhoods.

INTRODUCTION: FROM WHICH STUDIES THIS BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ITINERARY ORIGINATES

The author of this article has been committed for several years to the study of a comparative history which focuses on the presence and influence of illegal networks in the working-class neighbourhoods of twentieth-century cities. From this analysis has emerged the necessity to explore the characteristics of, and the reasons for, the alternation of conflictual and sympathetic behaviours among 'working-class cultures' and those expressed by marginal social strata. More specifically, this study is being carried out by comparing the cases of the three cities of Barcelona, Milan and Marseille in the period between the end of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century: the cases of Milan and Marseille have already been dealt with in a recent volume [Vergallo, 2016]. The choice of these case studies favours the analysis of the phenomenon, since the dynamics of the French city were similar to the dynamics which would take place later in Barcelona and Milan: thus, it is possible to argue that, for this reason, all three cities are connected to each other by criminal episodes. For instance, in the 1920^s and 1930^s, Barcelona was the point of landing and transit for those white

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women who were victims of the huge trafficking organised in Marseille¹. Moreover, these three cities have experienced immigration. Yet, working migrants settled down in neighbourhoods which, from the point of view of their ethnic origin, were rather heterogenous in Milan and, on the contrary, very homogeneous in Marseille and Barcelona [Dell’Umbria, 2006].

Immigration is tightly tied with the dynamics of criminality, not much, or not only, because of the action of migrants, rather because both phenomena of immigration and criminality are the by-product of – or at least they are heavily influenced by – economic transformations which have perturbed urban communities on manifold levels. The small organised crime in Milan at the beginning of the twentieth century was radically different from the one which emerged between the 1950^s and the 1960^s, when Italy became an industrialised country, with millions of people shifting from the agricultural sector to the industrial one and from region to region. On the contrary, the small organised crime in Marseille has always shown a certain continuity: the most relevant breaks stemmed from a process of growth and monopolisation of illegal traffics which has followed the similar process of legal economy [Monzini, 1999]. Instead, Milan and Marseille are similar if we take into account the centrality acquired by a new and different social conflict generated by the contradictory urban growth: this exploded rapidly at the turn of the twentieth century in Marseille, with the arrival of huge masses of foreigners uprooted from their social fabric, *in primis* Italians (which, it is worth mentioning, according to the 1911 census were one fifth of the local population), and only after the Second World War, as it is known, in Milan, particularly between the 1950^s and 1970^s. In this paper, though, it will be interesting to analyse the case of Barcelona with a focus on the first part of the century, namely the case study that this author is currently dealing with.

THE HISTORICAL PROBLEM OF THIS CASE STUDY: HOW SCHOLARS HAVE LOOKED AT IT

Generally, there is no lack of studies on the three cities taken into account. On the one hand, a great deal of works have not been able to avoid banalising the phenomenon of criminality by creating the myth of ‘good’ delinquency; on the other hand, more innovative studies on neighbourhoods have mainly dealt with the family and free time perspective [Foot, 1997] or with the battles for a house [Agustoni, 2007]. Promising but isolated pioneering attempts have been carried out by architects and urbanists [Consonni, Tonon, 1981]. Nevertheless, historical works – especially those with an interdisciplinary approach – on the relations

¹ As reconstructed thanks to the 1930^s documentation collected at the Archives départementales des Bouches-du-Rhône, Marseille, in the papers of the archival series 4M (police) 2270, file “affaires Pigeyre et autres”.

between working-class world, big criminality and social marginality are still rare [Musso, 1997]. This is also true for the Spanish case, where research on social deviance and criminality has not been the main focus of recent historiography². If at all, these topics have been dealt with in anecdotal and amateur-biographical forms, or considered secondary or subsidiary to more numerous studies of history of institutions, eminent personalities, social and political movements and economic history. From the 1970^s, scholars have gradually lost interest in the analysis and understanding of delinquents as fundamental elements for social configuration and for the relations between social configuration and power. It is possible to argue that, nonetheless, it is not fortuitous that *franchismo*, and more generally politico-institutional structures, have been the main subject of scholarly attention in Spain, where, from that moment onwards, research has hardly ever dealt with social history (although Spain has a long tradition of this kind of studies) and much less with cultural history or with ‘daily’ life [Gómez Westermeyer, 2006].

PERSPECTIVE OF THIS RESEARCH

The comparative history of the neighbourhoods of Barcelona (and therefore of Milan and Marseille) is explored through the models and the interpretations adopted by social history. In order to better appreciate the complexity of a social fabric where the boundaries between economy and underground economy have never been clear-cut, it is useful to carry out a study that takes into account the single neighbourhoods: this will help explain why, for example, small criminality - unlike the better-structured and more violent criminality [Regnard, 2009, Montel, 2007] by which it was followed (or into which it transformed) – could sometimes find ‘protection’ and ‘comprehension’ by the police. From this viewpoint, it appears how, both in Marseille and in Milan, police forces have historically tolerated a great deal of the non-violent criminal activities adopted by small criminals for improving their own life condition, consistently with the “*regole del disordine*” (rules of disorder) suggested by Salvatore Palidda [2006]; i.e. with the tacit pact that such practices did not cross certain lines and, more importantly, did not compromise the balance of the system. Yet, sometimes, this pattern has turned the existential solidarity into a proper complicity or even into the sharing of some illegal markets. It is interesting to examine the applicability of this model also to the case of Barcelona.

The story of neighbourhoods is now finished and today it can be studied by historians because, after the end of the 1980^s, simultaneously with the first processes of deindustrialization and, above all, by virtue of a clear tendency to

² Note should be taken of some exceptions: Bascuñán Añover, 2005; F. Cobo Romero, S. Cruz Artacho, M. González de Molina, 1993; C. Mir, C. Agustí, J. Gelonch, 2005; F. Sánchez Marroyo, 1989; P. Trinidad Fernández, 1989.

move factories outside the urban fabric, working-class neighbourhoods have almost completely disappeared and so have the city traditional forms of social life *per rioni* (by districts)

Thus, the aim of this research is to create a comparative history of Barcelona, Milan and Marseille from 1898 and 1936, years which in Spain start with the Hispano-American war and the constitution of the so-called 'generation of '98' and end with the beginning of the civil war, periodising events also from the perspective of criminality. The focus to which it is necessary to pay attention are the *malavita* capability of economic penetration and the contamination effect that crime exerted on the most traditional working-class cultures (pride of the job, cooperative and party solidarity) and on the activity of local political organisations. It will be thus useful to explore the questions linked to the use of the territory which are normally preserve of urban history.

THE CRUCIAL QUESTIONS AT THE BASIS OF THIS RESEARCH AND HOW THEY HAVE BEEN DEALT WITH BY THE ISTORIOGRAPHICAL LITERATURE

Starting from this comparative study, then, this article will suggest a series of readings while showing three important themes in the bibliographical panorama, so that a framework – although inevitably and deliberately incomplete – of the most recent research on criminality can be given.

1. **The *ultimate causes of criminality*.** At a more general level, among the main subjects explored, stand out the historiographical analyses about the protagonists of the public discourse on crime, e.g. the scholars of the several fields on the one hand, and reporters, journalists, writers on the other hand; but also the *social* interpretations of the phenomenon which have mainly investigated the existence of the 'ultimate causes' of illegality, that is to say *what* encourages to commit a crime. Naturally, the economic factor has been a common explanation. Nevertheless, this ground is rather slippery for historians. Paul Lawrence has reminded how Clive Emsley insisted on the fact that criminality tends to be a class-related problem, not in the sense that indigence is necessarily a cause of criminality, but in the sense that poverty is the hallmark of many well-known criminals. This opinion is, after all, quite agreed by British scholars [Lawrence, 2000, p. 63]. Yet, before reasoning on the economic conditions that lead to crime, it is worth mentioning that some historiography has justly shown how such filiation sometimes happens by virtue of a different process, namely when a negative historical conjuncture, rather than directly producing criminals, introduced laws that criminalised certain behaviours, thus generating new forms of offences. This point of view has been emphasised by Claire C. Robertson, who has insisted on the

fact that “criminalising many survival-oriented strategies of an underclass makes it inevitable that they will break the law” [Robertson, 2007, p. 14, digital edition]. This has certainly been the case of the manifold forms of police supervision in Europe: following even short periods of imprisonment, these made reinsertion of delinquents to society basically impossible. The surveillance was so strict, oppressive and restrictive that ex-prisoners were isolated: few people wanted to host them – given the possibility of controls by the police at any time [Vergallo, 2016] – much less to give them a job: “The ‘admistered’ were often sacked by their employers and had to leave after the revelations of their infamous past” [Müller, 2010, p. 60]. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, this has also been the case of the Canadian criminal code and of the increasing firearms controls which were strongly influenced by the economic conjunctures and which made illegal, especially for migrants, the possession of offensive weapons [Pelletier, 2002]. Moreover, although tending to associate poverty and criminality, both British and French historiography seem to stress, rather than economic causes, individual responsibilities – and vice –, particularly substance abuse and, above all, alcohol abuse. More generally – and this is also valid for policemen when their ‘memoirs’ are subject of in-depth study – the perception is strong that ‘the poor’ were pushed to commit crimes by the combined effects of unemployment, local physical closeness to criminals and physical and moral decadence caused by vice and deprivation [Lawrence, 2000], something which has been amply shown also for the early twentieth-century French debate [Le Quang Sang, 2002]. Other studies have found this kind of analysis applicable to the colonial context, since in very poor cities, where the market of goods which could be stolen was much broader (because a light bulb or an old t-shirt were worth a very high use-value), most of crimes came from poverty: “Western criminological theories appear to have some relevance in the East African context. The structural causes identified by Durkheim and Merton in modern industrial societies are applicable; where individual ambitions were often thwarted by the poor opportunities for personal improvement, with the subsequent frustration leading to a sense of normlessness and in some cases eventually to crime” [Burton, 2004, p. 6, digital edition]. This viewpoint seems to be agreed by Francesca Locatelli, who has studied the case of Asmara: “Whether opportunistic or originating from real needs, the nature and development of theft in colonial Asmara seem to have emerged primarily from new forms of poverty caused by the economic policy of the Italian administration” [Locatelli, 2007, p. 243]. Moreover, back in May 1918, dealing with delinquent youth and with post-war periods, Edith Abbott – in an appropriate attempt at problematizing the evidence coming from data – had emphasized, rather than poverty per se, the pernicious lack of paternal advice on these young people, who, in most cases, had committed crimes in a state of deep drunkenness [Abbott, 1918]. More specifically, in the case of Barcelona, Christopher Ealham wrote, instead, of a *criminogenic city*, a city where in 1931 the 75% of death were caused by hunger and malnutrition,

with a mortality rate among infants triple, for instance, the Dutch one. In Barrio Xino, considered the most dangerous neighbourhood in the city, population density was more than 1,000 people per square kilometre, one of the highest in Europe. In such miserable and unhealthy context, raids to the detriment of food shops were extremely frequent, something which, besides explaining the definition of Barcelona as a criminogenic city, “revealed the refusal of many of the jobless passively to accept sickness and hunger within a world that had apparently declared war on the urban poor” [Ealham, 1995, p. 141]. From a similar theoretical approach seems to come Stefan Slater’s analysis, which defines prostitution as a “conscious choice by working-class women to improve their lot” [Slater, 2009, p. 29]. Prostitution – excluding the coercion which many women had to undergo – is understood, once again, as a strategy motivated by survival, notwithstanding the differences and the heterogeneity among women with respect to their life stories: “The impossibility in discerning psychological traits from the sources, combined with the heterogeneous composition of the prostitute ‘class’, renders reducing prostitutes to a category or typology a fruitless task. While contemporaries concentrated on trying to elucidate such motives, there is no doubt that poverty was a strong factor in leading women into prostitution” [Slater, 2009, p. 35]. Naturally, to conclude, among the ‘ultimate causes’ of criminality it is essential to mention the racial factor, which is not scrutinised here, but which has been dealt with by, among many others, Jean Claud Vimont – who has also explored the “stéréotypes sur les ‘délinquants constitutionnels ethniques’” [2009] – and by Paul Lawrence, who has dwelt on the impact of the stereotypes against *Gitanos* in the memoirs of English and French policemen [Lawrence, 2000].

2. What is organised criminality? A topic that deserves more scholarly attention is certainly the distinction of big and small criminality, namely between *malavita strictu sensu* and organised criminality and how they can be distinguished. This author has considered appropriate [Vergallo, 2016] to distinguish big and small criminality, in the first place, on the basis of the capability – or incapability – to impose (horizontally and, at least partially, vertically) an effective control over the territory and, in the second place, on the basis of the adoption – or non-adoption – of rules and codes which would last in the course of time. According to this meaning, for example, in the specific Italian case, only mafia and *camorra*, and later on *‘ndrangheta* and *Sacra Corona Unita* are to be excluded from the realm of common crime. On the contrary, part of this are thieves, robbers, small smugglers and exploiters of women at the beginning of the twentieth century. Some figures of big Marseilles *caïd* – e.g. case studies better known to this author – and Milanese gangsters can be situated in the middle and, as will be seen, represent a transit point between the two forms of criminality. Alexandre Marchant [2012] and Cesare Mattina [2014] have conveniently insisted on the preposterousness of some myths like the French connection. In particular, Marchant has deconstructed three stereotypes connected with drug traffic in France: the ideas that it was a well-

structured, centralised chain, directed and controlled by the Corsican milieu in Marseille; the idea that state power had let them free to operate until it became impossible after the start of the ‘war on drugs’ in the United States; the idea that once this chain was stricken, it and its satellite-activities disappeared completely. These three stereotypes, thus, prevent us from identifying a proper mafia – a group capable to impose a sole command – on the French territory. Also Stefan Slater, mentioned above, has indirectly touched upon these distinctions when he specified how there was no unified control over prostitution in London between the two wars: “It is established that no group ‘controlled’ prostitution in London, though a number of foreigners were involved in marriage-of-convenience rackets and assisting the passage of foreign prostitutes to the metropolis. Contrary to media concern, foreigners constituted only a minority of women involved in prostitution” [Slater, 2009]. Similar questions are also considered by Andrew Burton [2004]. Yet, in the opinion of the author of the present article, Burton has overestimated the level of ‘organization’ of the gangs related to Dar es Salaam by him studied; moreover, he has spoken of organised crime without thinking of a *mafia* and without considering the distinctions stressed above. Nevertheless, it appears the necessity of considering organised crime as a historiographical category to be used in a precise way and in opposition to criminalities of a different kind: “In addition to rates of recidivism, a further measure of the degree to which crime becomes professionalised is the extent of co-operation among criminals. In the case of Dar es Salaam, it is noteworthy that organised crime was at an extremely low level throughout the colonial period, criminals tending to operate singly or in pairs, although this appeared to be changing towards the end of the period when gang activity seems to have become much more common. There is some evidence of criminals collaborating in their activities in the earliest years of British Rule [...] It was until after the Second World War that more widespread and serious gang activity in Dar es Salaam began to be recorded” [Burton, 2004, p. 17, digital edition]. A case, all in all, that reminds us more of the conflict between gangs in early twentieth-century France or in 1960^s Milan, rather than ‘military crime’ in the full meaning of the term [“Intensified police activity, however, was failing to prevent a trend towards more organised crime, which by the final years of colonial rule appears to have reached a peak [...] Organised crime, which was rare under colonial rule, proliferated after independence with newspaper reports of gang activity growing in frequency”; Burton, 2004, pp. 17-18]; whereas, on the contrary, the analysis of the professionalization of the criminal activities is pertinent and of great interest.

3. **The quantitative theme.** Among the manifold approaches adopted in the studies on criminality, this author is convinced that the most slippery is maybe the quantitative one³. It is true what François Fenchel wrote, i.e. that, for instance,

³ It is crucial to take into account the interesting debate between historians appeared in the fifth volume, issue n. 2 of the review “Crime, Histoire & Sociétés”, regarding which see in particular Monkkonen, 2001; Aubusson de Cavarlay, 2001; Thome, 2001; Spierenburg, 2001.

statistics on release from prison represent to a certain extent the real “crime au sens strict, c’est-à-dire celui faisant l’objet d’une condamnation formelle” [Fenichel, 2011, p. 6]. Nevertheless, reconstructing a history of criminality relying on statistics, for example, that show the number of different kinds of crimes, the number of arrests, the number of punishments or murders seems a challenging, and probably useless, exercise, as too many and too diverse variables can influence the trend of the historical series.

To what extent, for example, are we able to attribute the decrease in crimes numbers or the increase in arrests numbers, or the increase or decrease in punishments to an effective regression of the phenomenon, or, on the contrary, to better police activities [insightful considerations about this and about the possible relation between number of policemen and crime can be found in Monkkonen, 1982] or to a different efficiency of tribunals [on these reflections, it is interesting to see what Taylor, 1998, maintains]? In this sense, in this particular field of historical research numbers are not very useful. To give an example, in a recent volume on ‘prison industry’ in Italy, one of the tables proposed explained how, from 1871 and 1876, the 49,6% of the detainees were peasants, and only the 0,7% were vagrants, beggars or prostitutes. Without questioning the undeniable value of the study taken into account, this is one of those cases in which it is possible to maintain that the sources lead to discover something irrelevant, if not little sensible. In the same book, on the contrary, the author suggests some figures connected with the number and the ‘movement’ of detained population, while contextualising them and showing what we are insisting on now, namely the possible causes of variance of numbers. This is useful in order to have an idea of the dimensions of prison population, but it does not explain the causes that have determined such dimensions. To mention one more example, in 1967, when Marseille was considered an extremely dangerous city, its rate of 3 crimes per 100 inhabitants was in line with the French average and equated to the rate registered in Clement-Ferrand, a town generally deemed very peaceful [Saccomano, 1968]. All this said without taking into consideration the difficulty to capture the phenomenon of delinquency in a ‘criminal’ category – and therefore always prosecutable by law and police – which transcends the spacial and temporal dimension, while justifying the construction of complex historical series. What is considered a crime today might not be a crime tomorrow. Hence, it is difficult to evaluate human behaviours over such a long span of time, *a fortiori* if we use measurement tools and criteria which constantly change. All these limits seem to emerge with respect to a generalising and quantitative approach to the history of small criminality. The debate is long-standing and – it goes without saying – remains open and vibrant: as a matter of fact, the doubts and the hopes connected with this kind of source – and already expressed with great prowess in 1977 by Harvey J. Graff [Graff, 1977] – persist.

AN OVERALL LOOK AT THE EXISTING LITERATURE

That, consistently with his specific research, the present author has focused mainly on some historiographical questions does not mean to ignore that the topics scrutinised by scholars are still diverse and manifold. For example, an in-depth exploration has been carried out to explain tribunal activities and judicial policies (along with the depiction of criminals deriving from them or generating them), rural violence and urban threats, problems connected with gender and generation (in particular, on violent youth; from both the gender and generational viewpoint, it is interesting what Yvorel, 2007, says), the several forms of police, etc.⁴

Generally speaking, the different historiographical areas seem to have been productively conditioned, first of all, by a *cultural* reading of crime (as happened, for instance, even though not exclusively, in Great Britain)⁵ and, secondly, by a scrupulous and analytic reconstruction, similar to *microstoria* (especially in France), of many particular cases and criminal typologies. The successful blending, in fact, of the assumptions and methodologies of both schools, today allows to understand communal traits and recurrences in the variety of cases seen; something which only occasionally seems to have led to excessive “modelisations” of cases which are actually marginal. Moreover, a greater attention to economic and social phases (and to their capability to influence criminality trends) – from sources to statistical collections on crimes, imprisonments, and homicides, etc. – seems to have emerged.

To be more precise, the archival abundance (which is not always a given; in Italy and in Spain, for example, there is not such abundance – on the situation of police archives in Spain, it is important to see the working paper by Godicheau, s.d.) with respect to police has made clear, as far as historians are concerned, the

⁴ For an introductory overview of criminal studies in France, that is one of the most productive countries in terms of this kind of studies, see Rousseaux (2006). Even though the review “Crime, Histoire & Sociétés” (see more in the text) has a double title in French and English, here only the French title, namely the one that appears first, will be used. Rousseaux contributed to the review with a study on crime historiography organised by themes and using the periodisation 1815-1914 and 1914-2005 for contemporary history. Moreover, in France, starting from the early 1990^s, scholars had already started a series of periodical conventions, involving many universities and researchers coming from different disciplines. Such multi-disciplinary dialogues have brought about interpretations of a wider scope. Among these conferences, note should be taken of the Dijon-Chenove conversation in October 1991, dedicated to the new approaches to crime history and published in Garnot (1992); in 1993 the conversation *Ordre Moral et délinquance de l'antiquité au XXe siècle* – see Garnot (1994) – and, omitting many others, the Sorbonne conversation in 2005 – see Farcy, Kalifa et Luc (2007). Another useful overview of historiography, even though the focus is more specifically in the Marseille case, see the work by Regnard (2012). Another important contribution is the 2008 book on violence and repression edited by Musin, Rousseaux and Vesentini (see bibliography): the twelve essays collected in this volume show once again the transversality of interests, historical periods, and disciplines when dealing with topic connected with criminality. By-product of the same research team is the volume by De Weirt and Rousseaux (2011).

⁵ An essential starting point is the volume edited by Gilman Srebnick and René Lévy (2005).

necessity of a more ‘in-depth’ reading of some extremely relevant textual documents, such as memoirs by policemen, police interrogation reports, testimonies by victims of crimes, reports by managers, notes by informers, transcripts of interviews with protagonists. This author believes that the copiousness of this material is better appreciated today, compared to the past, thanks to the effects of the *cultural turn*, which, once mitigated, has contributed to interpreting all those sources which have character of testimony, while contextualising their ambiguity; this is necessary in order to avoid the risk – and here again the lessons from *microstoria* are useful – of *modelisation without a model*, to which a superficial or naive interpretation of the above-mentioned forms of narration can lead. All this without forgetting that today a rigid compartmentation among schools seems to have been finally overcome, something which allows to better take advantage of the potentials and tools adopted by each historical perspective. For example, in Italy, the possibility of a constructive dialogue between different disciplines, with respect to the history of the police, has been shown by the ‘institutional’ strand. In this sense, it would be desirable to achieve what many years ago Mario Sbriccoli (2007) defined the need for a “*histoire du crime intégrée*”⁶.

Furthermore, in France, a series of introductory tools of a very high scientific value for the study of criminality are available. At the webpage *criminocorpus.cnrs.fr* the portal “Histoire de la justice – Criminocorpus” represents a fundamental scientific platform for the history of justice, crime and its repression: the platform, which collects multimedia editions, is the by-product of the unprecedented collaboration among researchers, archivists, readers, collectors, etc. The portal provides its users with a wide collection of scholarly articles, original documents and historical images, a bibliography included many tens of thousands of titles divided by topic, law texts, several chronologies, and so on.

Moreover, in order to orientate oneself in the numerous, modern and efficient French archives, since 1992 the *Guide des archives judiciaires et penitentiaires 1800-1958* by Jean-Claude Farcy (sous la direction de Philippe Vigier) is available: today it is downloadable from the same *Criminocorpus*.

Worth mentioning is naturally also the International Association for the History of Crime and Criminal Justice, founded in 1978, and the official journal of the association, namely the semestral *Crime, Histoire et Sociétés/Crime, History & Societies*, which today represents the most important publication on this topic – as shown by the present paper – and collects mainly contributions on the history of

⁶ Insightful reflections on these themes can be found in the introduction to the book by Emsley (2007). This volume adopts a comparative approach – focusing mainly on the English, French, German and Italian cases – and contains many bibliographical and archival references for the period 1750-1940. In addition, Emsley, had earlier published an interesting systematic review of historical researches on criminal justice (2005). As far as German scholars are concerned, a stimulating annotated review has been created by Reinke (2009). Belonging to the British school and dedicated mainly to Western England between 1840 and 1940 is one of the most interesting studies on the figure of the ordinary criminal: Godfrey, Cox e Farrall (2010).

police, justice, penal institutions and, of course, crime and criminality. Purpose of the association and of the journal is to spur studies on criminality which can make the double effort to analyse connections and social contexts, including the inclusive/exclusive dynamics of certain social classes: a similar effort is also made in France by the *Observatoire Régional de la Délinquance et des Contextes Sociaux* in Aix-en-Provence which publishes a bulletin of analysis and bibliographical update and which by virtue of the crucial work carried out has become a reference point for scholars of criminality.

As far as research in Italy is concerned, it is well-known that, with respect to studies on criminality and especially if we take the twentieth century into account, the field is almost unexplored, as evincible from one the latest systematic reconstructions of crime literature, e.g. the 2007 work by Mario Sbriccoli. The very few studies that cover the twentieth century are dedicated to big criminal organisations, as in the works by Salvatore Lupo (2007) and by Paolo Pezzino (2003) on mafia, or in the essay by Luciano Violante in the *Storia d'Italia* Einaudi (1997) or in the one by Paolo Prodi on justice (2000). On organised crime, also the works by Enzo Ciconte (2011), Francesco Barbagallo (2011) and Marcella Marmo (2011) are worth mentioning⁷.

Similarly, ranging from big criminal groups to economic corruption and to *banditismo* (banditry) and terrorism, the two classics on the *Storia della criminalità* by Romano Canosa (1991 and 1995) still deal mainly with high-profile criminality; even when they take into account 'common' criminality, their view is generalist, that is to say that radication, functioning and daily praxis are not investigated.

Instead, the core theme of the present article and of the research of the present author is, as already said, to explore small criminality and its conduct in the working-class neighbourhoods of twentieth-century European cities, starting from the reconstruction of personal experiences which, although individual, cannot be reduced to their singularity.

With reference to this subject and considering the twentieth century, there is a lack of literature:⁸ yet, it is possible to find some useful information in publications about police studies. A historiographical reference point for Italian scholars are the yearly conventions organised by Livio Antonielli on the topic 'the police' and the relative publications of the proceedings (Antonielli 2002, 2003, 2006.a, 2006.b, 2010.a, 2010.b, 2011) that allow to examine, although indirectly, criminality. Nevertheless, the studies making up these works are mainly dedicated to modern history, apart from few notable exceptions, mainly belonging to the field of sociology⁹, rather than history. Among sociological works on the subject of

⁷ On these themes see also Dickie (2012), *Onorate società*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2012.

⁸ See the isolated work by Erba (2009). The author is also of the new Milanese publishing house Milieu Edizioni, which has just published the volumes Barbieri, Erba (2013), Fantazzini (2012) and D'Agostino (2012).

⁹ See the extremely interesting Palidda 2000 and 2006.

‘criminality’, it is useful to mention the Italian translation of the seminal work by Garland (2004) and the ethnographical research carried out by Alessandro Dal Lago and Emilio Quadrelli (2003), created by putting together 400 interviews done around Genoa with ‘men of honour’, smugglers, prostitutes, drug dealers, thieves, crooks: this study is particularly interesting because it suggests a reading of the criminal world as functional to, and not separated from, ‘legitimate society’, or, to say it better, as the set of places responding to a consistent part of the market demands of ‘legitimate society’. A significant historical depth had already emerged also in the work by Barbagli (1995), at least from the viewpoint of the analysis of quantitative evolution of crime in the course of the twentieth century.

Going back to police historical studies, some researches of undoubted value must be mentioned, such as the ones by Reiter (1996 and 1997), later recalled in the volume written by the same author with Della Porta (2003). An insightful reflection on the state of research concerning police studies was realised in 2004 and 2015 by Nicola Labanca and by Labanca and Di Giorgio. On the contrary, it is almost redundant to remember the works by Canosa (1976) and Tosatti (1997 and 2009). To conclude, the present author has recently created (with Marco Soresina and thanks to the support of an international scientific committee of experts)¹⁰ the criminality studies series *Il cattivo esempio. Criminalità nella storia: società, economia, politica, (The Bad Example. Criminality in History: society, economy and politics)* with the publishing house Milieu Edizioni in Milan.

Studies on criminality and police are increasing in all countries, and a growing number of scholars belonging to different disciplines are devoting patience and dedication to these subjects in order to offer new instruments (and maybe, finally, even some answers) to the many questions which social history has posed in the course of the twentieth century with respect to deviancy and social ‘marginalities’. These are fields of studies that can certainly benefit from this new wave of research, also in view of a reconsideration – which the author of this article deems undoubtedly desirable – of social history.

¹⁰ Scientific Committee: Cesara Mattina, Céline Regnard, Elisabetta Rosa (Aix-Marseille Université); Laurent Mucchielli (Laboratoire Méditerranéen de Sociologie – CNRS & Aix-Marseille Université); Stefano Allovio, Livio Antonielli, Nicola Del Corno, Emanuele Edallo, Roberta Garruccio, Martino Marazzi, Roberto Romano, Veronica Ronchi (Università degli Studi di Milano); Marcella Marmo (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II); Massimiliano Franco (DocBi – Centro Studi Biellesi).