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SUMMARY SOMMARIO

Thirty years of urban security policies in Italy:
Some reflections from a criminological perspective

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Abstract

The term "urban security" appeared in Italy at the beginning of the 1990s, following new criminological approaches to community safety and crime prevention developed mostly by proponents of British Left Realism. The concept of urban security was the basis for a new public policy field, urban security policy (USP), originally characterized by a preventive approach and mostly promoted in Italy by local authorities. Around 2008, however, centralization began, and the national government started to define priorities and strategies. In parallel, interventions shifted towards a more punitive approach, based on a mix of administrative and criminal measures. This paper aims at taking stock of the development of these policies, analyzing in particular in what ways they have been influenced and shaped by criminological theories and research findings. The focus is on some particularly significant issues: the crime-fear nexus, the relation between crime and migration, the shift from street crime to disorder and incivilities, which implies the shift to situational crime prevention measures, and the tension between local and national levels of urban security policies.

Keywords: urban security, criminological theories, migration, fear of crime, public policies.

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Thirty years of urban security policies in italy: some reflections from a criminological perspective

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Introduction

Urban security, crime, incivilities and feelings of insecurity have been at the forefront of the Italian public and political discourse since several decades. This paper aims at taking stock of the development of these policies, and of the related debate, analyzing in particular in what ways they have been influenced and shaped by criminological theories and research findings.

In doing that, we adopt an historical and a criminological perspective, based on trying to understand – and to problematize – how Italian criminological research on these subjects developed in the last thirty years and which was its influence on this development. At the background of security policies in Italy, there is, indeed, a replication, and adaptation, of a variety of criminological approaches, that span from British left realism to routine activity and broken windows theory. Not differently from what happened in other European countries, urban security represents a field of battle for different criminological views on the related behaviors, on the most appropriate prevention measures, on the alleged "punitive turn" affecting many Western countries (Selmini and Crawford, 2017) on the balance between rights, freedom and security. We argue that Italian USP, indeed, turn towards a more law and order approach, and that the criminological weakness at the roots of Italian USP may explain, at least in part, this evolution.

We focus in particular on some issues.

First, the relation between crime rates, incivilities, fear of crime and feelings of insecurity. Italy is no more a "high crime rate society" (Garland, 2001); nonetheless, as occurred in many other countries, USP have become increasingly repressive and more based on form of preventive coercion (Ashworth and Zedner, 2014). We argue that, particularly at some point in their development, USP were responding not to crime changes, but to other political and social concerns.

Second, the controversial relation between crime and migration affects the debate and the development of USP since their origin, becoming soon one of the main issues. Divergent results in research contribute to the politicization of the subject in a way that is probably unprecedented in other countries. Urban security and migration problems are associated and dealt with together in several national laws, and the political discourse reinforces the link of migration not only with security, but with other urban problems, from prostitution to drugs selling, to poverty and even more serious phenomena such as terrorism.

Third, a shift from street crime to disorder and incivilities occurred, with the latter becoming the main issue of both political agendas and of some criminological, and urban sociology, studies. At the political level, this implies an adherence to broken windows and the related Zero Tolerance approach.

Fourth, consistently with this shift, crime prevention measures took a divergent trajectory, with the situational crime prevention becoming soon dominant in the landscape of urban security policies, in spite of the original focus on social and community crime prevention, and thanks to some ambiguous concepts, such as "integrated security".

Fifth, and particularly significant in the Italian context, the relation between the local and the national levels of USP. To understand Italian security policies requires analyzing of the complex relations among different institutional actors, whose cooperation and conflicts shape Italian USP in a unique way.

1. The origins: a social-democratic perspective for crime and disorder?

Differently from what happened in other European countries, particularly the UK, with a long tradition of theorization and practices on crime and crime prevention, in Italy, at the beginning of the Nineties of the past century, sociological criminology was a true novelty. Still mostly oriented to a psychopathological or legalistic approach, empirical studies were rare and knowledge on crime and the criminal justice system very underdeveloped, also as a consequence of poor and unreliable data. In this intellectual and scholar context, a window of opportunity appeared, when the academic world met political interests. Massimo Pavarini, who, with few doubts, can be considered the first promoter at the academic level of studies on urban security (Pavarini,1994), was connected to the British left realists, and also engaged in a variety of projects in cooperation with activists and members of the Democratic Party of the Left, with whom, in 1992, he launched a new educational journal titled "Sicurezza e Territorio" (Safety and Territory). The goal was pedagogic: on the one hand, to promote a social democrat project to manage crime and fear of crime at the local level, raising the awareness of local left politicians on these issues and, on the other hand, to improve criminology as a discipline, thanks, mostly, to the importation of the works by the British left realists and other, mostly French and American, critical so-

ciologist and criminologists. In a few years this political project became a governmental enterprise, when the regional government of Emilia – Romagna established a project called "Città sicure". The regional project had the goal to deal with crime - mostly minor street crime – incivilities and disorder, and feelings of insecurity, with prevention measures (see, among others, Pavarini, 2006; Cornelli, 2008; Selmini, 2020).

This project had significant political and scientific implications. Politically, it promoted an idea of "urban security" based on left realism values (Comitato Scientifico di Città sicure, 1995), such as the role of local communities and local institutions, the need to take into consideration also victims' needs, the importance of community and social crime prevention (Young, 1986, 1992; Young and Matthews, 1992; Hughes, 2004).

Some French influences were equally important in this first stage of USP. The French conceptualization of "new prevention" by sociologist Philippe Robert, who argued that the "new" prevention characterizing urban security local programs not only target crime but also incivilities, by means of "solutions other than imprisonment" (Robert, 1991, p. 5) also became very popular in Italy. Indeed, Robert's work was very influential thanks to a network gathering Italian and other European scholars around the journal *Deviance and Societè*, and the *Groupe de recherche européen sur les normativités* (GERN).

At the origin of USP in Italy we find therefore a combination of concepts from different sociological and criminological branches, sharing, however, the idea of USP as inclusive policies, aimed at reducing criminalization and promoting a better quality of life.

There are however several scientific weaknesses in this enterprise.

First, the lack of a strong and well-established culture of crime prevention, and particularly of social and community crime prevention, implied that the project started without the necessary foundations to properly develop. Welfare and social policies and criminal policies were, and still are, two separate fields of action in Italian public policies; crime prevention as a social project was part of the broader social policies, and rarely connected to the influence that better social conditions and improving of structural inequalities might have on crime (Selmini, 2012). If, as Reiner ((2006) claims, the social democratic criminology had to be based on Merton's theory, Italy lacked the criminological theoretical foundations on which to build a more advanced and sophisticated theory of crime. Some criminological concepts and theories, such as Relative Deprivation and "the square of crime", developed by left criminological realism, were imported in Italy and permeated the Italian criminological debate of the time (Young 1986; Lea, 1992; Young 1992) but really never developed in theoretical terms.

Second, empirical studies, in spite of the efforts of the Scientific Committee of the project "Città sicure". remained limited to the first stage of the development of

the policies and never fully developed, with the exception of some cities, that undertook interesting local studies and project on urban safety. Only in the last decade a wide range of USP studies has been carried out in Italy. A first group focused on the normative and institutional framework (Antonelli 2018; Nobili et al. 2019). Others analyzed the punitive turn and, in line with the international literature on the expansion of punitiveness (Ashworth and Zedner, 2014; Beckett and Herbert, 2010), investigated criminalization processes that USP has promoted in Italian society, particularly concerning urban marginality and migrants (Crocitti and Selmini, 2017; Ceretti and Cornelli, 2019; Curi, 2019; Ruga Riva et al., 2017; Risicato, 2019; Selmini, 2020). From a political science perspective and comparatively, others examined the relation between security and freedom (Tebaldi, 2016). Some studies have tried to move from a mostly descriptive level to answer more theoretical questions: why these policies developed and why they became more punitive (Selmini, 2020); the role played by political conflicts between national and local governments (Selmini, 2005) and the roles of fear of crime and insecurity in shaping the political agenda (Cornelli, 2008; Ceretti and Cornelli, 2013). More empirically oriented studies sought to understand the impact of institutional partnerships (Calaresu, 2013; Calaresu and Triventi, 2018) and the roles of political ideologies and other variables in making USP more or less punitive (Calaresu and Selmini, 2017).

Despite the relative increase of scientific contributions in the USP field, empirical studies of victimization and feelings of insecurity have been developed more by governmental researchers than by scholars. Works of the Emilia-Romagna regional government and of some other local observatory on urban security are examples (Cornelli, 2004a). One window of opportunity opened up with the carrying on of the first Victimization Survey, by the National Institute of Statistics (Istat), in 1996-1997. However, the results of this survey – the first of a series of five waves – rarely became a source of data for academic studies.

In sum, from the criminological point of view, the origin and the immediate development of USP in Italy suffered of several weaknesses and inconsistencies, which undermined its further development and made the "social-democratic" approach soon invisible in comparison with other, more politically attractive, criminological rationalities, based on different theories and approaches, as we discuss in the following paragraphs.

2. Crime trend and feelings of insecurity

At the origins of the Italian discourse on urban security, the measurement of citizens' fear of street crimes appeared to be one of the main contributions that scientific research could offer to policy development. First Italian surveys on insecurity were modelled on the U.S. surveys on fear of

crime. Murray Lee (2001, 2007) analysed extensively the historical moment in which the need to measure how much people are afraid and why emerged. Under the Great Society Programme promoted by President Lindon Johnson, the Science Advisory Committee invited scientific organisations to produce descriptive statistics on the behaviour of U.S. citizens useful for promoting welfare policies. In this framework, the relevance of a new concept, that of "fearing population", emerged since several public and private organisations, including the National Opinion Research Centre, began interviewing citizens about their personal experiences of victimization to obtain more accurate information about crime. In 1972 the US Department of Justice devoted a section of the National Crime Survey to the fear of crime, defining it as the fear that arises as a consequence of a criminal act.

This way of investigating fear of crime proved inadequate in understanding the social and cultural reasons for the profound change in collective sensibility taking place in Western societies during the 1979s and in the following decades (Garland, 2001). Moreover, criticism of the political and media use of the fearing population was present from the earliest research (Harris, 1969; Cohen, 1972). Nevertheless, as soon as the issue of urban security began to occupy the front pages of the newspapers in Italy (at the beginning of the 1990s), the first surveys carried out by private organisations, such as Doxa in 1992, were inspired by the U.S. surveys and replicated the close link between the increasing fearing population and the increasing crime rate. "Urban crime is out of control and citizens are afraid" became a leitmotif of the public discourse on social needs and guided politics in seeking immediate and practical solutions. Italian opinion leaders and policy makers started to be influenced by the US just desert model, based on the deterrence theory and on tough crime policies (Tonry, 2004) and on police strategies based on the so-called broken windows theory (De Giorgi, 2000; Har-

court, 2001). Rudolph Giuliani, Mayor of New York City during the 1990s, was a model for many Italian mayors, and the slogan "Zero Tolerance" inspired Italian political imagination. The effects of this cultural climate were soon evident. Detention rates and prison overcrowding began to rise, mayors began to demand more and more regulatory powers and financial means to increase local police officers and the use of CCTV (Pavarini, 1997, 2006; Ceretti and Cornelli, 2013).

To question these trends, already evident in the mid Nineties, researchers involved in local urban security projects tried to problematize the issue of urban security.

First of all, studies on crime trends showed that crime rates were declining, a drop that, even if with a different timing compared to other countries (Aebi & Linde, 2010; Tonry, 2014), is still going on today. Over the last thirty years, Italy is no longer a "high-crime society", to use Garland's popular definition, particularly with regard to homicides, which are decreasing steadily and constantly. Even street crime, such as robberies and car thefts, have been declining, despite some fluctuations, since almost two decades (Selmini e Arcidiacono, 2015).

Secondly, some research (Maneri, 2001; Cornelli 2004b, 2005; Pavarini, 2006) began deconstructing the concept of fear of crime, showing its connection with the personal, economic and social insecurities spread in late modernity. Others enlightened non-crime factors of insecurity (Caneppele, 2010).

Thirdly, the increase in fear of crime was also questioned, first by criticizing the adequacy of the items normally used in sample surveys (Cornelli, 2004a) and then by analyzing the time series of the most important surveys on insecurity carried on in Italy. Indeed, all the data available show that in the last thirty years fears, concerns and insecurities linked to crime didn't increased and that, on the contrary, they have been constantly decreasing in the last five years (fig. 1 and 2).

Source: elaboration of Istat data
Fig. 1 - Perception of Crime Risk in the neighbourhood in 2 Italian Surveys. Italy, 1993-2022 (Istat on "Aspetti della vita quotidiana"), 2004-2021 (Istat Eu-Silc)
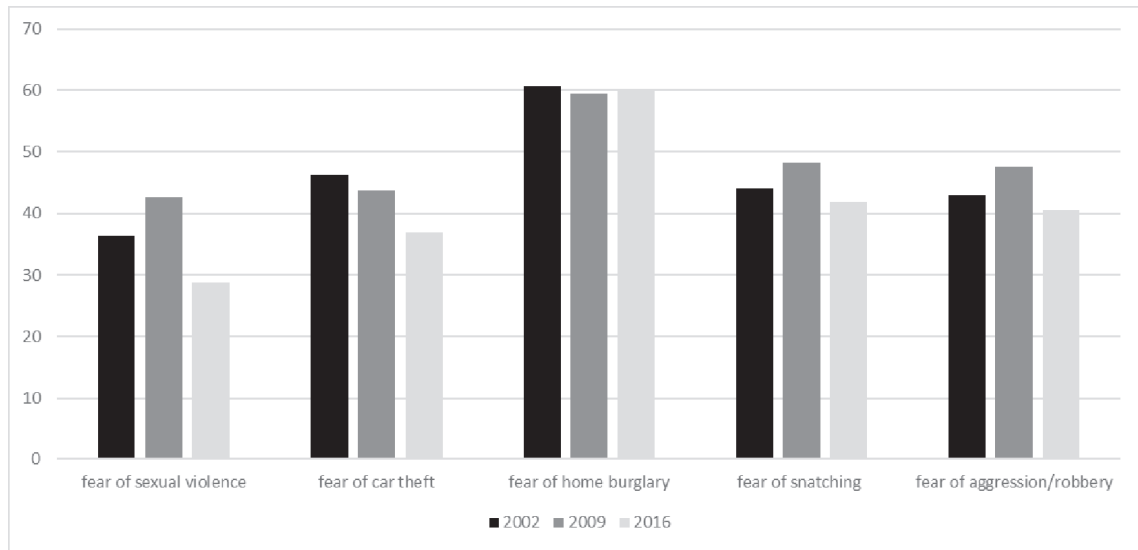
Source: elaboration of Istat data
Fig. 2 – Fear of Specific Crimes. Italy, 2002, 2007/8, 2016 (Istat on "Sicurezza dei cittadini")

In short, research shows that both crime and fear of crime are not increasing, and that fear of crime is mostly unrelated to crime trends. However, these research findings have failed to undermine the official narrative, extremely useful to strengthen repressive or coercive policies, of an increasingly violent society where fearful citizens ask for more severe punishment. As a result, the gap between the scholars initially engaged in policy-oriented studies – as those involved in the experience of "Città sicure" – and the institutions and policy-makers became even wider. Broadly, criminological research on USP and related issues in Italy proved to be unable to influence policy makers and political agendas, as the story that we describe in the next paragraphs confirms.

The gap between research and policy is remarkable in three areas. The first is the relation between security and immigration, one of the most contested fields of research and a hotly debated subject in public and political discourses. Since the very beginning researchers tried to provide useful knowledge to discuss the subject in a more rigorous and scientific way. In spite of these efforts, since the early years of the third millennium, at the political level anti-immigration policies and the emphasis on the relation between immigrants and crime prevailed (see par. 4).

Secondly, broken window theory became firmly established in the institutional language, in local and national practices and laws, as in the media narrative, legitimizing the adoption of coercive and situational prevention policies based mainly on punitive administrative local orders, and electronic surveillance. Criticisms to this approach, that we discuss in the following par. 5, have been largely ignored.

Thirdly, the shift of security policies from the local to the national level reduced mayors' willingness to engage in more creative, research-based policies tailored on the local peculiarities and on the specific security problems of their city, and more oriented to replicate at the urban level the national political strategies and operational tools. Here again, policy-oriented empirical research has been increasingly marginal (see par. 6).

3. The relation crime-migration

The controversial relation between crime and migration affects the debate and the development of urban security policies since its origin, soon becoming one of the main themes (Dal Lago, 1996, 1999; Barbagli, 1998; Melossi, 1999, 2000).

Italy became a destination country for migration flows more recently than other European countries. Until the 1980s, the number of Italians leaving the country to seek work abroad was higher than the number of foreigners arriving in Italy (fig. 3)
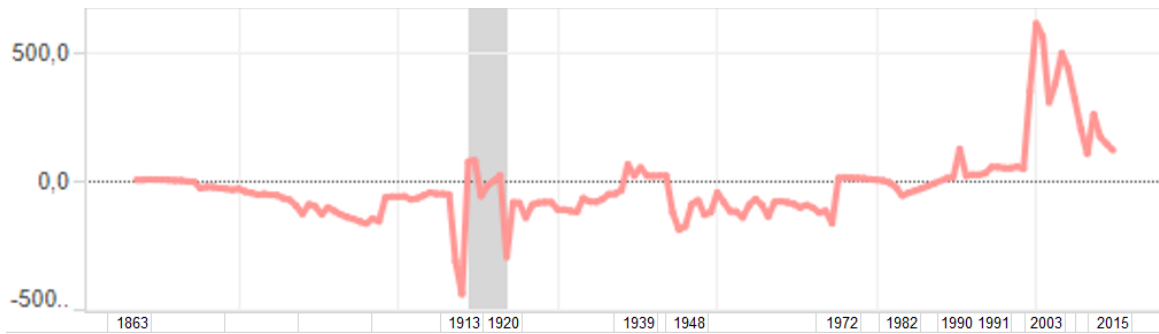
Source: Istat
Fig. 3 - Migration balance in Italy. Years 1863-2015 (in thousands)

During the 1990s, however, the number of foreigners resident in Italy doubled, rising from 649,000 in 1991 to 1,341,000 in 2000 (Pittau, 2005). At the beginning of the new millennium, the foreign population growth was estimated to exceed 5 million in 2015 and to remain stable around this number until 2022. Foreigners currently make up 8.5% of the resident population in Italy.

The fast transition from a country of emigrants to a country of immigrants was accompanied by a public discourse oscillating between the duty to welcome and the need to defend. Over the years, the latter approach prevailed, and the perception of migrants as a social threat sparked across the country, giving raise to increasingly more restrictive laws on the conditions of regular access to Italy and to criminalization processes of regular and irregular foreigners (Crocitti, 2014, 2022; Fabini, 2017, 2023; Campesi and Fabini, 2020). In the framework of the migration and asylum policy of the European Union, which from 2015 extended Frontex's mandate and transformed it into a fully-fledged European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Campesi, 2015), Italian immigration laws have been inspired by the rhetoric of defending national borders and embedded in broader legislation on urban security and public order. In this approach, the governance of immigration has become inextricably intertwined with the issue of security and constantly presented as the *trait d'union* of a variety of urban problems. From street crimes to prostitution and drugs selling, to more serious phenomena such as terrorism, immigrants are described as troublemakers and dangerous people, even more when they are "illegal migrants" who entered the country violating the increasingly narrow migration laws.

Research on the relationship between immigration and crime is nuanced and has been influenced by – and in some ways is replicating – the ambivalence of the public discourse between the – more marginal – approach in favor of inclusive policies, and the dominant anti-immigrant approach. Some studies at the local level addressed a variety of urban problems associated with the presence of foreigners (e.g. prostitution; Pavarini, 2006) trying to orient local policies towards prevention and harm reduc-

tion; some studies provided useful knowledge on the presence of foreigners in supporting policies to promote integration and civil coexistence (Gatti et al.; Di Nicola, 2010); other studies addressed the issue of governing multicultural societies (Melossi, 2014) and questioned the shaping of Italian public opinion on the basis of racial stereotypes (Cornelli, 2019). Studies based on police data or criminal justice statistics, on the other hand, showed an increasing rate of foreigners among suspects, convicted and inmates (Barbagli, 1998; Solivetti, 2019). These data permeated the public debate, reinforced the common opinion of immigrants as a social threat and fostered defensive attitudes towards immigration in the wider society. In scholarly debates, these findings have been, however, strongly criticized for three reasons.

Firstly, research shows that the increase in the number of foreigners in official crime statistics is not related to the increase in the number of foreigners in the country, including irregular ones (even if on these last there are only estimates available). This finding implies that the assessment of the weight of foreigners in official statistics was inadequately calculated or incorrect (Ascolani, 2002). Indeed, statistical studies investigating the causal impact of immigration (legal residents) on crime across Italian provinces during the 1990s. demonstrated that total criminal offences as well as most types of crime are not related to the size of immigrant population (Bianchi et al., 2008).

Secondly, some scholars (Ferraris, 2021) remarked how it was necessary to address the relationship between immigration and crime more broadly and to better understand, on the one hand the impact of migration on crime trends at a macro level and, on the other, how foreigners' victimization might affect the whole picture. On the first point, data show that crime started to increase the 1970s, when migration to Italy was almost irrelevant. Similarly, homicides started to decrease in the 1990s when migration to Italy intensified (Cornelli 2007; fig. 4). Data clearly rule out the hypothesis that immigration contributes directly to the increase in crime (Bianchi et al. 2008).
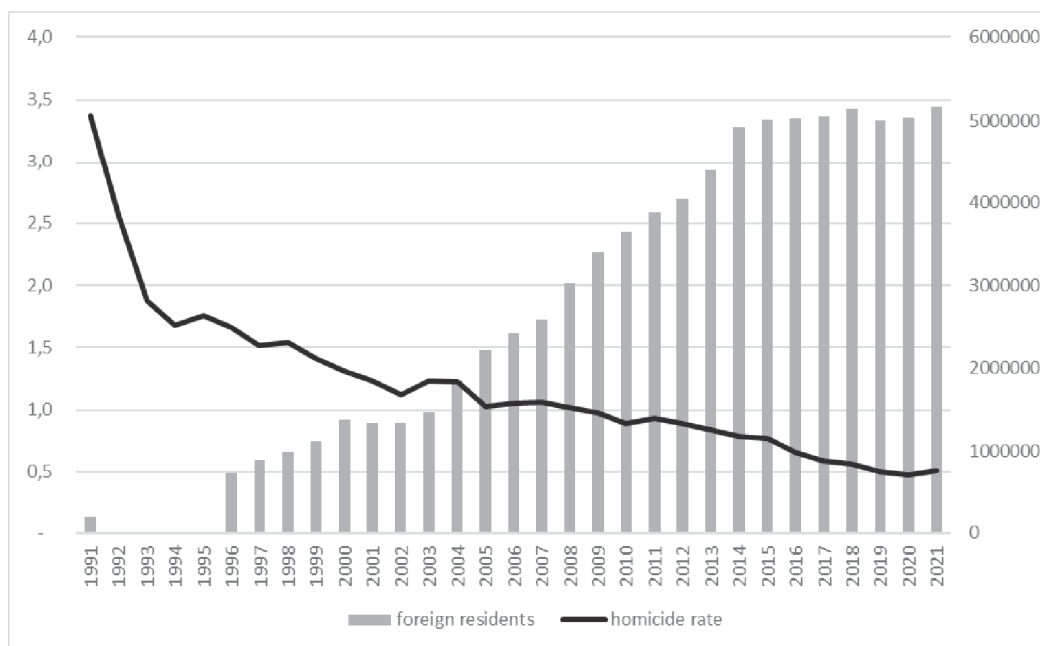
Source: elaboration of Istat data
Fig. 4 – Comparison between homicide trends (rate per 100 thousand inhabitants) and the presence of foreign residents (absolute value)
in Italy. Years 1991-2021

Furthermore, a study on homicide reported data showed a strong correlation between the nationality of the perpetrator and the nationality of the victim, and that it is more likely for a foreigner to be killed by an Italian than for an Italian to be killed by a foreigner (Colombo, 2011).

Finally, it has been highlighted how official statistics may be biased by institutional prejudices and stereotypes, and thus how important it is to take into consideration the processes of constructing statistical data (Melossi, 1999)

The contemporary debate on the relation between crime and migration is deeply affected by these divergent research findings. No surprise, then, that the subject is highly politicized, probably even more than in other contexts, where studies are more widespread and based on more reliable data.

4. From British left realism to Zero Tolerance: The evolution of USP in Italy

Poor research and lack of reliable data on fear of crime, feelings of insecurity and crime and migration contributed to the development of USP much more characterized by a law and order approach, particularly when compared to the inclusive rationality permeating the origins of USP at the local level. In Italy, as in other European contexts (Jones and Newburn, 2007; Selmini and Crawford 2017) broken windows – and the related concept of Zero Tolerance – became wide-spread concepts, widely accepted by

politicians at the local and national level, of both the right and left wing (Selmini, 2020). The adaptation of this concept implied a strong focus on disorder and incivilities, that became the most important subject of USP. The main ideas of broken windows – that incivilities attract more serious crime, and that they foster feelings of insecurity – were accepted, even if not strongly supported by empirical evidences. Indeed, there are no studies in Italy showing that incivilities attract serious crime[1], while data from the national victimization surveys demonstrate that experiencing some types of disorder in the public space has an impact on the feelings of insecurity (Barbagli, 2002; Chiesi, 2004; Nobili, 2022). Moreover, the theoretical approaches connected to broken windows, such as Routine Activity, Life-style and Rational Choice, have rarely been tested empirically[2]. Despite the lack of research, incivilities, disorder and the need to tackle them seriously became the most important aspect of USP, and they were translated into national laws, and in local practices, through municipal by-laws and administrative orders.

The adoption of this approach seems to be the result of a policy transfer process (Jones and Newburn, 2007) much more than the response to specific crime problems,

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1   In other countries, several studies showed that the connection between incivilities and crime was weak or limited to some specific crime (Matthews, 1992).
2   See Barbagli (1995) who tested the empirical validity of the decision-making process of potential offenders for the case of thefts and robberies in Italy.

considering, as we mentioned above, that crime was de-creasing. Indeed, the Italian Victimization Survey (2018) showed that from 2008-2009 and 2015-2016 also citizens' perception of disorder in their neighborhood went down, except for prostitution.

In spite of these findings, suggesting some improvements in the feelings of insecurity and concern about crime, the law reforms of the period focused on incivilities, as the major urban problem. In term of the content of USP, this process implied: a restriction of social and community crime prevention, and of measures based on urban renewal, a reinforcement of the situational crime prevention and control at the local level, and the increasing tendency to deal with disorder and incivilities as if they were semi-criminal behaviors.

Urban security gradually lost its conceptual and practical autonomy as a set of local public policies and became one of the aspect al the overall public security. The new concept of "sicurezza integrata" (integrated security) now used at the national and local level, expresses this shift towards USP that are firmly entrenched in the broader field of public security (and then, as Selmini shows in this volume, also in public order).

This process of centralization occurred in the second half of 2000 and accelerated in the last few years. One important consequence is that even in the field of disorder and incivilities, the punitive rationality of the Minister of the Interior prevails, as shown by some law reforms in 2008-2009 and then, more recently, in 2017-2019, that we describe in these final paragraphs.

A turning point was the decree of the Ministry of the Interior (5 August 2008) – not a law, but an administrative regulation issued on the basis of Law no. 125/2008 – defining for the first time, at the national level, what are the problems of urban security and what measures mayors can adopt. In this document incivilities and disorder are defined at the national level as a specific area of competence of the mayor, who can adopt "provisional and urgent ordinances" to prevent or eliminate dangerous situations that "threaten public safety or urban security". In addition, mayors may intervene to «prevent» and «contrast» situations of urban decay and social isolation that favour the development of some criminal phenomena, such as drug dealing, exploitation of prostitution, alcohol abuse -related violence and aggressive begging involving minors and/or disabled people.

The decree, mainly evoking prodromic situations of crime in public spaces, contributes to move the notion of urban security into the context of security and public order, and it is consistent with the principles of broken windows theory and Zero Tolerance policing. Once again, these regulations were enforced without any clear support from research findings. The approach was then developed further by the Law no. 94/2009 «*Provisions on public safety*» clearly oriented towards a centralization of urban security policies. The central government now definitively provides guidance, priorities and establishes what is the mayors' role at the local level: they, as executors of national policies, and not as elected by citizens and representants of the local community, are entitled to use municipal regulations (*Ordinanze sindacali*). Administrative ordinances, already common in USP, become since then the most important measure to deal with urban security problems.

The 2008-2009 reform was followed by the adoption of hundreds of municipal ordinances on urban safety, defined as attempts to enforce a sort of "municipal criminal law" (Ruga Riva 2008: 133). The instrument has been used often particularly in large Italian municipalities (with more than 250,000 inhabitants), in the center-north of the country, and in particular in Lombardy, Piedmont, Veneto, Emilia-Romagna and Liguria (Giovannetti 2012). A research by Crocitti and Selmini (2017) showed that administrative ordinances were mostly addressed at problems of urban marginality and specifically targeted immigrants living in the public space and surviving in the informal economy of the city as beggars, prostitutes, panhandlers. Since then, mayors' administrative orders are still the most important tool to deal, at the local level, with incivilities and "soft" crimes.

The centralization process implied that a punitive attitude permeated most of the measures at the national and local level. Besides mayors administrative orders, CCTV was strongly supported by the government that, in 2009 launched a national program on urban security to fund local projects. Of 175 projects, 103 are based on CCTV, 21 fund local police equipment and headquarters, 15 support urban renewal measures, 9 road security, and only 2 social crime prevention initiatives (Selmini, 2020, p. 74). In 2008, one more government's project, defined as "Strade sicure" (Safe streets), shows that a control mentality is prevailing, since he program introduces army patrol in the city. The measure was meant to be temporary and mostly directed to protect buildings and monuments from terrorist attacks, but it then became permanent, making army patrol a routine form of control on a variety of urban problems (Battistelli 2016). Data on the impact of this militarization of public space are rare and only gathered by investigative journalists. They show that, at least in 2015, 3.5 million of Euros were diverted from funds addressed at services for asylum seekers to support the army patrol in the streets (Civillini, 2016).

5. Centralization and the never ending conflict among Cities, Regions and the State

The centralization process described above implied not only a more punitive approach in dealing with urban security problems, but also redesigned the cooperation between regional and municipal governments, with the latter becoming the most important actor cooperating with the Minister of the Interior, while the former lost its pivotal role. Together with the laws mentioned above, another turning point towards centralization – and the breaking off of the alliance between municipalities and regions – occurred in 2007, when a national strategy to sign

formal agreements for the cooperation in USP (the so-called "Security Pacts") was launched by the Minister of the Interior. These pacts are, since 2007, following a national pattern, pre-determined by the Minister of the Interior – though in cooperation with the National Association of Municipalities (ANCI). As Calaresu (2013, p. 44) states, they redefine roles and power of the political actors involved in this public policy, giving the Minister of the Interior (and the Prefects at the local level) a prominent role (see also Antonelli, 2010). Other political actors are entitled to "integrate" a policy, whose core is now definitively relocated in the public security field.

Security pacts have been presented by the national governments as a new organizational and operational model, based on the philosophy of "partnership", and also as a successful way to reduce crime rates. Research findings (Calaresu, Triventi, 2019) show that security pacts had a limited impact on crime one year after the adoption, but they significantly reduced thefts and minor crime two years after. The same study found evidences of heterogeneous effects along province population size, with the strongest impact in the larger provinces, and null effects in the smaller ones. Despite this study, it remains unclear what is the role played by the dynamics characterizing the international crime drop (Aebi & Linde, 2010; Tonry, 2014) which, even if with a different timing, affected Italy as many other Western countries. Once again, the lack of empirical research, and particularly of evaluation studies, doesn't allow to understand what the impact of these agreements on the urban problems they are targeting really is.

As occurred in other European countries (Le Goff, 2004) also in Italy the rhetoric of "partnership" prevailed, but real cooperation never developed, considering the asymmetry of power among the institutional subjects involved (Selmini, 2020)

The attempt to redesign cooperation among different levels of governments was undertaken again a few years ago with the Decree 14/2017 (known as "Decreto Minniti"), characterized by two distinct sections. The first redesignes the complex infrastructure and distribution of competencies among Regions, Cities and the State, showing once again how important are institutional and administrative relation in shaping urban security policies.

More specifically, the decree introduces a vertical integrated security model, in which the State, the Regions, and the municipalities promote and implement an allegedly unitary and integrated system.

The measures to establish this integrated security system are, again, specific agreements –such as the security pacts mentioned above – to be signed between the State and the Regions and other local pacts. In the first section of the decree, there is a clear, albeit rhetoric, attempt to conceptualize urban security as an autonomous system of policies related to local governments' competence, and to emphasize the role of social and community crime prevention. Indeed, the introductory statement of the decree mentions very ambitious goals, such as the need to promote urban, social and cultural regeneration of areas char-acterized by social and physical disorder, the removal of factors of social exclusion, the promotion of a culture of legality and of higher levels of social cohesion and civil coexistence. The law, however, neither includes specific measures oriented to these goals, nor promotes – and funds – social and community crime prevention.

Indeed, the opposite: the second part of the Decree takes a clear law and order approach, since security policies must now be based on these main types of intervention: mayors administrative orders (reinforced and limited to some specific urban areas defined by the government and detailed by municipal regulations), and then two completely new measures. The first is the "ordine di allontanamento", issued by mayors: a sort of banishment order to remove people from public space in some specific areas of the city. These orders are very short-term (48 hours) and are enforced by the municipal police. The second is the "divieto di accesso", an harsher banishment order issued by the city police chief (the "Questore", head of the national police in the biggest cities). These orders are police measures, they may last up to two years, and target those who do not comply with the mayors' provisional orders and are a problem for "urban security". Therefore, despite the premises of this decree (based on "decorative" statements about promoting social inclusion and fostering social prevention) this is a Zero Tolerance approach, mostly addressed to poor people, immigrants and homeless living in public spaces (Crocitti and Selmini, 2017; Ruga Riva et al., 2017; Ceretti and Cornelli, 2019; Curi, 2019; Risicato, 2019; Selmini, 2020).

Unlike mayors orders, these banishment measures target specific individuals and increase social and spatial segregation, creating urban areas free from "disturbing" populations, i.e the same individuals that for more than two decades have been considered the main problem for security, such as beggars, prostitutes, alcoholics, drug addicts (Nobili, 2019: 70; Selmini, 2020).

The following decrees (one in 2018 and the second in 2019) have been enacted by the right-wing government and precisely by the Minister of the Interior Matteo Salvini (they are commonly defined as "Decreti Salvini") of the League Party, famous for his campaigns against migration and a strong supporter of Zero Tolerance policies. Both decrees address a variety of problems (migration, first of all, but also terrorism and organized crime) blurring the boundaries between minor crime and disorder and other social or serious criminal problems. At the local level, they reinforce the earlier measures of the Decreto Minniti, transforming the banishment orders in two-step prohibitions order (Simester and Von Hursch, 2006) since, in some cases, not complying with the order becomes a criminal offence; the areas of the city where they can be enacted is enlarged; the consequences on people's life become harder (Selmini and Crocitti, 2020); crimes that were in the past de-criminalized, are now crimes again (such us begging). These decrees definitively conceptualize urban security as a matter of "public security" (and sometimes of "public order", see Selmini, this volume).

In conclusion, research on the development of USP in Italy clearly shows that this branch of policies, originally meant to be preventive and inclusive, are now dominated by a zero-tolerance approach and by forms of preventive coercion, based on mayors administrative powers and on police measures.

6. Conclusion

In this article, we discuss the development of USP, their shift from local and more inclusive policies to law and order approaches, trying at the same time to better understand what the impact on this development of both criminological theories and of empirical research was, and we argue that complex explanations of crime, such as left realism, have been abandoned in favor of more practical and policy-oriented approaches, such us broken windows and theory of opportunities. Empirical research on USP in Italy is still limited and fragmented, and, even when data are rich and reliable, as it is the case of the Italian Victimization surveys by Istat, they are not taken into consideration by policy-makers. The lack of connection between research and policy is a common issue in many countries, and it is self-evident in the case of crime policies, at least for what concerns studies on punishment and sentencing. In Italy this disconnection seems to be even stronger, and the story we told in this article leaves many open questions and shows future lines of research.

A first open question concerns the determinants of USP. If research findings are not at the basis of policy design and implementation, and if evaluation studies are not carried out, which are the reasons why policy makers adopt more punitive policies? The answer to this question has always been that USP represent the State's response to an increase in crime rates and in feelings of insecurity and fear of crime, consistently with a bottom-up model, in which the State responds to public concerns associated with demands for security (see Bottoms, 1995; Garland, 2010). Criticisms have been expressed by several scholars, who argue that USP, and, broadly, criminal justice policies are a political construct shaped by other factors, such as political consent and conflict (Beckett, 1997; Simon, 2007; Selmini, 2020; Ceretti and Cornelli 2013; Mosconi, 2017). In the international literature the subject was never fully problematized, with the notable exception of work by Beckett (1997) who, rejecting the "democracy-at-work" thesis, showed that law and order policies result from a top-down approach, with politicians (and the media) setting the tune. The focus on the role of political factors as determinants of law and order policies and practices was addressed, in a wider picture, by Garland (2001), who analyzed dynamics of state sovereignty and re-distributions of power and the influence of public discourse about crime on collective sensibilities, and by Simon (2007), who described criminal policies as part of a broader political agenda of "governing through crime". In Europe, the issue was examined, among others, by

Downes and Morgan (2007), in terms of political conflicts; by Crawford (1997, 2002) who focused on how governance unfolds at the local level; and by Edwards and Hughes (2012) from the perspective of "regime analysis". More recently, Kübler and De Maillard (2022) showed empirically how political ideology influenced European mayors' adherence to a law and order approach, while Wenzelburger & Staff (2017) explored the divergent development of these policies in the UK and Germany in relation to political conflicts and balances of powers. This literature represent a useful starting point to develop similar lines of research in Italy as well, aimed at understanding whether a bottom -up model is at work, or, as the literature mentioned above claims, we need to look more carefully to a model "top-down", in which political needs are the determinants of USP, and, broadly, of criminal justice policies, and fear of crime and feelings of insecurity are strongly influenced and reinforced more by political campaigns and initiatives and law reforms than by crime trends or increase in disorder and incivilities. Research in this field would allow to answer to most important – and still open – questions – about USP in Italy and their determinants, filling a gap and improving studies that still remains at a very descriptive level.

There are several other knowledge gaps that need to be filled. Just to mention some of them, the analysis of the result of data from victimization surveys need to be improved as well: in spite of the good quality of the surveys carried on by Istat, the findings have rarely been taken into consideration not only by policy- makers, but also by scholars. As shown by our discussion in this paper, the studies on the relation between crime and migration should also improve, with more research on the type of crime committed by immigrants, and more attention on how to the different nationalities of immigrants influence their involvement in crime. Both the academic debate, and the public discourse on crime and security would benefit from these new lines of research, making USP more based on rigorous knowledge and less influenced by political dynamics and replication of models.

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Reflections on developments in urban security across europe over the last 30 years: trends and enduring tensions

Adam Crawford

Abstract

This article reflects on the learning, developmental trends and research evidence accumulated over the last 30 years in relation to crime prevention and urban safety in Europe, with a particular focus on urban policies and city-level strategies delivered through multi-sectoral partnerships. Intrinsically, it focuses on commonalities rather than divergences. It draws on an international review of urban security research, interventions, policies and practices conducted as part of a European Horizon 2020 project entitled *Innovative Approaches to Urban Security* (IcARUS). Scoping reviews of interventions in four focus areas – preventing juvenile delinquency, preventing organised crime and trafficking, preventing radicalisation leading to violent extremism, and the design and management of public spaces - were supplemented by interviews with international experts at the forefront of shaping the knowledge base during the period. Here, consideration is given to some broad trends, trajectories, persisting fault-lines and recurring challenges that feature over time and across jurisdictions. Despite divergent pathways, uneven developments and country-specific programmes that reflect political, cultural, legal/constitutional and economic differences, broad trends and developments are discernible. Against a backdrop of changes in the nature and level of crime and insecurity, the emergence of new harms and significant innovations in digitalisation and technologies, these include the growing importance of design features, place-based interventions, problem-oriented approaches, partnership relations, user engagement and gender implications. Finally, a number of enduring tensions that have restricted progress are explored including institutional responsibility for prevention, data sharing and the dissonance between the research knowledge base and contemporary policy and practice.

Keywords: Crime prevention, Urban security, Public space, Partnerships, Research/Policy nexus

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Reflections on developments in urban security across europe over the last 30 years: trends and enduring tensions

1. Introduction

The latter part of the twentieth century saw pioneering initiatives that firmly placed urban safety on the policy agenda of city authorities across Europe. Where crime prevention and urban security had been assumed the sole responsibility of the (national state) police, a new approach emerged that embraced a pluralised and multilateral logic. From the early establishment of the Swedish National Crime Prevention Council (Brå) in 1975, the first in the world and the landmark Bonnemaison report (1982) that shaped the French approach, through the influential work of the Home Office Research and Planning Unit in the 1980s and the Morgan Report (1991) in the UK, to the *Città sicure* programme in Italy (Selmini, 2004; 2005), the new millennium heralded a new thinking and infrastructure to deliver what Tuck (1988) described as a major 'shift in paradigm'. This 'preventive turn' in crime control policy was intimately tied to a 'new mode of governing crime' defined, at the time, by Garland (2001) as a 'de-differentiated' response that is not compartmentalised but affords a generalised activity built into the routines and consciousness of all citizens and organisations. This novel approach recognised that the levers and causes of crime lie far from the traditional reach of the criminal justice system. It acknowledged that there is no single agency solution to crime, which is multi-faceted in both its causes and effects. Furthermore, it recognised the need for responses to crime that reflect its multiple aetiology; allowing for holistic approaches that are 'problem-focused' rather than 'bureaucracy-premised' and affording the potential co-ordination and pooling of expertise, information and resources (Crawford, 1997). Much has been learned across the interconnected fields of crime prevention, community safety and urban security in terms of the scholarly knowledge base and 'what works', policy development and professional practice (Sherman, Farrington, Welsh and MacKenzie, 2002; Crawford, 2009). Collectively, these now constitute a loosely defined domain where divergent disciplines and organisational interests coalesce, as exemplified by the focus in research and policy on city-level municipal authorities as the multi-stakeholder delivery mechanisms for joined-up approaches to the prevention of crime, harm and vulnerability (Tilley, 2009; Selmini, 2010).

This article reflects on broad developments and trends in urban safety across Europe over the last 30 years or so. Intrinsically, it focuses on commonalities rather than divergences across countries. It draws on an international review of the English language research literature (published since 1992) conducted as part of a European Com-

mission funded Horizon 2020 research project *IcARUS: Innovative Approaches to Urban Security* (Crawford, Donkin and Weirich, 2022). Scoping reviews of interventions in four focus areas – preventing juvenile delinquency, preventing organised crime and trafficking, preventing radicalisation leading to violent extremism, and the design and management of public spaces - were supplemented by interviews with urban security practitioners (n=18) in the six cities engaged in the IcARUS project (Lisbon, Nice, Riga, Rotterdam, Stuttgart and Turin) and key international experts (n=19) who have been at the forefront of shaping the knowledge base and invested in the application of research in multi-sectoral practices. Interview material is used selectively throughout to illustrate some of the arguments and viewpoints presented[1].

A recurring theme that runs throughout centres around why – despite the intense early innovations in theory and practice inaugurated in the 1980s and 1990s – crime prevention has **not** become a more central feature in the governance of crime and urban safety. While preventive healthcare practice, by contrast, has advanced profoundly over the equivalent period, the same cannot be said of crime prevention policy and urban security practices. Moreover, the hesitant and uneven 'preventive turn' and growth in urban security over the last three decades has coincided with the historic international decline in aggregate crime rates, notably in traditional offences. This trend is mirrored across jurisdictions and cannot simply be traced to country-specific causal factors. When asked about key changes over the last 30 years, British criminologist, Ken Pease noted in interview:

> The most significant change is the global crime drop… The second is the migration of crime from physical space to cyberspace. This is important for many reasons, of which two of the most important are first that until now offenders had to find their victims. Now 'phishing' means that victims find themselves. Send 1,000 messages and the ten who answer are your victims. The second reason is that policing based on territorially-defined areas of responsibility is increasingly irrelevant, with the obvious implications for enforcement.

While the extent of the crime drop may be contested (Matthews, 2016), notably given the growth of cyber-en-

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1 Interview data cited in this article are drawn from the IcARUS Review (Crawford, Donkin and Weirich, 2022), which also includes details of interviewees and methodology; available at https://www.icarus-innovation.eu/d2-1-the-changing-face-of-urban-security-research-a-review-of-accumulated-learning/

abled crime (Levi, 2017), there is little doubt that preventive interventions have played a role in this historic turn-around in aggregate crime rates in relation to traditional property crimes and public offending (Farrell, Tseloni, Mailley and Tilley, 2011; Farrell, Tilley and Tseloni, 2014). However, despite this apparent 'success', crime prevention remains under-resourced, poorly implemented and little championed politically (Waller, 2013; 2019). In part, this may be attributed to a 'measurement paradox' in that urban security interventions often suffering a lack of observability. It is both difficult to evaluate preventive interventions and hard to communicate the success of prevention. There are evident challenges associated with measuring and quantifying prevention as a 'non-event' – something that does not actually occur. Additionally, the desired outcome or preventive effect may be distant in time. Hence, the relative advantage or benefit of prevention are often delayed, deferred and diluted. Reflecting on progress across the years, Canadian criminologist, Irvin Waller noted in interview:

> We are left wondering why we cannot implement measures that we know will work, reduce crime, and cost less for law and order… The most important conceptual insight is that politicians talk about prevention but do not do it, in part because they are not familiar with the evidence and in part because they are overly influenced by the special interests of police, lawyers and prisons.

As a result, communicating the successes of crime prevention and the effectiveness of early interventions in ways that elicit long-term political commitment and organisational change remains an enduring challenge. In the absence of necessary political leadership, appropriate levels of resources and institutional commitment from relevant stakeholders remain limited. Nonetheless, significant advances have been made. Let us first consider some of the key findings from the IcARUS Review before highlighting a number of developmental trends and persistent tensions across the period.

2. Key Findings

2.1 Design, Innovation and Public Space

There has long been recognition that occurrence and placement of crime can be influenced by situational measures through modifications to the immediate physical environment (Clarke, 1995). Furthermore, history reminds us that much prevention serves largely as an attempt to 'retrofit' solutions to novel criminal opportunities that are created by technologies and social change. The great aspiration at the heart of the 'paradigm shift' that Tuck (1988) and others heralded some 35 years ago was that anticipation and incremental experimentation would be routinely built into the design of new technologies, services and products. Realising this aspiration, however, has proved problematic. It has met cultural and institutional

obstacles, including a reluctance to embrace experimentation and organisational learning within the public sector and from commercial logics within the private sector – where crime consequences often constitute a relatively small business imperative. The design of motor vehicle security and the subsequent decrease in vehicle-related crime is a notable example, albeit one that took considerable governmental leverage to effect change (Maxfield and Clarke, 2004). Anticipating the potential criminogenic opportunities generated by technological innovations, designs and urban planning was supposed to inform the logic of the UK Crime and Disorder Act 1998, by requiring local authorities to take anticipated crime consequences into consideration when making policy decisions[2]. Yet, despite being initially lauded as a radical advance in preventive urban security planning (Moss and Pease, 1999), the legislation has been little used across the subsequent decades. According to Moss (2010, p. 251), implementation has been "at best, lukewarm and at worst, nonexistent".

Nonetheless, there has been a growing appreciation that design modifications to the built environment and public spaces of cities can foster urban security. Dating back to Jane Jacobs' pioneering critique of urban planning, it had long been recognised that place-based features of local community and "the intricate, almost unconscious networks of voluntary controls and standards" (Jacobs, 1961, p. 32) influence crime and urban safety. Subsequently, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) (Jeffery 1971), Secured by Design and 'defensible space' theories (Newman, 1972) have all offered important insights that have informed practical measures. In resultant years, the influence of the CPTED principles of natural surveillance, natural access control, territorial reinforcement, maintenance and management have been considerable and wide-ranging, particularly with regard to security in public spaces. These have informed diverse design interventions to address a range of security problems. The use of CPTED principles had become widespread by the mid-2000s, being used in numerous counties, and endorsed by the European Union through its European Committee for Standardization, which sought to provide a handbook for EU members (Davey and Wootton, 2016).

All of these developments drew the design, regulation and management of public spaces into sharper focus. In their application, however, some of these CPTED principles and 'defensible space' theories with overt surveillance as deterrence have been interpreted and implemented in overly crude ways, resulting in a tendency to prioritise security outcomes at the expense of other values and benefits of public spaces; be they social, cultural,

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2 Section 17 of the 1998 Act imposed a duty on local authorities, in exercising their various functions, to consider the crime and disorder implications of any new policies and the need to do all that they reasonably could to prevent crime and disorder in their area.

environmental, educational or health-related. This has seen the securitisation and sanitisation of public spaces, often paying insufficient attention to aesthetics and the impact on public perceptions. One of the deep ironies of some urban security interventions through environmental design has been that in their implementation overt forms of security can foster perceptions of insecurity by alerting citizens to potential risks and heightening sensibilities. Vulnerability-led design responses or too great an emphasis on security can promote fear of crime and insecurity, with adverse implications for wellbeing.

Across jurisdictions, there has been a propensity to prefer technological solutions – often hardware – as opposed to human solutions in addressing security concerns, with less regard for the intersection and interaction between social and technological processes. The most evident example has been the use of CCTV in public spaces. A large swathe of research has shown that CCTV has been implemented too indiscriminately with insufficient regard to the benefits, outcomes, costs and their sustainability within specified contexts. When used as an independent prevention element, CCTV seems to lack any particularly effective results. Reflecting on developments across European cities over the years, Elizabeth Johnston – Director of the European Forum for Urban Security (Efus)[3] – commented in interview:

> One of the most important lessons for us - but I'm not sure that it's been translated back into policy - is the fact that CCTV and technology in general has been evaluated and its relevance and effectiveness have been shown to be limited to certain cases and certain situations, which has been very useful for those who have been reading the research. But, has that lesson been totally taken on? No! Clearly not, so there's a discrepancy... One of the lessons we can take away from research is that it's saying the effectiveness is obviously not proven in the ways that we're still currently using CCTV.

By contrast, research has highlighted the value of compliance strategies that decentre the police and engage informal actors, civil society mediators and forms of persuasion, self-regulation and capacity building, rather than resort to coercive law enforcement, police, prosecution and punishment. By putting the community back into public space, a sense of ownership and guardianship over the space can emerge. Popular activities placed at the heart of empty public spaces can reclaim the space for legitimate users and foster perceptions of safety. In turn, this can increase natural surveillance and hence the risk of detection of criminal and undesirable activities. The challenge is how public spaces, as places that accommodate and welcome a diversity of use, can remain welcoming and lightly regulated through mechanisms that engage users and beneficiaries alike.

The inappropriateness of overly-securitised design interventions in public spaces was most acutely felt and acknowledged in the design and regulatory strategies first implemented in privately-owned 'quasi-public' spaces – such as shopping malls, amusement parks, recreational facilities, etc. – where commercial logics frequently take precedence over overt securitisation (Johnston and Shearing, 2003; Crawford, 2011). Resultantly, many cities have witnessed a cross-fertilisation of security interventions from the commercial sector into municipal strategies, whereby through a 'process of naturalisation' regulation has become embedded into the physical infrastructure and social routines in ways that are less noticeable, more aesthetically pleasing and unthreatening. The balance between security concerns and other public goods or private pursuits was an early lesson learned in the business and retail sector where security concerns often clashed with commercial imperatives. As Braithwaite (2003) highlights there is a very different history of policing and prevention to be derived from the business regulatory field as distinct from the 'police-prisons' arena. In this vein, some time ago, I noted: "*In reality, both criminology and government policy were relative late-comers to a preventive way of thinking*" (Crawford, 2007, pp. 900-901).

Hence, there remained a tension between the priority accorded to crime prevention and security against other benefits, uses and values, notably with regard to the dangers of over-securitisation of public spaces (Cozens and Love, 2017). Hence, so-called 'second generation CPTED' sought to integrate concepts of social organisation, 'collective efficacy' and community development to redress the imbalance with opportunity reduction in physical places. It also sought to include principles of political economy, community connectedness and cultural diversity that were too often ignored in earlier applications. A preoccupation with technological fixes to urban security problems increasingly became tempered by this broadening of the design focus. More generally, the language of 'security', with its future-orientation and preventive implications, increasingly came to influence urban governance and local safety policies, in part bolstered by the increased role of the private sector in municipal preventative partnerships.

Urban public space has become the crucible in which much of the politics of safety is played out and enacted. For city managers and civic leaders, the quality and use of public space - in which security and perceptions of safety play a fundamental part - has become a defining feature of the identity and promotion of European cities. From a focus on safer nightlife and the presentation of cities as safe places for visitors, investors and businesses, security has become a defining feature of the urban economy and city marketing. Concerns over political violence and threats of terrorism have added to this trend. So too – in a very different way – the Covid-19 pandemic reinforced the salience of locality and importance of public space and citizens' relation to it.

For some, the securitisation of public space has be-

3   See: https://efus.eu/

come a new frame for managing political conflict, poverty and the visible manifestations of social inequality. In interview, Rossella Selmini asserted:

> I think there is a stronger and stronger connection in terms of terminology, definitions, priorities, policies, etc., between urban security and the control of political dissent. It is as if the control of public spaces is now merging… At the same time, you are using the same type of tools and rules to control protests in public space as with controlling the poor immigrants from begging on the corner. The "old" matter of poverty marginality has shifted toward control of political dissent, and the connection is public space.

Urban public spaces are inevitably contested places infused with different and competing economic, social and organisational interests, where commercial and business imperatives converge with moral claims over appropriate behaviour and conditions of citizenship. Concerns about the limitations of criminal justice and the ineffectiveness of penal sanctions have also fostered a blurring of administrative/civil and criminal orders and regulations (Selmini and Crawford, 2017). This has seen a growing resort to administrative regulation and civil laws (or quasi-civil laws such as anti-social behaviour regulation), as means of effecting and implementing crime prevention and urban security. It has also prompted the creative use of administrative sanctions in responding to organised crime and trafficking, by disrupting the business models and underlying structures of organisation (Huisman and Nelen, 2007).

2.2 Community Engagement and the (En)gendering of urban security

Recent years have seen greater emphasis given to the importance of community engagement and recognition of citizens as co-producers of security. This has highlighted the diversity of uses, experiences and expectations of public spaces and security interventions. This has raised fundamental questions not only about the relationship between public services and citizens but also about expertise and the appropriate knowledge that should inform programme innovation. It has re-centred design and implementation around an intervention's beneficiaries and users rather than the interests of funding authorities and designers. This has fostered new ways of collecting relevant information to inform security interventions. Commencing with the birth of victimisation surveys, diverse mechanisms have been deployed to seek to elicit insights from citizens and local user-groups. Reflecting on early developments, Dutch criminologist Jan van Dijk, a key early proponent of victimisation surveys, commented in interview:

> I think symbolically when you do a victimisation survey, you break the monopoly of the police on the topic. In the old days, they were the ones who collected the statis-

tics and manipulated them. So, it was totally within their universe. When you have victimisation survey data, you changed the rules of the game… So, I see the victimisation survey, more than I did in the past, as an extremely important tool in the democratisation process.

Increased recognition of the need to engage populations that are the targets of interventions as active co-producers and agents of change rather than as passive recipients of services has fostered human-centred approaches to design and implementation that are sensitive to local context and the nature of social interactions therein. Nonetheless, this remains very much a work in progress, particularly with regard to local beneficiaries and users. South African Director of Fixed, Barbara Holtmann, noted in interview:

> Lived experience is very often ignored. When it comes to crime statistics, the reality in most communities is that you can tell people they are safe until you are blue in the face, but if they don't experience it or perceive it to be true, it doesn't matter. So, there needs to be a much bigger conversation about how we value different kinds of data, because that will influence the way we capture data and what we do with the data.

Across the years, victimisation survey findings and other mechanisms of engagement with beneficiaries and users have also highlighted the differential use and experiences of security and space among diverse groups, as well as across different parts of cities. Recognition that crime and harm are both socially and spatially concentrated and that they compound other forms of social disadvantages and vulnerabilities has highlighted the considerable gender differences in both perceptions and experiences of crime and victimisation.

In many ways, much of the knowledge base concerning the prevention of crime and insecurity has traditionally been constructed in relation to male offending and risks presented largely by male activities. So too, urban security responses have largely been delivered by male-dominated institutions and organisations. In more subtle ways, some of the assumptions that have informed broad theories – such as rational choice and routine activity theories have frequently posited an implicit male 'autonomous individual' as its assumed foundation. Across time, the growing focus on victims of crime, fear of crime and the adverse impact of perceptions of insecurity introduced a decidedly gendered understanding of urban security in ways that challenged the dominant male focus and related gendered assumptions. Consequently, there has been a growing importance of gender in framing urban security in terms of both the lived experiences of security and the production of safety, notably in relation to the use and quality of public spaces and domestic abuse as a community issue (Stanko, 1990; Ceccato and Nalla, 2020). In interview, Caroline Davey noted:

> Obviously, gender is a big factor in terms of offending behaviour. It's also a factor in terms of the victims of of-

fences. And there are gender differences related to feelings of insecurity. But there's also a gender dimension in terms of the types of solutions that are preferred. There is research highlighting the fact that the focus on technology solutions – or on more aggressive interventions – is something that's coming from a more masculine perspective. There's a need for a different approach to security that is more understanding of human beings – more connected to their experiences, to their feelings. So, gender is really something that runs through the security domain – from the design of public space, through the use of urban environments to offending behaviour.

Most notably, there are significant gender differences with regard to perceptions of safety in public spaces across Europe. Over time, there have been some improvements, as measured by the European Social Survey, since 2002/3 (when the survey first ran). Throughout Europe, overall feelings of safety have generally improved for both genders but women remain between 2.5 and 5.7 times more likely to feel unsafe than men in almost all countries (Fitzgerald, 2021). Overall gender differences remain stubbornly persistent. Consequently, new approaches are now being advocated the design of public spaces – such as urban parks – that incorporate an explicit gender dimension (The Safer Parks Consortium, 2023), although these remain few and far-between.

3. Key Trends and Tensions

Let us now consider a number of paradoxes, highlighting key trends and enduring tensions borne out by the IcARUS Review. Here, I focus on three inter-related issues – problem-oriented processes, the limitations of a 'what works' approach and data exchange – all with implications for multi-sectoral partnership working and responsibility.

3.1 Problem-oriented approaches

There has been a gradual, hesitant and, in many senses, reluctant recognition of the importance of applying 'process models' of problem-solving that seek to tailor responses to the context of local problems and populations, rather than applying 'off the shelf' universal solutions. Initially elaborated in relation to policing by Herman Goldstein (1979; 1990) in the US over fifty years ago, problem-oriented methodologies have provided robust process-based frameworks through which to specify and better understand the nature of given crime and security problem and guide practitioners towards better-quality interventions and their implementation. In essence, problem-oriented approaches challenge public authorities to: identify specific problems; engage in structured efforts to better understand the underlying causes that generate these problems using a wide range of relevant data, information sources and analytical techniques; think creatively about the most appropriate response to prevent or miti-

gate a given problem by involving partners who are affected by or responsible for the problem; and, assess the impact of implemented measures.

Tailoring interventions to particular issues and contexts, problem-solving approaches highlight the key processes involved. They are encapsulated by the SARA model that incorporates scanning, analysis, response and assessment (Eck and Spelman, 1987) and the '5Is' framework of intelligence, intervention, implementation, involvement and impact (Ekblom, 2011). Collectively, they foster approaches that work outwards from defining the specific crime or security problem, engaging with the end-users and beneficiaries of an intervention as the basis for a more effective approach that builds context, implementation and evaluation into the intervention design from the outset.

Yet, as Bullock, Sidebottom, Laycock and Tilley (2022a) have shown, the implementation and adoption of problem-oriented approaches in the context of policing has not followed a neat pattern of diffusion of innovation that might have been anticipated. Some European countries have neither embraced nor adopted a problem-solving approach. In jurisdiction where they have, cultural obstacles to fostering change at the frontline have been substantial, notably within the police (Chan, 2007). The unobservability that hinders much urban security and crime prevention interventions, as well as its complexity, has been notable, so too has the apparent incompatibility of problem-oriented approaches with prevailing norms and values of police organisations. Simply put, police lack a suitably receptive organisational culture and absorptive capacity to accommodate proactive problem-solving as opposed to reactive crime-fighting. Goldstein noted as much in 2018 at his acceptance of the Stockholm Prize for Criminology:

> I have grown accustomed to viewing successful efforts to implement POP [Problem-Oriented Policing] – when carried out in all of its full dimensions – as episodic rather than systematic; as the results of relatively isolated cells of initiative, energy and competence. I view these pockets of achievement as exciting and pointing the way but sprinkled among a vast sea of police operations that remain traditional and familiar (Goldstein, 2018, p. 3).

Despite all the organisational and technological developments, which should have enabled greater progress, a genuinely problem-oriented approach remains stubbornly unfulfilled (see Bullock et al., 2022b). Gloria Laycock reflected in interview:

> I think we've got a huge amount of knowledge about how to solve problems… And I think the police need to behave like engineers. They need to experiment. They need to try things. They need to see if they work or not. The trouble with police culture is they're not allowed to fail. And if you're experimenting, you are taking risks and you're risking failure. And there's a huge cultural reluctance to take risks for all sorts of understandable reasons.

Fostering an organisational culture that is open to experimentation and learning through experimentation remains challenging. This is true of other public services, not only the police. Some years ago, Ekblom and Pease (1995, p. 636) suggested that all those involved in the evaluation and design process "should move towards the willingness to fail and the readiness to learn from failure". However, nearly thirty years on, there remains a pervasive fear of failure, a culture of risk aversion and trepidation of genuine experimentation.

Recurring operational barrier to implementation and delivery include weak scanning and analysis, an over-reliance on police data, responses that tend to emphasise traditional enforcement and poor evaluation of the impact and outcomes of specific interventions adopted (e.g. Scott, 2000; Goldstein, 2018). Reflecting on progress over the years, Nick Tilley commented in interview:

> I still think that our efforts to understand local problems and draw on evidence in order to try and figure out strategic ways of responding is not really functioning as I'd hoped it would [over 25 years ago]. I'm pleased that it's still happening after a fashion, but disappointed, it's been so slow and disappointed that the development has been so uneven. I would have hoped for steady progress. If you think of the literature on diffusion of innovation you would expect there to be a slow take up, for things to take place slowly, then to be a rapid increase and then to plateau as adoption becomes almost universal. That has not happened in problem-oriented policing.

Evidence shows that problem-oriented approaches to policing and crime prevention «was often perceived to be highly complex to deliver, and required a great deal of maintenance and attention over time» (Bullock, Sidebottom, Laycock and Tilley, 2022a, p. 401). It was also difficult to evidence the impact of preventive problem-oriented (POP) approaches. A recent UK review of the impact of problem-oriented policing concluded: «despite extensive evidence for and endorsement of POP, it has not become the modus operandi of British policing» (Sidebottom et al., 2020, p. 4).

One of the key limitations that constrained the implementation of problem-oriented policing is that it has focused on problems that fall within the police remit from the perspective of the police organisation alone. This police-centric perspective recasts social problems as police problems and sees the locus of the response to those social problems through the lens of policing, yet the levers to the problems often lie far from the reach of the police. Hence, problem-oriented approaches in urban security demand an inter-organisational partnership approach involving a plurality of stakeholders and knowledgeable actors. The tendency of the police to 'go it alone' has stymied the adoption and routinisation of problem-based processes. As Greenhalgh, Robert, Macfarlane, Bate and Kyriakidou (2004, p. 612) note in the context of healthcare reform: "*The more complex the implementation that is needed for a particular innovation, the greater the signifi-*

cance of the inter-organisational network will be to the implementation's success". Most urban security problems cut across the capabilities and know-how of diverse organisation, some for whom specific problems may only be a peripheral concern. Hence, securing their engagement will often be problematic. Harnessing the different competencies, responsibilities, resources and skills is an added burden.

3.2 The Limitations of 'What Works'

The 'what works' movement in crime prevention and policing has played an important role in advancing the evidence base and in championing the value of research-led policy and practice. It has helped foster a robust argument in support of the view that urban security practices would be substantially improved by more systematic attention to, and application of, evidence about the effects of strategies and interventions. However, the focus on outcome measurement and the methodologies associated with the 'what works' and evidence-based policing movements (Sherman, Farrington, Welsh and MacKenzie, 2002; Sherman, 1998) have tended to down-play the importance of implementation processes and context. They have preferred to emphasise assumed causal links between mechanisms (interventions) and outcomes patterns. The approach advocated tends to advance a narrow understanding of 'evidence' and 'science'. It posits a clear hierarchy of knowledge informed by a ranking of methodologies with random control trials (RCTs) at its apex - epitomised by the Maryland Scale of Scientific Methods (Sherman, 2009). Yet RCTs strip away the complexities of reality in an effort to isolate certain factors. Such contextual factors, however, may be central to a programme's execution and impact. Whilst RCTs provide strong internal validity, they do not tell us much about whether we could replicate that intervention in another context (Hough, 2010). They embody a linear notion of causality. Yet for complex social phenomena, not only are causes multiple, but feedback loops may make them more circular in effect.

Consequently, there has been a tendency to search for universal solutions under the banner of 'what works'. This has drawn attention away from the situated and contextualised features of local places. Furthermore, insufficient regard is accorded to which groups of people benefit from particular interventions or design features within specific contexts or settings at a given time. The 'what works' quest for generalisability and universal solutions, tends to fly in the face of and sit awkwardly with process-oriented and problem-based approaches. In interview, Paul Ekblom noted:

> Preventive interventions have to be intelligently customised to problem and context; success stories cannot simply be copied cookbook-fashion. Intelligent replication requires a process that customises action to problem

and context. In this respect, replication will always involve some degree of innovation, trial, feedback and adjustment, whether minor or major. This, in turn, places requirements on the kind and format of knowledge that security practitioners possess, and the institutional context of implementation.

Urban security interventions involve intentional interaction within complex social systems. Differing groups, people and technologies interact with programme components in diverse ways. The human dimensions of implementation and programme reception are adaptive, resulting in changes to the intervention and how it is received, used and translated. There is inbuilt complexity in the chains of action, interaction, feedback and adaptation. As Greenhalgh et al. (2004, p. 615) note in relation to healthcare:

> herein lies a paradox. Context and 'confounders' lie at the very heart of the diffusion, dissemination, and implementation of complex innovations. They are not extraneous to the object of study; they are an integral part of it. The multiple (and often unpredictable) interactions that arise in particular contexts and settings are precisely what determine the success or failure of a dissemination initiative.

The contribution of insights from realist evaluations has been vital in highlighting and advancing understandings of the interactions between context, mechanisms and configurations of outcome patterns (Pawson and Tilley, 1997; Pawson, 2013). Realist methodologies provide a framework for thinking about features other than effect size. Crucially, they highlight theories of change and focus attention on factors too frequently ignored in the (notably quasi-experimental) research – namely context and implementation. Moreover, these features are precisely the kinds that are frequently central to the concerns and interests of policy-makers and practitioners. As Nick Tilley, a prominent promoter of realist evaluations, argued in interview:

> 'What works' is a terrible phrase because it's an unspecified universal… I rail against the use of that kind of language because built into the phrase 'what works' is the unspoken 'always and under all conditions'. I don't believe there are many, if any, [interventions] where that holds. So, if I could wave my magic wand, I would always have discrete evaluations saying 'this worked'. Findings of evaluations are always in the past tense. They are always: 'this worked here, in this population'.

Building upon these realist insights, recent efforts have been given to developing ways to combine discussions of measurement effects and their size together with other dimensions of importance to practitioners and that enable us to assess the quality and applicability of evaluation evidence. A notable example is the EMMIE scale (Bowers, Tompson, Sidebottom, Bullock and Johnson, 2017), which seeks to provide evidence that equips policy-makers and practitioners with 'actionable knowledge' (Antona-

copoulou, 2007) in a format that helps users to access and understand the evidence quickly. It asserts that to provide a framework for learning from interventions, evaluations should provide evidence and information on all the following: the overall **E**ffect direction and size – alongside significant unintended effects – of an intervention and the confidence that should be placed on that estimate; the **M**echanisms or mediators activated by the intervention, policy or practice in question; the **M**oderators or contexts relevant to the production or non-production of intended and significant unintended effects of different sizes; the process of **I**mplementation that highlights key sources of success and failure in implementing the intervention, policy or practice; and the **E**conomic costs and benefits associated with the intervention, policy or practice (Johnson, Tilley and Bowers, 2015, p. 463). Developed in conjunction with the UK College of Policing, the EMMIE framework now informs the crime reduction toolkit, which provides a useful resource for practitioners[4]. In large part, the latter three elements all relate to external validity. However, the trouble remains that most robust research evaluations of crime prevention and security interventions today still do not apply a realist methodology and frequently tell us little, if anything, about factors such as context or implementation, let alone costs. This means that any review of the evaluation literature and certainly any meta-review of reviews, can only provide a partial account as the (scientific) knowledge base largely only focuses on only two of the five elements within the EMMIE framework. As such, the knowledge base shines a light more clearly on the relationship between interventions and outcome effects, and is much less revealing about the contexts, implementation or costs of interventions.

3.3 Data Sharing and the Dynamics of Partnership Working

It has long been recognised that in its design and implementation crime prevention and urban security interventions demand collaboration through multi-stakeholder responses and the police alone cannot prevent crime. However, delivering effective problem-oriented partnerships remains decidedly problematic (Berry, Briggs, Erol and van Staden, 2011; Crawford and Cunningham, 2015; Bullock et al., 2022b). Enduring challenges pertain to the pursuit of multi-stakeholder urban security networks through horizontal exchanges of shared information, knowledge, resources or other transactions that cut across vertical intra-organisational priorities, and which pay scant regard to the task of managing inter-organisational relations. Despite – or maybe because of – considerable advances enabled by digitalisation in the volume, variety and velocity of data and advances in data science methodologies and analytic capabilities – including victimisation

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4   See https://www.college.police.uk/research/crime-reduction-toolkit

surveys and advanced quantitative techniques and visualisation – the quality and availability of data to inform robust intervention design, decision-making and evaluation remain problematic. Data sharing and data linkage are some of the most intractable and contentious aspects of urban security practice. A pervasive and deeply ingrained reluctance to share information between agencies persists, informed by technological, legal, organisational and cultural barriers to data exchange. Despite government guidance encouraging information sharing between organisations, the full benefit of data linkage and connected public sector administrative and routine data, remains an elusive goal.

Given the siloed nature of data and the different processes through which data are defined, collected and stored – as well as the variable quality of administrative data – the issue of data sharing and information exchange sits at the heart of urban security partnerships. Information exchange itself can be a source of conflict particularly in the context of crime control where information sharing is governed by complex rules and laws relating to sensitive data and privacy. Furthermore, there are problems of the non-interoperability of data across different organisational systems for data management. Nonetheless, good quality data enable the better understanding of the nature and distribution of local crime and disorder related problems, establish local problem profiles and produce a local strategy specifically aimed at preventing the problems.

Gloria Laycock noted in interview that: "*If you take the view that you're trying to prevent crime on a problem-solving basis, then you need to be very clear on what the problem is, and that means you need data*". Good quality data collection and sharing across relevant organisations, as well as ethically sensitive data management and use all allow for effective joined-up service provision. They afford opportunities for joint analysis and coordinated working between relevant agencies, provide the capacity to track and support individuals and families through service provision/diverse interventions and assess their trajectories. They also provide an evidence-base from which to assess effectiveness, ensure the best use of resources and afford opportunities to monitor performance and render services accountable. And yet progress on this front has been slow and disjointed.

One of the practical ways of overcoming problems with data sharing has been through the establishment of co-located multi-disciplinary teams, where interpersonal trust and denser reciprocal relations become key lubricants (Crawford and L'Hoiry, 2017). While, information exchange and informal working practices can provide a valuable basis for communication and negotiation, they come with certain risks. Hence, balanced information exchange also demands mutual understanding of the limits and legal constraints in which the sharing of sensitive data can be done ethically.

4. Concluding Reflections

Across time, there has been an uneven trajectory in the political fortunes of crime prevention and urban security influenced by exceptional events and the vagaries of political priorities, which has seen the ebb and flow of investments in prevention with a shifting focus as political priorities change. Narrow electoral horizons and short-termism continually serve to undermine the necessary investment in long-term preventive solutions and a fundamental shift away from traditional punitive responses to crime and harm. There also remain enduring and entrenched political demands for uniform and eye-catching solutions – 'silver bullets' – that can be applied, almost regardless of context or the nature of the specific problem. The IcARUS Review reveals a considerable discrepancy between the evolving knowledge base and contemporary urban security policy and practice.

One of the central challenges in synthesising the knowledge base is that most of the research has been written by and for researchers and has tended to focus on exploring narrow questions of internal validity and methodological robustness. Much of the research literature has reified the value of methodological rigour and advanced an unhelpfully rigid hierarchy of evidence. In its quest for 'what works', it has paid insufficient regard to the relational and process-based mechanisms that foster change. While the 'what works' movement has been important in fostering a robust evidence base, it has also, inadvertently, served to detach 'evidence' from the messy politics and complex realities of social relations, organisational interactions, cultural environments and situational dynamics into which crime prevention interventions must be implemented, enacted and brought to life. In its narrowing of the frame of relevance and striping out complexity and interdependencies, the 'what works' approach has advanced what some have referred to as an 'elite science' (Sparrow, 2016), ignoring the role play by practitioners in giving life to interventions and the knowledge that they bring to the resultant effectiveness of interventions, as well as public perceptions. Yet, these stubborn features shape reality.

Consequently, there remain insufficient understandings of the ways in which social context shapes successful outcomes and the nature and extent to which particular preventive mechanisms are context-determined or context-dependent. This is not to argue the relativistic case that context is everything, but rather a need to balance place-based understandings of how contexts shape outcomes while drawing lessons from successfully evaluated interventions that afford replication, application and adaption from one place to another. As Frank Weerman noted in interview:

> Research has become better because we adopted rigorous methods and experiments or quasi-experimental research. But we also lost something with that [focus] and that is looking at what's happening and at the individuals involved. So one thing that might be very interesting

is to combine those two. So, on the one hand, we do experimental research and evaluate effects, but at the same time, we follow the people who are carrying out the interventions over time to see what's happening and follow how individuals experience interventions and prevention programmes and what they take from them.

The overwhelming lesson from the last 30 years is that the institutional context, social interactions and resistant organisational cultures have often undermined the implementation of research-informed urban security interventions. It is not that the science is inevitably poor – although it is certainly incomplete and in some places inadequate given shifting technological and social change - but rather it is not being implemented or implemented in inappropriate ways, circumstances and situations.

Combining lesson-learning from past evidence, problem-oriented processes and human-centred design efforts with realist insights into evaluation offers a more nuanced basis upon which to construct an enriched evidence base for future interventions. However, this will also demand a different approach to relations between key actors and agents in urban security; between the communities of research, policy and frontline practitioners. It also demands an appreciation that citizens are not merely passive recipients of services but are active co-producers of urban security and agents of change. In the face of modern security challenges, there is now as great a need as ever for urban security policy-makers, practitioners and researchers to combine their knowledge, expertise and insights in ways that engage directly with those people affected by urban security programmes. To do so, will demand recognition of the limitations and constraints of different partners' motivations, values and priorities in co-designing effective interventions. This will necessitate bringing together groups that frequently have markedly different priorities and interests, with the aim of working together towards mutually agreed, shared and long-term goals. At its core lies the goal of collaborative advantage that derives not simply from the combination of differing perspectives but also in framing and shaping questions, methodologies and outcomes differently. Hence, negotiating common purpose, forging shared priorities and ensuring appreciation of the divergent contributions of differing partners are all cornerstones for mature partnerships in the co-production of urban security (Crawford, 2020).

Certainly, the last 30 years have witnessed a greater mutual recognition across these different professional sectors often forged through greater partnership working. There remains considerable scope for further collaborations that engage researchers, practitioners, policy-makers and administrators on the ground in the processes of place-based mutual learning, knowledge generation, programme co-design and implementation of the kind that the IcARUS project is advancing[5]. City governments and municipal authorities, given the breadth of their competencies and their role as local anchor institutions, have a vital role to play in harnessing these coalitions for change in ways that break free from the straight-jacket of narrow, self-interested governmental thinking and inter-professional rivalries. As Irvin Waller noted in interview: "*National systems like policing or education are siloed, whereas local governments are much closer to the outcomes and have a joint interest in a city or neighbourhood being better*". City authorities are also well placed to ensure inclusive urban security policies that serve the needs of diverse communities and address inequalities across neighbourhoods. They can bring together expertise, resources and data, as well as the commitment of multiple actors in the interests of public safety, while simultaneously balancing these with wider social value judgements that inform the ethical principles, preferences, culture and aspirations of urban societies.

In delivering problem-based preventive strategies, political leadership, public trust and institutional commitment, appropriate levels of resources and buy-in from relevant stakeholders, are all vital to the success of sustainable interventions. Demonstration projects backed by rigorous research evaluations can provide valuable insights and learning but will result in modest enduring change if they are not embedded within infrastructures that align with cultural values, and if they are not underpinned by sustainable funding and supported by long-term organisational commitments. The shifting nature of crime and the interdependencies of diverse forms of vulnerability, harm and disadvantage will require city partnerships to explore new strategies to advance prevention alongside radically different models of governance and service delivery.

However, if the genuine co-production of security is to be more than a distant ideal or hollow refrain, this will require a reformed conception of what constitutes knowledge and how it is best mobilised and deployed. Research evidence can help reshape the social world it seeks to describe. To do so, it needs first to be appropriately translated, communicated and applied to inform action and change. As decades of criminological research testify, however, the effects of research on policy are not always benign. Knowledge does not simply solve governance problems but also creates new ones. Knowledge and governance are mutually interdependent. Knowledge is enacted in and through governance and the allied processes of implementation. Hence, knowledge needs to be coupled with practical action. Genuine co-production is "not about ideas alone" nor is it "only about how people organise and express themselves, but also about what they value and how they assume responsibility for their interventions" (Jasanoff, 2004, p. 6). This demands not merely a methodology or abstract evidence base but also a practice that combines problem-raising and problem-solving.

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5   See https://www.icarus-innovation.eu/

Acknowledgements

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Urban security, public space and the control of protest.
Some lessons from Italy and Spain

Rossella Selmini

Abstract
The article discusses the connection between urban security and public order, and the related processes of criminalization of both urban marginality and protest, in two European countries, Italy and Spain. I focus on these main points. First, the criminalization pursued by both these different branches of policies is to be found in contemporary views on public space, in the changing political economy of the city, and in the increasing State authoritarianism in European democracies. Second, both urban marginality and protesters perfectly embody the idea of a public enemy, whose presence in the urban space endangers the neoliberal project of a safe, clean city. Third, the legal concepts and practices enforced to criminalize urban marginality and protest, particularly street protest, become interchangeable, and criminal justice measures are applied in combination with administrative and hybrid tools. Fifth, the shift is, at least in the Italian case, strongly connected to the "centralization turn" taken by Italian urban security policies in the first decade of 2000, when policies that were meant to be mostly preventive and "local" gradually transformed into national and more punitive public security, and ultimately public order, policies. My arguments are based on the analysis of law reforms, institutional documents, and findings from studies on the criminalization of urban marginality and of protest activities in both countries.

Keywords: urban security, criminalization, protest, public order, public space.

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Urban security, public space and the control of protest.
Some lessons from Italy and Spain

"Fioriere lives matter": an introduction

In recent years, intolerance and criminalization of protest are increasing in many countries (Di Ronco 2023; Maroto, González–Sánchez, and Brandariz, 2019; Selmini and Di Ronco, 2023; Vegh Weis 2020; Watts, 2020). In this article, I give an account of how criminalization of protest is conceptually and practically related to the development of urban security policies and their changes over the years. Some recent Italian events well exemplify how the media and the politicians –both right and left – are reframing acts of protest as threats to urban security and to the *decoro* of urban life. *Decoro* is an obsolete Italian word that refers to the ideas of cleanliness, decency and moral dignity, which acquired a normative status after being included in legislation on urban security, and is now common in the contemporary Italian public discourse on urban security.

One of the most interesting of these events involved the mayor of Florence, well known for his tough approach towards incivilities and his passion for technological urban surveillance[1]. Indeed, the city government has been leading for long the tendency to enforce a law and order approach against urban marginality, being the first Italian city to issue an order sanctioning squeegee men, and broadly paving the way to what was defined as the "new municipal criminal law" (Ruga Riva 2008). In March 2018, Idy Diane, a panhandler from Senegal, was shot in the street by an Italian, apparently mentally disturbed, man. As a reaction, the Senegal community in Florence marched in front of the municipality asking to meet the mayor, who refused. Anger and frustration prevailed among the protesters, and a few flower pots (*fioriere*) were damaged. The mayor publicly condemned the shooting, but mostly complained about the destruction of the flower pots, a statement that sparked wide outrage and gave the magazine "DinamoPress" the chance to write an ironical article titled "Fioriere lives matter" (Vicentini 2018) on how the life of a poor man from Senegal was devalued compared to the destruction of some *terracotta* pots. The public discussion on racist assaults, and on the reaction of the Senegal community, which was one of the few protests performed by immigrants in Italy, was obscured by the attention given to the issue of the *decoro* of the city.

The same happened more recently in relation to the environmental activists of *Ultima Generazione* (Last Generation), whose repertoire of action is based on dramatic attacks to monuments and blocking roads across the country. Concerns about protest as a threat to urban social order and cleanliness, particularly when historical monuments and buildings are targeted, were raised again. One of these protests occurred in March 2023, when some Last Generation activists threw red paint against the walls of Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, provoking the outraged reaction of many, including the mayor – the same mentioned above - who actively cooperated with the police in stopping the activists (Ulivelli, 2023, March 17).

In these cases, public reaction tends to focus not on the content of the protest and the political message it conveys, but on the modality through which it is performed and on the threats to the urban *decoro*, instead of on the need to seriously take action against climate change. Similarly, public discourses on incivilities and urban marginality focus on the cleanliness of the city, instead of trying to understand the underlying causes, such as poor urban maintenance because of austerity policies, lack of integration of migrants and increasing social inequalities in Italian society. Language once used to stigmatize the presence of homeless, drunks, sex workers or drug addicts in urban centers (Crocitti and Selmini, 2017) is now applied also to political activists, with the *decoro* being definitively the core concept of the new social, moral and political order of the city.

Starting from these premises, in this paper I focus on the connection between urban security and public order, and the criminalization of both urban marginality and protest.

I will discuss some approaches that try to provide a theoretical framework to understand the criminalization of both urban marginality and protest, particularly those analyzing changes in the concept of public space and in the economy of the city, and those focusing on the emergence of the "security state". I then analyze how the same tools - mostly hybrid administrative measures of preventive coercion (Ashworth and Zedner, 2014) - have been applied to urban marginality and protest, showing how the legal concepts and instruments developed to control urban marginality and street protest become interchangeable, and some definitions may apply to different types of groups population.

I discuss in depth two cases, Italy and Spain, where the link between the two dimensions is reflected in recent law reforms and is demonstrated by studies on the enforcement of national or local rules concerning both urban security and incivilities, and the control of protest. I also

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1   See for instance the interview where the mayor celebrates the thousandth CCTV camera installed in the city and promises the arrival of "new software to monitor any suspicious object or people movement" (N.n., 2019, December 30).

argue that, particularly for Italy, the blurring of boundaries between the two dimensions occurred gradually and went through steps, but has been present, though less visible, since the earlier stages of the urban security policies.

Public space, urban marginality and the new economy of the city

A rich international literature connects the emergence of new forms of punitiveness of urban marginality to the economy of the city in the neoliberal era (Beckett and Herbert 2008, 2010; Belina 2007; Peršak, 2017; Peršak and Di Ronco, 2018, 2021; Passavant 2021; Sassen 2007). In a neoliberal economy, the competition among cities to attract investments, business, consumers and tourists requires taking punitive approaches towards those social groups whose presence in the urban landscape is considered to be a threat to the city attractiveness (Beckett and Herbert, 2008). In Italian cities these "undesirable" (Belina, 2014, p. 19) populations are commonly migrants, who mostly live in the public space and whose conditions as foreigners overlaps with being homeless, panhandlers, prostitutes, drunks. They, and other social groups and phenomena, such as young people and nightlife entertainment, have been, and are, the most common targets of urban security policies whose goal is not prevention of crime and disorder, but the banishment of these groups from urban spaces redesigned for different types of users (Crocitti and Selmini, 2017; Gargiulo and Avidano 2018; Gargiulo 2019). Order maintenance becomes the priority of the Italian local governments, and a variety of regulations and new social control techniques were enforced to ensure the banishment of those social groups from urban spaces.

This is not, of course, just an Italian phenomenon. Anti-social behavior orders, trespass orders, civility laws, banishment orders and similar new "hybrid"[2] tools have sparked around many cities in the US, the UK and Europe (Beckett and Herbert, 2008, 2010; Crawford, 2009; Belina, 2007; Peršak and Di Ronco 2018, 2021; Selmini and Crawford, 2017) and have become the standard way to deal with problems that, in most cases, were considered once to be social, or urban maintenance, problems rather than criminal ones. The financial crises of local governments and the austerity policies pursued after 2008 in Italy also contributed to the shrinking of local welfare and the increase in the number of people living at the margins of the city, in a condition of "disorder" that is considered

to be incompatible with the goal of a sanitized public space, free from disturbing presences. The urban fiscal crisis, which for American cities dates back to the Seventies, implied that urban governments had to start to compete as market actors (Passavant, 2021, p. 9) in order to attract visitors and tourists, and to host mega- events and exhibitions. The need of hosting mega- events is considered particularly important for its implications in terms of social control. Mega-events that attract a huge number of people and are often the reason why protests explode, usually require narrower controls and heavier security measures, that often then remain even after the event is over, and become "institutionalized as normal policing practices" (Passavant, 2021, p. 10).

These processes undermined the attempts, made at the origins of the development of social-democrat urban security policies, to idealize public space as a context for a harmonious and civic co-existence of all people living in and using that space. An example of this effort is the campaign launched in 2004 by the regional government of Emilia- Romagna (I) – where the project *Città sicure* (Safe Cities) was based (see Cornelli, Selmini and Nobili, this volume). It promoted the slogan *Libertà e sicurezza per tutti* (Freedom and safety for everybody) which tried to convey the message that safe and free use of public spaces, without distinction of gender, age and nationality, was the main goal of urban security policies. In a similar vein, Spanish cities, with Barcelona leading the process, promoted the concept of *civismo*, that reflects the idea of a harmonious urban environment, where social conflicts are pacifically managed and civic co-existence is promoted (Pemán Gavín, 2010; Galais González, 2010). The most famous example of this approach is the 2006 Barcelona ordenance (*Ordenança de mesures per fomenter i garantir la convivencia ciutatana a l'espai public de Barcelona*), a municipal regulation that includes a wide range of rules to sanction anti-social behaviors while promoting a pedagogy of how to use public spaces minimizing conflicts and behaving "appropriately".

In the Italian case, the philosophy of "freedom and security for everybody" was replaced by punitive and exclusionary measures, very much resembling the American Zero Tolerance approaches. In Spain, the concepts of "civic co-existence" and of *civismo*, in spite of the good intentions of their promoters, resulted in administrative orders that increased control, as we see better later on, and sparked wide criticisms (Delgado Ruiz and Malet Calvo, 2009; see also Maroto Calatayud, 2016; Villacampa, 2017).

Urban crisis and the "security state": Blurring the boundaries among disorder, crime and protest

Passavant (2021) shows how the two dimensions – control of marginality and crime and of protest and dissent – albeit targeting different groups of population – equally originated from "three interrelated crises: a crisis in

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2　Hybrid tools is the definition given by Beckett and Herbert (2008, 2010) to measures that are civil at a first instance, but that then may become criminal. Simester and von Hirsch (2006) talk of "two-steps prohibition", where the first step is the breaking of a civil/administrative prohibition, and the second is the imposition of a criminal penalty. See also the concept of "preventive coercion", discussed by Ashworth and Zedner (2014).

democracy, an urban fiscal crisis, and a crime crisis" (Passavant 2021, p. 7). The aftermath of Zero Tolerance policing towards minor crime and disorder represents an important step in the shift towards criminalization of every social relation considered problematic in the public space, including protest. The "crime crisis" Zero Tolerance represented the response to legitimated the increase aggressiveness of police in a variety of different contexts. In American cities, the negotiated management approach that had been privileged for some few decades to manage protest, started to be abandoned (della Porta and Reiter, 1998; Passavant 2021; Schweingruber, 2000). Similarly, in other parts of the world, North and South, police control of the protests and the use of force have become more common, even if the lethal use of violence has decreased in some contexts (Maroto e al., 2019). Militarization of public space is another important dynamic that occurred in many contexts in recent years. In Italy, for instance, the 2008-2009 *Pacchetto sicurezza* (see later, par. 4) introduced army patrol as a routine urban security practice in city centers.

One more perspective trying to find a common framework for the increasing criminalization of incivilities, minor crime and other behaviors, including protest, focuses on the role of the "security state" (Hallsworth and Lea, 2011), which has replaced the liberal welfare state model of the post WWII period. In focusing on the role of the State and dismissing those perspectives based on "governmentality", Hallsworth and Lea (2011) interpret the increase in criminalization, punitiveness and the law and order approach in the UK as the result of a new form of State authoritarianism, in which control of any social relation that might be considered problematic is a priority. Authoritarian approaches develop at the margins, but they expand to the center of social life and institutions, through law, practices and discourses that originally address specific problems, but then are widened to cover other areas of conflict. Examples are the many practices to manage the socially excluded that are then adopted towards other groups of population, such as the extension of administrative-punitive measure from urban marginality to protest. Other examples go in the opposite direction: rules issued to criminalize serious crime and terrorism which are then enforced, through pre-emptive criminalization measures – against social movements and other individuals who have nothing to do with terrorism (Hallsworth and Lea, 2011, p. 152). Similarly, environmental protesters in Italy have recently been charged of conspiracy to commit crime (*associazione per delinquere*), a serious offence usually related to economic and organized crime (U.D, 2023, April 17); other social activists have been charged with other serious offences such as extorsion, that are, again, usually reserved for organized and economic crime (Marchio, 2021). Although not discussed in this paper, we can observe this phenomenon also in looking at how some banishment orders and discourses about violent hooliganism have been extended to deviance and political activism (Selmini 2020a, p. 109). The result is

the creation of "hybrid categories of offenders" (Sentas and Grewcock 2018, p. 76) including minor deviants and dissenters, drug addicts and terrorists, traffickers and organized crime members.

These examples can be contextualized in the extension of the State punitive approach based on two processes, defined by Hallsworth and Lea (2011) as mutual reinforcement and diffusion. The former implies that changes in one area of the criminal justice system affect changes in another, thus creating an infrastructure of control in which different fields of laws and institutional practices reinforce each other. An example, again, is the combination of criminal and administrative tools in controlling urban marginality, but also other forms of deviance and political protest as well. Diffusion refers directly to the expansion process, made possible by vague definitions (such as "risk for the security", a recurrent phrase in these laws) as shown by the rules on terrorism in the UK mentioned above.

In conclusion, the neoliberal economic and political project at the urban level on the one hand fosters social exclusion and marginality and raises protest; on the other, it promotes urban policies based on a punitive and authoritarian rationality, aimed at making the public urban space more segregated, and free from any type of disturbing presence. I discuss examples of these processes from the Italian and the Spanish cases.

The steps towards the criminalization of protest in Italian urban security policies

As described by Cornelli, Selmini and Nobili (this volume), urban security policies have a long and complicated history in Italy. I focus here on some steps of this development that can illuminate how the shift to public security and public order occurred.

In the original intention of the promoters – mostly regional and municipal governments – urban security policies were addressed to those phenomena - such as minor crime and the vague category of "incivilities" - which, in the urban environment, may potentially undermine the quality of life of communities and individuals, and increase feelings of insecurity. The original idea was that conflicts in the public space were manageable without the use of criminal justice system measures. Social and community crime prevention, in combination with situational crime prevention, were considered the best ways to deal with a new set of urban problems (Pavarini, 2004; see also Cornelli, Selmini and Nobili in this volume).

Naively, Italian local governments believed that they could have contributed to the development of a new "democratic" social and urban order, based on the "freedom and security for all" philosophy mentioned above, in which prevention of minor crime and incivilities would have been possible using administrative tools. It was a common belief in those years that administrative measures would have been less punitive and manageable than crim-

inal justice measures[3], and that the conceptualizing urban security as a separated concept from public security and public order was possible.

As Cornelli, Selmini and Nobili argue in this volume, these beliefs and good intentions were soon abandoned by many municipal governments, or replaced by national rules and laws based on a more punitive approach. I'm not discussing here in-depth the reasons why this happened[4] , but I focus on these main points: how the centralization turn also implied a punitive turn, and how this punitive turn led to a criminalization not only of urban marginality, but also of protest. I also argue that, however, several signs of the link between criminalization in both contexts were already present in the earlier years of urban security policies in Italy, even if they became clear only recently. I finally argue that, even if the centralization of security policies at the national level was fundamental in extending criminalization to protest activities, some local governments and mayors, and particularly the National Association of Municipality (ANCI) also played a role in the shift.

When the national government stepped in – definitively in 2007 – and started to define priorities and strategies local governments should implement, as merely executors of national policies – the concept of urban security gradually merged with the much stronger and traditional concept of public security. The first step of this process is represented by the appearance, in the first decade of the 2000s, of the concept of *sicurezza integrata* (Antonelli, 2018; Nobili, Giupponi, Ricifari and Gallo, 2019) which emphasizes cooperation between the local and the national governments. The new definition sparked in the institutional and political discourse, and in the media, and it is the main concept adopted in the so-called *Patti per la sicurezza* (Security Pacts), signed between the mayors and the prefects in many Italian cities (Calaresu, 2013). These pacts try to regulate cooperation in the national and local governance of urban security, and, since 2007, are managed and controlled by the minister of the interior, in order to guarantee national homogeneity, under the new philosophy of integrated security, which now parallels, and indeed replaces, the older concept of urban security.

In these institutional agreements we can find one of the first signs of the inclusion of protest within the context of urban security. Indeed, the minister of the interior states clearly that the institutional cooperation is extended to the fields of public order and public security. Cities and the State must cooperate not only in the traditional matters of disorder and minor crime, but also "for the prevention of tensions and social conflicts that can provoke

disturbances of the public order and of the public security" (Minister of the interior, 2007). Public order is now legitimately a field of common work, and an integrated part of urban security policies, with the agreement of the mayors, represented by ANCI. Even if we do not know whether pacts including measures for the control and criminalization of protests have actually been signed, the leading documents pave the way to the inclusion of protest as a subject that can be dealt with within the institutional and conceptual framework of integrated security (Selmini 2020a).

Between 2008 and 2009 the so called *Pacchetto sicurezza*[5] was also enacted. Public order and protest control are not explicitly mentioned in these pieces of legislations but they are in the guidelines of the *Pacchetto sicurezza* issued by the minister of the interior (2010). The guidelines try to systematize and present all the new rules concerning urban security, encompassing offences and behaviors that span from incivilities to protest. For instance, offences such as: "occupation of public spaces, graffiti and other forms of impairment of public and private properties, including the smearing of transport system and buildings" are included in a specific section dedicated not to the protection of public order – though several of these behaviors are connected to protest – but to the *decoro urbano*, showing how conceptually these phenomena are becoming increasingly framed in an interchangeable way.

Other signs of the blurring of boundaries between urban security, *decoro* and public order were also already present in some mayors' administrative orders; these are, as discussed by Cornelli, Selmini and Nobili (this volume) the most important tools for urban security at the municipal level. As findings of research based on an in-depth analysis of mayors' orders related to nightlife and alcohol consumption in public space shows, the justification for issuing such orders is not only "security" and *decoro*, but also "public order" (Gargiulo and Avidano, 2018). The protection of public order -– a field in which mayors have no competence – is mentioned in almost half of the 55 orders analyzed. The study shows clearly that the borders between public order and security and *decoro* are, in the mayors' view, blurring, and that order maintenance at the urban level implies targeting any individual or group who can be considered "undesirable" in the public space. As Gargiulo and Avidano (2018, p. 21) state: "in the urban security field, maintaining public order may become an operation of "moral surgery" equivalent to the administrative persecution of some specific social groups, whose access to some spaces are limited and whose behaviors are prohibited" (my translation).

One further step in the shift of urban security policies is represented by a Bill, titled *Norme in materia di sicurezza*

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3   About the harmfulness of these civil or administrative new tools in the UK and in the US, see Ashworth and Zedner (2014) and Beckett and Herbert (2010).

4   About which see Selmini 2020a, and Cornelli, Selmini and Nobili, this volume.

5   *Pacchetto sicurezza* is the common definition given in Italy to a combination of several laws, decrees and minister regulations including new rules on migration, urban security, public security, organized crime.

integrata, nonché a tutela della sicurezza delle città e del decoro urbano (Rules for integrated security, urban safety and the protection of urban *decoro*), that was the result of a long negotiation- ending on October 2016 – between the already mentioned ANCI and the government, on a national law aimed at regulating urban security. The Bill includes many new rules to reinforce mayors' powers- in a more punitive vein – and the use of administrative and banishment orders against urban disorder and incivilities. Art. 9 of the Bill, however, also includes rules making the repression of protest harsher, and it represents a clear example of how the two different fields – urban security and public order – are blending. While poor and homeless are still mostly managed through administrative fines – even if in this Bill the first examples of two-step prohibitions (see footnote 2) also appear – protest and protesters are addressed through the traditional criminal justice measures, but within the conceptual framework of urban and integrated security. The Bill introduces new criminal sanctions for behaviors such as using helmets or other protections masking the face, and for the use of a variety of different tools during a protest or a march (such as fireworks, firecrackers, sticks, smoke and gas, cudgels, shields, blunt objects, smearing or polluting materials and "any other tool potentially dangerous"). These offences are aggravated by some circumstances, such as when the perpetrator has already been sentenced for terrorism or "subversion of the democratic order" and for other offences related to public order. The Bill also increases the punishment for offences already existing in the Italian penal code: *imbrattamento* (soiling) and *deturpamento* (impairment) of properties and goods. These offences include graffiti and similar threats to what is considered to be the urban *decoro*, a behavior strictly connected to political expression, or that may be part of street protests and urban unrests. This Bill was never approved; however, most of these provisions, including those on criminalization of protest, were included in two new laws enacted in 2018 and 2019, discussed below.

The final shift towards public order

In 2017, a decree titled *Disposizioni urgenti in materia di sicurezza delle città* (Urgent rules about security of the cities - Decree No 14,17 February 17, 2017) was issued, as a matter of urgency, with two main goals: first, to rationalize cooperation among the State, the Regions and the Municipalities in matters related to urban security, and, second, to introduce new measures to deal with incivilities and disorder at the urban level. The first part, in spite of the rethoric on cooperation and partnership, confirms a tendency that had already appeared in the first half of 2000 (see Cornelli, Selmini and Nobili, this volume) towards re-establishing the leading role of the central government in determining choices and priorities. New banishment measures, issued by mayors and by the police chief (questori) reinforce the zero tolerance approach of these laws on urban security. A recent analysis of the orders issued from both the mayors and the *questori* at the national level shows that most of them target immigrants and homeless, beggars, unlicensed car park attendants, sex workers, and similar groups trying to survive in the informal urban economy (Borlizzi, 2022).

This decree doesn't include explicitly new rules concerning the control and policing of protest, but it paved the way for two following decrees that definitively merge urban security with criminalization of protest. The process resembles Passavant's (2021) reflections on how crime crises in the city pave the way for harsher repression of protest. They were enacted, respectively, in 2018 and 2019 by the right-wing government and specifically by the then minister of the interior Matteo Salvini, of the League Party (Cornelli, Selmini and Nobili, this volume).

These decrees now conceptualize urban security as a matter of public security, and definitively, also of public order. The decrees aim at making clear that public urban space needs to be clean and protected from the disturbing presence of homeless, immigrants and other groups of marginalized populations, as well as of protesters and dissenters marching, occupying spaces and properties, or leaving, intentionally or not, signs of their presence on walls, street and buildings.

Concerning urban security (now framed as public security) the 2018 law (decree no.113, October 4, 2018)[6] reinforces the earlier measure of the 2017 law described above, as discussed by Cornelli, Selmini and Nobili, this volume. Concerning specifically traditional offences against public order, the decree re-criminalizes road blocking (which had been de-criminalized in earlier years), with a maximum penalty of six years, much higher than before, and introduces new aggravating circumstances.

It is however in the decree no. 53, June 14, 2019 (titled *Disposizioni urgenti in materia di ordine e sicurezza pubblica* - Urgent measures or security and public order) that protest and political dissent are directly targeted, in terms of expanding some pre-existing rules, of more severe penalties, and of new aggravating circumstances.

Some of these new provisions are replicating those already included in the Bill negotiated between ANCI and the government in 2016 mentioned above, such as a more severe punishment for those who use protective helmets or in any other way make more difficult to identify a person during a protest: punishment is now up to three years, one year more than in the past, and fines are up to 6000 Euros, instead of 2000. The new offence of using fireworks, or other potentially dangerous tools (as those described above) during protests is established, with a maximum penalty up to four years. Other changes to the penal code imply more severe penalties for already existing crimes when they are committed "in the context of a

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6   It's important to remember that only a small section of the decree is about "urban security". Most provisions are about migration and organized crime.

demonstration in public space or in spaces open to the public" (art. 7). Aggravating circumstances related to violence, resistance or threats against public officers, or political, administrative or judicial bodies, now extend to those who are simply participating in a public protest; the aggravating circumstance of interruption of public offices or public services, now punishable up to two years when committed during a protest. Similarly, some already existing aggravating circumstances for the crimes of ravage, looting and damages are now extended to the case of protest in public space. As a consequence, for damages to public and private goods the maximum penalty is now up to six years, instead of three, when committed during a protest. Commentators pointed out not only the harshness of these new "anti-riot" rules, but also how inconsistent they are with the fundamental principles of the protection of civil and political rights (Zirulia 2019).

In 2020, the new center-left oriented government amended some sections of the 2018 and 2019 decrees, but only concerning the rules that made the control of migration much tougher than in the past. The new decree left untouched the changes on protest control, and made some of the rules on the use of banishment orders even harsher (Selmini 2020c), showing a continuity with the punitive and authoritarian approaches of the earlier, more right-wing oriented, government.

Burorrepresión and the administrative control of nuisance and protest in Spain

Spain is another interesting case when trying to understand the connection between urban security and criminalization of protest. The subject has been widely discussed in recent works by Spanish scholars, who emphasize how, in spite of the transition from the dictatorship to the democracy that occurred several decades ago, the country is still characterized by many illiberal rules concerning protest and dissent (Garcia, 2014; De Mosteyrín, Fernández, and Limón López, 2018; Gonzáles-Sánchez and Maroto-Calatayud, 2018). In 2015, an effort to decriminalize some behaviors related to the expression of dissent and protest and to transform them into administrative violations was made. However, the whole reform resulted in an example of that mutual reinforcement and diffusion dynamics described by Hallsworth and Lea (2011).

The reform of the penal code implied that many behaviors are now regulated under an administrative regime, precisely by the 2015 *Ley Organica de protección de la Seguridad Ciudadana* (March 31, 2015, n. 1), which replicates and reinforces a pre-existing and equally controversial 1992 law, with the same name. The law, soon renamed popularly the "Gag Law" because of the restriction of freedom of expression, raised a widespread concern among scholars and human rights organizations (Amnistía International España 2018; Calvo and Portos

2018; De Mosteyrín et al., 2018; Gonzáles-Sánchez and Maroto Calatayud, 2018).

The 2015 law is based on a system of administrative fines, and has created a complex infrastructure of control of protest and of other urban problems, such as drug dealing and incivilities. Of 44 provisions, 21 target directly protest in public space (Casino Rubio, 2017, p. 81) in different ways: punishing behaviors that were not sanctioned before, or making the sanction harsher. Zones considered off-limits for protest have been widened, the organization of unnotified meetings or protests in specific areas may now be fined up to 600.000 euros, when they provoke "a risk for people safety". Many of the behaviors transformed into administrative violations replicate surviving criminal prohibitions, and they therefore create a double regime, whose enforcement is left to police discretion. Two points deserve attention. First, the police have a wide discretion in choosing whether to enforce the administrative or the criminal system, in substantiating the occurrence of "risks for people safety", and are also granted a special protection, considering that non-cooperation and "disrespectful behaviors" towards police officers are administratively sanctioned (Selmini 2020b). Second, instead of the administrative sanctions replacing the criminal ones, a process of mutual reinforcement, as described by Hallsworth and Lea (2011), often occurs, either because of the double regime described above, or because of the activation of the administrative sanction once the criminal charge has been dismissed by the courts. In my research on the criminalization of political dissent in Catalonia (Selmini and Salellas Vilar, 2022) several activists interviewed mention the fact that, once their criminal charge (i.e, for public disorder) was dismissed by the court, an administrative fine was then applied for the same behavior, under the administrative regime of the Gag Law.

At the local level, other administrative tools, similar to the Italian mayors' orders and consistent with the *civismo* ideology described above, have been applied to minor violations of the urban order and also to the control of protest, showing once again the tight connection between these dimensions. As the cases gathered by Maroto Calatayud (2013, p. 36) show, distributing leaflets during a demonstration has been sanctioned on the basis of an administrative order that prohibits throwing garbage in the street; camping in public space, which has happened often particularly during the wave of protest of the 2010s, has been equated to occupying public space; and the local orders about control of noise have been applied to protesters using a megaphone.

Both these orders and the provisions of the Gag Law have been contextualized by some Spanish scholars in the framework of the so-called *burorrepressión* (Olmo, 2013), a word that well expresses the idea of a criminalization based on – apparently – less punitive tools but that, nonetheless, has several harmful consequences. Indeed, these "infra-legal devices" (Maroto Calatayud 2016, p. 68) not only discourage protest and undermine freedom of expression, but also transform the exercise of these rights

into a nuisance that needs to be sanctioned as other forms of incivilities – such as throwing garbage in the streets – are. The political nature of these behaviors is downgraded, and equated to a nuisance or an incivility. The goal, according to these scholars, is not only to discourage protest, but also to depoliticize it. As Delgado Ruiz and Malet Calvo (2009, p. 64) put it, protest is no more considered (only) "subversive" or "seditious", but it may also be re-conceptualized as an act of incivility, because, exactly as urban disorder, it undermines "el normal fluir de una vida pública declarada por decreto amable y desconflic-tivizada".

Conclusion

These reflections on urban security, the neoliberal urban project and the public space, and contemporary ways to deal with a variety of urban "troublemakers" link the criminalization of political dissent to the criminalization of other forms of urban marginality. Indeed, both types of criminalization are consistent with the neo-liberal punitive project and are motivated by the same reasons. The exercise of political (often constitutionally granted) rights, beyond the celebrative rhetoric of how important their protection is, is more and more restricted and criminalized, as poverty and minor crime are.

This story shows how urban security policies – mainly addressed to urban marginality - and the criminalization of protest – a behavior that is expressive of constitutional rights – merged together after a process that, at least in Italy, went through different steps.

In this paper, I discuss two specific cases, Spain and Italy. In both countries, the story shows many links between these two dimensions. In the case of Italy these links were already present, though less visible, in earlier stages of urban security policies, and the shift was from the control of marginality and disorder to the control of protest, seeming to illustrate Passavant's (2021) suggestions about how "crime crises" are important in determining an extension of the zero tolerance styles of control from one area to another, and reinforcing a punitive mentality. In the case of Spain, the process went apparently in the opposite direction: the public order mentality, a result of specific historical conditions and of the persistence of authoritarian institutions (Bernat and Whyte, 2019) affected the area of incivilities and urban marginality, replicating a punitive attitude based on very serious administrative fines. The final result is the same: urban poor and protesters became the targets of interchangeable and "fluid" policies, that reinforce each other – instead of reducing the State control on individuals – and that spark punitive attitudes. Criminal, administrative and civil regulations merges in dealing with any type of disturbance in public space, and measures established in one area become interchangeable and adaptable to be used in other areas of social conflicts, thus covering a wider range of threats, creating hybrid categories of of-fenders and, ultimately, undermining democracy and legitimacy.

Lessons learned from the Italian and Spanish cases urge scholars working on criminalization and punitiveness to widen their analysis, also in a comparative perspective, and to try to understand how these areas overlap, and how in both dimensions, through the mutual reinforcement and diffusion dynamics described above, criminalization expands its boundaries.

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Local partnerships, strategy of responsabilisation and Internal Police Reform in France*

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Abstract

Urban security has become a new policy preoccupation in many European cities since the 1980s. City governments throughout Europe have increasingly engaged in the repression of incivilities, the fight against street crime, and actions and measures of securitization and protection. The last 30 years have seen the emergence and institutionalisation of a new urban politics in which public security has become a new policy preoccupation based on several common characteristics: a focus upon pro-active prevention rather than reactive detection; emphasis upon wider social problems, quality of life, anti-social behaviour and disorder; implementation through decentralised, local arrangements for the delivery of these politics; delivery through a partnership approach, drawing together a variety of organisations and stakeholders in horizontal networks (Crawford, 2014). Mobilising recent research on France on the operational partnership groups created since 2019 (as part of the "day-to-day security police" reform), we identify the main tensions at the heart of these policies: the thwarted strategy of responsibilization by the French central state and the difficult reform of the *police nationale*.

Keywords: Local governance, police nationale, partnerships, problem solving, responsibilization

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1. Introduction

Urban security has become a pressing political issue in many European cities, as it has come "to express a number of key tensions, if not contradictions in European thinking about crime and violence – between the importance of prevention and sanctioning as policy priorities established by 'active citizens' as well as scientific and political elites" (Edwards, Hughes and Lord, 2013, p. 265). For the last thirty years, in Italy (Calaresu and Selmini, 2017; Quassoli, Colombo and Molteni, 2018; Selmini, 2005), but also in France (de Maillard, 2005; de Maillard and Mouhanna, 2017; Ferret and Mouhanna, 2005), the Netherlands (Prins and Devroe, 2017; Van Swaaningen, 2005), England and Wales (Edwards, Chambers, Fyfe and Henry, 2017b; Hughes, 2007) or Belgium (de Pauw and Easton, 2017), local authorities have mobilized around the issues of crime, incivilities and insecurity. Through the use of local police forces and administrative tools, the adoption of new technological devices (the most widely used being CCTV) or the adoption of a more or less harsh rhetoric, mayors and more globally local authorities have developed local security policies, sometimes challenging the traditional dominance of the central government on these issues (Kübler and de Maillard, 2022). As Adam Crawford (2014, p. 126) has highlighted, we have witnessed "the emergence and institutionalization of a new urban politics in which public safety has become a new policy preoccupation", marked by several commonalities: a focus on proactive prevention rather than reactive detection, an emphasis on wider social problems (including quality of life issues), a focus on modes of informal social control, delivery through a partnership approach and an orientation towards holistic solutions. More particularly, in France, since the 1980s, a variety of local councils, committees and working groups have been introduced that stucture a new and more holistic way of dealing with crime issues.

A large body of literature has discussed the complexities of this new local governance of urban security. Crawford (1999; 2001) has stressed its contradictory components, both joined-up and fragmented, at arm's length but also hands on ('hands on' central government interventions), wide-angled (partnership approach) but also with a tunneled vision (intra-organizational focus on 'outputs'; performance indicators), relying on a growing demand for trust and on the institutionalization of distrust (role of procedures, new managerial rules), based on cooperation and negotiation in a cold climate of competition (bids and benchmarking), marked by a nostalgia disguised as modernization (crime as a result of the breakdown of communities) and ambivalent political responses, combining preventive strategies and populist punitiveness). Edwards et al. (2017) have mapped out the convergences and divergences impacting upon the formulation of policing strategies for European Metropolises, devising several types of "governing assemblages" in European metropolises, in the wake of Stone's urban regimes (2005).

David Garland has provided a powerful interpretation of these transformations with the concept of "responsibilization", that is *"instead of addressing crime in a direct fashion by means of the police, the courts and the prisons, this approach promotes a new kind of indirect action, in which state agencies activate actions by non-state organisations and actors"* (2001, p. 124). It is true that police agencies, judges and magistrates are now in closer relationships with other forces of social control, with whom they seek to build alliances and exchange information. The key words of this new local governance of urban security are: 'public/private partnerships', 'multi-agency co-operation', 'social participation', 'local co-ordination'. The diffusion of local partnerships is an illustration of this trend: new local partnerships define frameworks for interpreting problems, sets of resources and procedures for responding to them, rather than defining *a priori* the objectives and respective roles of the actors involved. The state chooses to shift responsibility for crime control to the municipalities and to other services (education, urban planning, social work, road traffic, etc.). For the central government, new local partnerships are part of a logic of "doing with" rather than "doing". On the one hand, this trend can be seen as a horizontal logic, where the state (and in this case the national police) enters into a logic of constant negotiation with the other actors to define reciprocal roles and joint actions, and to decide on common strategies. But, on the other hand, it may be analyzed as an attempt to impose, in a more vertical mode, a distribution of missions, defining what the police can (or cannot) do and assigning missions to other local actors. This raises a question of indirect government: to what extent do police services orientate and shape the actions of other actors on the local scene? In France, as we will see, the central state has created local councils and groups (such as the operational partnership groups, see below) to favor more horizontal ways of dealing with local security issues. But at the same time, several research projects have shown how the police continue to define the ways issues of local security are dealt with, by imposing a certain framing (based on a narrow conception of security) and distributing responsibilities between partners (Darley and Gauthier, 2018).

This issue of responsibilization is related to a second one which concerns reform of the police style of action.

We know that the public police were traditionally dominated by a mode of action relying on three dimensions (the three Rs: "three Rs": random patrol, rapid response, and reactive investigations; see Sherman, 2013). More particularly, in France, the action of the national police is dominated by a model of "intervention": the dispatch of patrols in response to emergency calls, and a distanced relationship with local areas (within a broad literature, see in particular de Maillard and Zagrodzki, 2021; Roché, 2016). Numerous reforms have been introduced that have tried to change this dominant police strategy (often defined as "one size fits all"). Community policing reforms are based on organizational decentralization, involvement of local communities and problem- solving strategies (rather than mere law enforcement interventions). Local partnerships should favor the feedback of security requests from the public, define priorities and specific actions (sending out patrols, launching investigations, etc.) according to a problem-solving logic[1]. This leads us to the following question: To what extent does the implementation of these local partnerships transform the way in which the national police operate in the local areas?

To answer these two lines of questioning, we will use empirical research conducted on operational partnership groups (*groupements opérationnels de sécurité*, GPOs) launched in France in 2019. We will start by presenting these new local partnerships, as well as the methodology used in our research. On the basis of the empirical data collected, we will then answer the two questions raised above.

1. Operational partnership groups partnership groups: new local partnerships and day-to-day security

Operational partnership groups (GPOs) are part of the reform of the day-to-day security police (PSQ) launched in 2018 by the French government. The latter involved a number of ideas that clearly reflected the spirit of community policing. These included the police mixing with residents in sensitive areas, the development of local partnerships, conflict management and dialogue training courses, officer empowerment, and decentralized decision-making. These ideas are featured under the rubric of the "*Police de Sécurité du Quotidien*" (PSQ). Translated as "day-to-day security policing," this reform was announced in February 2018 (see de Maillard and Zagrodzki, 2020). The GPOs follow in the footsteps of the many partnership-based schemes that have sprung up since the early 1980s, from local crime prevention councils (*Conseils communaux de prévention de la délinquance*) to local security and crime prevention councils (*Conseils locaux de sécurité et de prévention de la délinquance* - CLSPD), via local

crime treatment groups (*Groupements locaux de traitement de la délinquance* - GLTD) and other priority security zones (de Maillard, 2005). As we shall see, this similarity is also a redundancy: GPOs take their place where there are already existing councils, which raises questions about the overlap of specific areas of action and organizational competition (CLSPDs are chaired by mayors and run by municipal departments, whereas GPOs are run by police officers). This is precisely one of the specific features that makes it worthwhile analyzing GPOs: whereas the leadership of previous mechanisms had been entrusted to municipalities (CLSPDs), or even public prosecutors (local crime treatment groups), GPOs are managed by police officers.

Focused on "proximity areas" (941 have been defined throughout the territory of the central public security directorate), GPOs are "the place for contact, exchange of information, collective definition of concrete solutions to problems revealed and collegial evaluation of their effectiveness with representatives of the population and partners"[2]. They are supposed to embody "a global approach which aims to identify precisely the security expectations expressed by the population and elected representatives, and to respond to them in an appropriate manner by means of concrete and tailored actions"[3]. Organizationally speaking, they are led by a sector referent, appointed from among the middle managers (inspectors) or the frontline supervisors. This police officer, in principle specially trained for this mission, has the task of collecting security requests, developing transversal and collegial responses and evaluating the actions implemented.

These GPOs follow in the footsteps of the many partnership mechanisms that have been in existence since the early 1980s, from communal delinquency prevention councils to local security and crime prevention councils (CLSPDs), local delinquency treatment groups (GLTDs) and other priority security zones. As we shall see, this similarity is also a redundancy: GPOs take their place where other mechanisms already exist, which raises questions of overlapping specific areas of action and organizational competition as CLSPDs are chaired by mayors and run by municipal services, whereas GPOs are run by police officers. This is one of the specificities that makes it interesting to analyze these GPOs: whereas the leadership of the previous mechanisms had been entrusted to municipalities (CLSPDs), or even to the public prosecutor's office (GLTDs), these GPOs are entrusted to the police, a shift that should be questioned: should we see this as a return to the state's control of local partnerships?

In terms of research strategy, we chose to focus on four medium-sized towns in the Yvelines region (in the far

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1 Problem-solving policing refers to a type of policing that is based on the idea that police should not only respond to incidents but also address the more substantive issues underlying them.

South-Western suburbs of Paris) with different socio-demographic characteristics: two towns marked by the importance of higher social categories (Valentine and Saboville[4]), two more Working class towns (Louisville and Trouville) and different political majorities (two right-wing towns, two left-wing towns).

To conduct our fieldwork, we relied primarily on cross-sectional interviews with partners (a total of about 50). These interviews are particularly useful for identifying the different cognitive maps and professional norms (types of vocabulary, representations of action, cognitive schemes), as well as the types of power relationships between actors (more or less negotiated, more or less asymmetrical). Thanks to the support of the Yvelines departmental public security directorate (DDSP), we were able to meet with the heads of each of the towns' precincts (and/or their deputies), as well as with the officers who ran these groups. In each of the towns, we were also able to meet with the municipal officials involved in the GPO (prevention and security department, municipal police officers, and even, more rarely, elected officials), as well as with several of the partners (notably the 'social landlords'[5]). In two of the towns (Valentine and Saboville), we were also able to observe GPO meetings (five in total), which allowed us to supplement our interviews by observing the exchanges.

2. A thwarted strategy of responsibilization

As we said earlier, GPOs are somewhat original in the landscape of local partnerships: contrary to other ones (such as the local security and crime prevention councils), they are led by police managers, not by municipality officials. One may therefore wonder if GPOs are a tool to regain control of local partnerships, by redistributing the tasks and missions of the various partners, whether they are municipal police, social landlords or even associations. These new devices are led by the national police, with sometimes an aggressive discourse on the 'pedagogy of partnership': "*The police wanted to show that they could take over the field, to show that we were present... and that we could manage things... To show that we are the leaders on the ground... I think that's the idea of daily security police, with the municipal police taking on more and more weight*" (Captain, GPO Chief, Saboville, January 2021).

Representatives of the national police worked to define the conditions for the participation of the different actors, in other words, the rules of exchange, what can be asked or not:

"*At the beginning, people came with their shopping list... We had to explain to them that the approach was not that*

4   We have chosen to anonymize the four towns.
5   A social landlord is an organization that owns one or more properties for residential use. It rents these properties to low-income households at moderate rents. In some cases, it is responsible for building social housing.

one... But to tell them that we were in a logic of coproduction..." (Divisional Commissioner, Chief of District, Saboville, December 2020)

To illustrate this question of responsibilization, the cases of the relations with municipalities and social landlords are particularly significant. For some municipalities, it has meant an increasing constraint by the national police, as GPOs may have led to an increased control of local partnerships by the police.

For some towns, the idea of having their priorities dictated by the national police force is not accepted:

"*The police say 'we're not here to give orders to mayors', but it's a bit like 'tell us what's going on in your area and we'll tell you what to do'. But, as far as I'm concerned, it's out of the question for people from the town other than me to take part. We're the representatives. Whoever pays is in charge here*" (Security directorate, Saboville, February 2020).

The question of the relation with social landlords is central to these arrangements. In all the GPOs we attended, they were present. And they regularly come back to the center of the stories we hear:

"*I take the case of social landlords, which is interesting... I had an exchange with a social landlord... we have reports of drugs trafficking in such and such a place... what do you do? First of all, it's a private place... Secondly, they are still responsible for the peace and quiet of their tenants... First of all, the parking lots, re-encoding, lighting, cameras... It's not up to us to do anything... It's a problem that we don't have with all the landlords...*" (Divisional commissioner, chief of police district, Saboville, December 2020)

What comes up regularly in the discourse of police officials, and in particular heads of department, is the idea that the police do not allow their agenda to be imposed by other actors, and in this case by the landlords: "*The approach is not the police calling for help... But the police convening meetings to respond to requests... Before we intervene, you would have to put in cameras, re-engage your digicodes, etc.*" (Commissioner, head of the street units, Trouville, December 2020).

Two approaches are then mobilized: on the one hand, a logic of empowerment (what are you doing for your own security?), and on the other hand, police support by sending out patrols, carrying out controls, and even investigative work. Several operations illustrate this logic of reciprocal commitment, following the example of an operation carried out in a block of flats on the banks of the Seine (on the towpath), where young people come to meet and do car races. Realizing that there are garages there hidden from view, they use them to conduct crimes (in particular to receive stolen goods). This is one of the issues that appears in one of the GPOs:

"*We say [to the landlord]: what are you going to do? Well, we don't know... The other partners make suggestions, say why not video, etc. And we come up with other ideas and I say that I will try to bring in human resources, with more frequent patrols from such and such a time to such and such a time... But according to the problems and emergencies. And the police will also put in their resources, they will say from*

such and such a time to such and such a time […]. Then, when we get all this information, we put together a team and set up a plan of attack, with the head of the department, to monitor drug dealing points, we set up a team... I communicate the information to my head of the SU [Urban Security, i.e. Criminal investigation department] and to go and see is also important... We will ask the public prosecutor's office for requisitions, we will ask the police, we set up a Codaf [departmental anti-fraud operational committee]. All of this, thanks to the feedback" (Major, GPO chief, Louisville, January 2021).

On the landlord's side, they closed the block of flats to traffic, installed cameras, reinforced the lighting, and thus mobilized a whole series of financial means. The police and the landlord have made progressive commitments, with the commitment of one leading to the commitment of the other:

"Without GPO, we wouldn't have had these results. They've play their part and now they have the financial means. And afterwards, they realize that the police intervene, there have been several interventions..." (Major, GPO chief, Louisville, January 2021).

However, these partnerships contain tensions and contradictory logics, which refer to the territorial organization of the different organizations, to the timeframes of action or to the means made available by the donors, as a condition of give and take. The first question is that of the territory covered by the funders. Participating in meetings implies finding managers who can represent the organization while having knowledge of the field. This results in some actors being overloaded by the multiplication of meetings:

"The difficulty with the GPO is really this: the landlords are all interested, but they cover too many areas, and not just on the constituency... With an issue that can go to four meetings" (Major, GPO chief, Louisville, January 2021).

A second parameter is the temporality of action. Different organizations obey different temporalities: the landlord's redevelopment operations may be long-term (redevelopment of a space, for example), while some police operations may be decided immediately:

"In block of flats J, there is a lot of work, it takes time, to do everything at the same time, because you need a dog handler. So, it's going to take two years to do the work... We at the GPO, the delinquency problem, it's solved after 6 months..." (Major, GPO chief, Louisville, January 2021).

Conversely, while a landlord may have installed cameras, some of the investigative operations conducted by the police take a long time. These gaps can create impatience on both sides. In these two cases, what is also apparent is a question of trust between the different operators, with cooperation being put to the test:

"There are some who are impatient... While we must give the investigation time. For example, the manager didn't come anymore... Because he could think that it wasn't going well... He found out about it afterwards... With the need for the investigation, we can't tell them... We can't communicate before

the intervention, obviously. Relationships of trust, but at the same time you have to give time to do the investigation. So, we go to the area to give signs of involvement..." (Major, GPO leader, Louisville, January 2021).

Finally, the give-and-take logic assumes a reciprocity that is not always found. In fact, a plurality of practices appears among the landlords, depending on the resources available, but also on the projects they have for certain blocks of flats. In the interviews with the GPO managers, the very different relationships they have with the landlords were mentioned several times. The issue at stake is the action of the police if a landlord does nothing:

"On another sector, the landlord tells us «I don't have the means», the head of department will say «I can intervene, but...» The patrols are put in, but it's not a priority anymore. We go where there will be results. Because otherwise..." (Major, GPO leader, Louisville, January 2021).

This last remark reflects the logic of police involvement: it is likely to vary according to the commitment of its interlocutors, implying an à la carte distribution of resources according to the quality of partnerships and the involvement of landlords, as assessed by police managers. This differentiated police involvement raises the question of the change of police modes of action induced by the implementation of GPOs, which is the subject of the last section.

3. Local partnerships: a limited redefinition of the modes of police action

GPOs question the transformation of the police institution in the territories. This issue concerns both the relations established with local partners and the internal relations of the national police, both within the police stations and with central management. First, they result in a limited redistribution of responsibilities within the police services. Secondly, they favor moderate change in the way things are done.

One of the original features of the GPOs is that they entrust the mission of leadership to officers or non-commissioned officers, generally with responsibilities for the public highway. The aim is therefore to make middle managers (but not police officers) more responsible within the police station. This can be seen as a partial delegation of responsibilities, allowing for professional valorization and nuancing the usual vertical logics, but generating questions about the coordination of actions. As we mentioned earlier, although some department heads were somewhat reluctant to experiment, especially with GPOs considered to be sensitive they were ultimately inclined to emphasize the forms of valorization that these functions allowed. Like the unit heads in small specialized judicial groups studied by E. Lemaire (2020), these new functions allow department heads to distribute responsibilities and the associated valuations:

"It's powerful in managerial terms, because I have who feel responsible for their territories... But also because I'm not

the one telling them." (Divisional Commissioner, Chief of Precinct, Valentine, December 2020)

It is this dimension of involvement in the territories, with the need to report regularly, that is frequently emphasized by the heads of department, which has led to allowing autonomy to the GPO heads:

"There is also a form of collective commitment... With people saying 'I am committed to'... All bound by commitments, with accountability. Which makes people care about making it work." (Divisional Commissioner, Chief of Precinct, Valentine, December 2020)

"People chosen, cast and profiled to be in those positions. What I make sure of and what I see is that there is a real exchange of information... I think the more responsible and autonomous they are, the better. What I try to do is to make them as responsible as possible, someone who makes his thing come alive and who gives me good feedback... And on which I have good feedback... I have quite a lot of confidence, so I don't rap them on the knuckles... Decentralization on our scale and accountability that is very beneficial for everyone." (Commissioner, Chief of Precinct, Louisville, January 2021).

The assessment of the GPO heads is perhaps less unilaterally positive, insofar as they are also inclined to emphasize the constraints associated with these missions. However, there is the same idea of a territorial commitment, with all that it entails in terms of accountability to partners, as well as a fairly large degree of autonomy left by the heads of department:

"Me at the beginning, managing both [GPO and Territorial Proximity Security Group] was super difficult... in the end, it's done well... Me, I don't sign up at all to be an office guy, I'm really on the gound. And it's important to want to do it... and to be given a little autonomy to create it... Without that, it wouldn't have worked... If I had been told: «you do meetings like the others», it wouldn't have worked..." (Chief Brigadier, Chief GPO, Louisville, January 2021)

According to our interviews, it would appear that this internal valorization is more noticeable in the ranks, as inspectors (*officiers*) are more accustomed than frontline supervisors to autonomy and direct relationships to department heads. On the other hand, this intermediary position of the GPO chiefs does not always allow them to respond to requests made to them by partners. Here, we find the classic dissociation between functional and territorial logics. Solicited by territorial requests requiring reinforced patrols or the dispatch of personnel to specific locations and times, GPO leaders are not always able to activate services for functional reasons: they simply do not have control over these services, and must go through the order and employment office. A GPO leader who is also in charge of a "territorial security group" (GSPT, *Groupement de sécurité de proximité territorialisé*) can rely on his or her staff to work daytime hours, but must call on other units at night. A GPO chief, who has no manpower responsibility, will have to constantly call on other manpower, whose mobilization is far from automatic:

"I can't impose things on the night brigades. Even if we

only spend the day, as I am only the chief, I pass it on to my officers for the night... Here, the doctrine has been to put in place in the troubled area... If a neighborhood is managed by the hierarchy, it's difficult when you're just a chief... But, on the contrary, it's more difficult for the other units... I have to go through the officers..." (Chief Brigadier, GPO Chief, Louisville, January 2021).

Two problems appear in the functioning of GPOs. The first is that of rank: in a world that remains extremely hierarchical between the three corps (*commissaires, officiers, gardiens de la paix et brigadiers* [frontline supervisor]), the fact that one is an inspector or a frontline supervisor when one has the responsibility of GPO chief is far from trivial. The ability to activate additional personnel for whom one is not directly responsible is made more difficult in a highly stratified bureaucratic universe. In this case, the intervention of department heads can be used, but this can only be on an ad hoc basis, otherwise it risks becoming commonplace. The second is that of functional responsibility: the tendency of each of the GPO chiefs is to call on their own staff: GSPT for some, police rescue and BAC (*Brigades anti-criminalité*, street units with an anti-crime mandate) for others (heads of street services). From this point of view, the GPOs, rather than promoting crosscutting activities, are part of the silos that are part of the daily life of police stations. This leads us to take a longer look at the ways in which police action repertoires change.

To what extent has police work changed in the context of GPOs? The question of the types of action mobilized and the methods of evaluation is the focus of attention here.

We have seen above that some of the actions carried out within the framework of GPOs are based on a give-and-take logic: increased patrols on the part of the police services, on the one hand, and recourse to situational prevention on the part of landlords, on the other. And this is one of the major observations that emerges: for the most part, the main resource associated with GPOs is the dispatch of crews. It entails therefore greater work for programming patrols, even if it means multiplying the targets and limiting the operational autonomy of the agents:

"For the time being, with the GPO, it is true that the patrols are impacted, they are more solicited... But to be able to observe, they have to go there! They see that the orders increase [...] and when you have only one patrol for 13 municipalities. And sometimes when we don't have feedback, well, we understand... They tell us: 'but your whole list of errands, I couldn't do it'..." (Captain, GPO leader, Saboville, January 2021).

These targeted patrols, fueled by the emergency telephone, can lead to more regular practices of distributing fines to the audiences that are at the origin of the partners' solicitations, such as groupings in the halls of buildings. In one of the meetings, the head GPO, thanking the landlords, attests to his action in the following terms:

"Chief GPO: Well, so that's very good, we have the pass [to enter the block of flats], thank you very much. I tell you every time, when we move, we don't move for nothing. We

fine, that's really our philosophy, I'll tell you that: hit the wallet" (Observation, GPO Valentine East, October 2020).

Also recurrent in the work of the GPOs is the difficulty of problems that are only displaced or only temporarily resolved. This is the case for squatting issues and, above all, for dealing points. While some of them may have been resolved at one point, the problem is always likely to reappear, which does not fail to arouse a certain frustration:

"For the drug point, the landlord put cameras in, as a result of GPO meetings, and it moved somewhere else…They just crossed the street…There are some notable successes, but a never-ending problem…in terms of narcotics materials, at least…" (Chief Brigadier, GPO Chief, Louisville, January 2021).

Our observation is therefore similar to that of Thierry Delpeuch and Mathieu Zagrodzki (2021) for the Nantes GPO: fairly stable repertoires of traditional police action are mobilized (visits and controls, surveillance of individuals, collection of information, identity checks, visits to cellars or common areas). In other words, "the action taken is targeted, territorialized and planned, but is not strictly speaking a 'tailor-made' action" (2021, p. 26). The proposed solutions are based primarily on the street units, and exceptionally on the judicial services. The defining division between the street units and the investigative services, continues to be structuring. However, the cases analyzed above show that, in one of the towns, exchanges with the judicial services have increased, notably thanks to the problems raised in the framework of the GPOs:

"The SU [urban security, i.e., the criminal investigation department] on top, the Pinot[6] or the blues outside. But the GPO improves relations, makes the link between services. You are obliged to exchange in a GPO, so we are obliged to exchange… it creates a kind of emulation in a police station, it creates dialogue…" (Chief Brigadier, Chief GPO, Louisville, January 2021).

Conclusion

One of the starting hypotheses of this research was that GPOs were a tool to regain control of local partnerships, in connection with everyday security, by redistributing the tasks and missions of the various partners, whether they be municipal police, social landlords or associations. This logic corresponds in part to the definition that police officers have of themselves, namely that they are the real "security experts" and that they are not a partner like the others. As one commissioner said, "it is not the police who call for help, but they who call the meetings". However, the very dynamics of these meetings are more horizontal than it might seem at first sight. More than a form of accountability imposed by the national police, it is a logic of exchange and give and take that predominates. The po-

lice target their patrols, carry out controls, and can launch investigations, while landlords launch security operations through situational prevention. As with other partnership arrangements (Darley and Gauthier, 2018; Germain, 2013), GPOs are a tool for the police to reinforce a pragmatic legitimacy weakened by the decline in clear-up rates, criticisms of police action that is too ineffective, or of the institution's over-centralization. In other words, the national police are not able to impose their views: they may define the conditions of their involvement, but have to listen to local queries and to exchange resources with other actors (municipalities and social landlords in this paper). GPOs do not mean increased control by police actors, but a resumption of their power of initiative conditional on their ability to listen and lead partnerships.

Our analysis also questions the transformations of the police institution from two points of view: the redefinition of internal responsibilities and the type of response promoted. On the first point, GPOs are based on a desire to delegate responsibility for running them to actors who are not heads of department. This was not easily achieved, as some department heads were worried about losing information or being evaluated on systems they did not manage. However, our fieldwork reveals, if we listen to the GPO heads and the heads of department, shared satisfaction that this may have generated in terms of valuing agents in the police stations. However, this delegation has raised questions about rank (what is the legitimacy of the GPO chief, ,when the chief is a senior officer, to request work from other services headed by other officers?), but also about types of specialization (how to mobilize services for which one is not responsible?), which may have put some GPO chiefs in difficulty with regard to the commitments they had made locally. In terms of preferred responses, the dominant response was to borrow from the traditional repertoire (targeted patrols, checks, and more rarely investigations) of an intervention model. Public-solving methods remain mobilized in a shallow manner: rapid diagnoses, use of patrols, situational prevention. The public street units have been activated, at the risk of putting excessive strain on patrols, all of which reveals a not very imaginative approach to local crime situations.

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6   "Pinot" refers to the average police officer working on the streets.

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Youth deviance, urban security and 'moral panic': the case of Italy

Stefania Crocitti | Alessandro Bozzetti

Abstract

American sociological research and prevention policies on youth deviance and juvenile street gangs have a very long tradition. Since the mid-1990s, in some European Countries, youngsters' antisocial behaviors in public spaces gained terrain in criminological studies and on the public and political debates. In Italy, instead, youth has not been traditionally meant as a 'security' problem, but rather as a matter of educational and social policies. In recent years, however, also in the Italian context urban violence of juvenile street groups has become a recurrent topic in media representation, a source of citizens' insecurity and an issue to be solved by local security policies. Even though from classical approaches street gangs appeared as a complex phenomenon (aggregations involved in criminal acts but, at the same time, types of socialization for youth having a migratory background), there is the tendency to describe street groups according to a unitary and criminalizing 'gang' model. The aim of the article is to situate the study of youth street groups within the broader topic of juvenile delinquency in Italy. Moving from how the youth question evolved in Italian debate and policies, socialization practices as well as deviant behaviors of youngster in public spaces are analyzed. The difficulty for young people from the marginal strata to access a structured sociality located in certain urban spaces risks resulting in a subordinate social role and, eventually, in violence as a reaction in search of visibility. The ultimate goal of the article is to provide a reinterpretation of street groups that is not oversimplified and that pays attention to processes of inclusion/exclusion within the social structure, urban space, and the related conflict dynamics.

Keywords: Juvenile delinquency, Street Gangs, Moral panic, Urban violence, Security policies

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Credit author statement

The article is the result of joint reflections, research activities and writing. Therefore, each paragraph should be attributed to both authors.

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Youth deviance, urban security and 'moral panic': the case of Italy

Introduction

The Italian approach to juvenile delinquency has long been considered more lenient than that of other Countries (Nelken, 2005). The broader tendency toward increasing punitiveness that, according to someone (Bailleau and Cartuyvels, 2014), has been related to neoliberalism – leading to a pronounced dialectic of responsibility, targeting public discourse toward youth groups as a form of 'transfer of anxiety' (Nelken, 2005), and to a zero-tolerance response – had not influenced the juvenile justice system (Pazè, 2013), control agencies and, generally, the public opinion in the Italian context. The public opinion, in particular, seemed to show a 'benevolent tolerance' toward younger offenders (Scatolera, 2004), at least when they do not belong to marginalized social strata. At the beginning, Italian urban insecurity policies do not focus on juvenile antisocial behaviors (but for those linked to alcohol and, to a certain extent, drugs). Security measures targeted other disorderly people, namely homeless and Roma people. However, this approach has changed in recent times (Selmini and Nobili, 2008): media and political debate has focused on youth crime, particularly of juvenile street gangs, activating those mechanisms described as moral panic (Cohen, 1972). Studying youth socialization in urban spaces thus becomes crucial to provide counter-representations to a mediatized – and sometimes overly alarmist – reading of the phenomenon.

The article aims to give account on how, in Italy, the juvenile delinquency question changed, not necessarily in the reality of the phenomenon but instead in media representation, citizens' perceptions and policies dealing with troublesome youth. We will resort to juvenile street groups as an example for discussing these changes.

Firstly, we will present criminological approaches to youth deviance and street gangs through a historical excursus of American and European research on juvenile street gangs. Then we will focus on Italian studies on youth deviance and street groups. Aware of the need to move beyond a 'single model' of street gangs (Feixa, 2020) and to take into consideration the complexity of groups, we will discuss Italian official statistics on juvenile delinquency, wondering whether the dominant representation of youth groups as dangerous reflected an increasing number of juvenile offenders. From this contextualization, the succeeding paragraph will investigate the role played by the media in the narrative frame that describes youth street gangs as the new *folk devils* (Cohen, 1972). The final paragraph will reconstruct Italian political responses to juvenile delinquency and youth urban disorder, focusing on the current tendency to resort to punitive measures for controlling public spaces juvenile groups use as places of socializations. The need to problematize the media reading of the phenomenon and to reformulate social prevention policies, having also a careful look at urban spaces as place of visibility for marginal youth, appears to be a need that can no longer be postponed.

Criminological approaches to youth deviance and street gangs

Juvenile delinquency and youth street groups have been recurrent topics in American criminological research and security policies. Since the mid-1990s, also in some European Countries antisocial behaviors of young people in public spaces gained terrain. In Italy, instead, youth has not been traditionally viewed as a 'security' problem, but rather as a matter of educational and social policies. In recent years, however, in the Italian context there has been a shift in describing youngsters – above all, juvenile street groups – and urban violence as a source of citizens' insecurity and an issue to be dealt with punitive measures.

Thrasher (1927), in the seminal ethnographic study of Chicago, defines juvenile street gangs as composed by youngsters, mostly males with a migrant background, living in the marginal (interstitial) urban areas, resorting to conflict – with other groups and institutions – to find recognition within the social context. Groups develop a marked territorial bond (territoriality) in their residence neighborhood. Violence with other gangs is a way of asserting and defending a space of identity and existence. Later on, Foote Whyte (1943), in his study among street groups in Boston, defines such groups *street corner societies* to focus on how second-generation migrants resort to the group for finding "solidarity …, protection and identity construction through the sharing of a difficult daily life" (Feixa, 2020, p. 101). Delinquency is episodic, a symbolic solution of adaptation for socially marginalized youth.

In the second half of the last century, American criminologists developed an interpretation of street gangs that "no longer appears to disregard delinquency and violence" (Prina, 2019, p. 44). Malcolm Klein (2001) defines juvenile gangs in New York as characterized by criminal behavior and derives from it both the perception of groups as dangerous to community safety and the legitimation of punitive law enforcement. Crime becomes prevalent, also because Klein's research has been based on data and interviews with police forces.

Another strand of analysis has been developed moving

along the approach of Thrasher and the Chicago School. These studies derive knowledge from qualitative studies, observing juvenile street gangs and giving voice to gang members. Ethnicity and migratory background are confirmed as elements of 'multiple marginalities' (Vigil, 2014) leading to the building of street groups, but also new factors emerge: the role of women (Vigil, 2008); the effects of globalization and new technologies; migrations of gangs together with shared (sub)cultural factors, such as rap music (Hagedorn, 2005; Hazen and Rodgers, 2014). Repressive responses have been questioned: Hagedorn (1998) warns about the risk of institutionalization, that is the result of consolidation of gangs' illegal activity to which the processes of criminalization contribute predominantly. The 'demonization' of groups results to be crucial in strengthening internal cohesion and in transforming them into a security issue. A debate, in fact, emerges also on new definitions. Brotherton (2008) proposes rejecting the term *gangs*, to speak instead of 'street youth organizations', in which criminal behavior is not dominant and coexists with pro-social activities.

The two different models of approaching juvenile street gangs in the American studies[1] influenced criminological scholars when youth groups started to gain visibility in European cities since the mid-1990s. In 1997, following the model that defines street gangs as characterized by territoriality (rooted in a neighborhood) and criminal behaviors as a distinctive trait, the *Eurogang* study group has been built. According to Eurogang, "street gang (or troublesome youth group corresponding to a street gang elsewhere) is any durable, street-oriented youth group whose identity includes involvement in illegal activity" (Weerman et al., 2009, p. 20).

This criminalizing view has been widespread in the UK. The debate on youth groups involved in urban riots shadowed social disadvantages to focus on violence of such groups, citizens' insecurity and, consequently, on the need for punitive policies (Andell, 2022). Even though some scholars defined riots as a reaction to the lack of social opportunities (Young, 2003) or linked to street subcultures using public spaces as an 'arena' (Miller, 2020), the dominant political and media discourse described such events as urban violence by "feral youth"[2], following the punitive response against juvenile antisocial behaviors that, since the '90s, has been at the basis of community safety policies in the UK (Moore, 2012, p. 98).

Differently, street groups have been defined as a 'community of like-minded people' in studies on *Latinos* in Spain and Arabs in France. In an attempt to highlight the distance from the criminalizing model described above, new terms have been coined. Recovering the tradition of

Latin American *pandillas*, 'urban tribe' is used to identify groups, composed by young people living in the suburbs, not characterized by territoriality, but that move throughout the city, prefer socialization places in the city center and, in particular, in the areas of youth entertainment (Feixa, 2020). Interviews with the *Latin Kings and Queens* members in Barcelona highlighted how "Latino youth move through and take possession of Catalan public space by creating and representing an identity ... It does not mean that these youth are members of youth gangs, nor that their attitude or lifestyle is particularly violent or delinquent" (Feixa, Porzio, Canelles and Recio, 2007, p. 54). They are driven by the search for a space "of resistance" in which they could counteract the invisibility - if not discrimination - they experience in daily lives.

Scholars who analyzed ethnic gangs in France (Mansilla, 2021; Mohammed and Oualhaci, 2022) focused on three intertwined factors: migratory processes and the dynamics of migrants' inclusion of second- and third-generation immigrants from the Maghreb, the urban transformations of suburbs, and the media and political construction of street groups in terms of danger to urban security. In tracing the history of youth groups, particular emphasis has been placed on how media representation and local security policies have changed over time. In the 1960s, the *Blousons Noirs* were not street gangs perceived as a security matter, but their "deviance" was defined on a symbolic level as nonconformity. In the following decades, the increasing number of immigrant families and the deteriorating housing conditions in the *banlieues* have led to a dominant narrative of street groups as the result of a "malaise of the suburbs", understood in the terms of an "ethnic-racial otherness" combined with a "socio-economic otherness" (Mohammed and Oualhaci, 2022, p. 320). Juvenile groups lost all character of cultural nonconformity and became manifestations of French violent youngsters with Arab origins. Public and media representations linked violence to an alleged "non-integrability" and help legitimize increasingly punitive urban security policies.

In Italy, traditionally, the youth question has not been considered as a 'security' issue, or as a problem of violence and security in public spaces, but instead as a challenge for social and educational policies, aimed at protecting young people. Since the '90s, however, there seems to be a shift from a picture of youngsters as irresponsible people to be safeguarded, because they can harm themselves (through drug or alcohol abuse), to a picture of violent people being a danger for others and for citizens' security (Selmini and Nobili, 2008, p. 353).

Socio-criminological research on youth have focused mainly on alcohol and drugs, and bullying at school (Baldry and Farrington, 1999) and online (Genta, Brighi and Guarini, 2013). Since the 1990s, the Italian part of the International Self-Reported Delinquency Study (ISRD) has opened the analysis to juvenile delinquency in public space, such as vandalism, also focusing on foreign minors, youth groups and their deviant behavior.

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1 Differences are in focus (criminal activity or life experience), in methodology (descriptive and police knowledge-based or ethnographic research) and in intervention proposals (punitive response versus social interventions).

2 In these terms, the then Britain Minister of Justice quoted by McDowell (2012, p. 573).

From the ISRD study results that the migrant background of minors is related "to greater involvement in illegal behavior, although the differences with Italians are rather limited, and in any case much smaller than those found in official crime reports" (Gatti et al., 1994, p. 54). However, from other self-report studies, carried out in the Emilia-Romagna region and specifically oriented to test the relationship between migrant origins and juvenile delinquency, resulted that there was not a strong linkage between being a foreign minor and committing deviant behavior (Melossi, Crocitti, Massa and Gibertoni, 2011; Crocitti, 2011). Unlike the representation of foreign youngsters as at more risk to be involved in crime than Italian minors, having a migrant background does not result to be relevant in explaining youth deviance.

As to juvenile street groups, Italian research has been influenced by both the aforementioned approaches to street gangs. Moving from the Eurogang definition, the ISRD study found that 5.7% of sampled students "have to be considered a *gang member*" (Gatti et al., 2008, p. 56). Furthermore, being involved in illegal activities was higher for youngsters belonging to a group and being a member of a 'street gang' leads to an even higher involvement in crime (*ibidem*, p. 57).

Differently from this delinquency focused approach, studies carried out in some Italian cities (Genoa and Milan) in the early 2000s, when Southern-American gangs started to appear in urban places, brought to light a space – called 'Latin Atlantic' (Queirolo Palmas, 2010) – in which youngsters with an immigrant background were able to gain visibility and recognition. *Latin Kings and Queens*, *Netas*, *Mara Salvatrucha 13*, *Barrio 18* were portrayed in political and media debate as protagonists of urban disorder and violence. Contrary to this portrayal, ethnographic research displayed that these street organizations, by enacting practices of "defensive resocialization" (Bugli, 2009) from subordinated lives, provide Latin youth with support, identity and protection from exclusion and marginality (Queirolo Palmas, 2009; Grassi, 2021). Social and "political" characters of Latin street organizations have been found to prevail over the dominant narrative as criminal gangs.

Contrary to other European countries mentioned before (e.g. France and the UK), "where the combination "youth violence-urban insecurity" has been widely supported and widespread" (Selmini and Nobili, 2008, p. 365), Italian urban security issues, at the beginning, have focused on other figures of danger, namely immigrants, Roma people and homeless.

In the last decades, however, political and media attention has been devoted toward youth behavior in leisure time places (*ibidem*) and, recently, toward youth street groups – indistinctly referred to as gangs – that occupy public spaces, conflicting with other users of those same spaces (parks, shopping malls, squares). The youth issue as a 'problem' has gained terrain on the scene of urban security (and related policies), leading to a change in the institutional response, that from being focused on social interventions seems to be, today, mostly centered on restraining and punitive measures. Also in Italy, like in other European cities, the link between urban violence and youth street groups has become central in local security policies and in related punitive responses for dealing with juvenile antisocial behaviors.

However, we believe there is an urgent need to counter such a representation of Italian street groups based on a "single model" of juvenile gang, often identified with the criminalizing one that dominates the American tradition, that does not fit the reality of youth socialization. It is important to consider the diversity and complexity of groups, not renouncing to problematize the social factors that are at the origin of these groups, the dynamics within the group, the interactions with peers and other generations, and their practices of protest and resistance, including deviant and violent behavior. All these elements are to be combined in order to make a distinction between *group* delinquency and *gang* delinquency (Mastropasqua, 2013, p. 250)[3], and to delinquency not linked to youth aggregations as well. Youth street socialization should be viewed as a *continuum* at opposite ends of which are, on the one hand, delinquent gangs and, on the other hand, recreational aggregations, and in between a "plurality of hybrid groups" (Feixa, 2020, p. 102). Moving from this perspective, the article aims to analyze juvenile delinquency, to describe the multifaceted phenomenon of youth street groups in Italy, and to critically discuss the recent punitive turn in urban security policies targeting youngsters' antisocial behaviors.

A case study from Italy. Official statistics on juvenile delinquency

Recently, the Italian public and political debate has focused on juvenile delinquency. The visible, disorderly and sometimes deviant presence of young people in the public space is read and discussed through media narratives that, by referring to 'baby gangs', highlight the urgency of this phenomenon, particularly evident after the forced retreat caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Before discussing the media representation of these dynamics and the characteristics of youth groups in urban context, as well as the nature of their behaviors, we want to describe the broader phenomenon of juvenile delinquency moving from official crime statistics (with all the limitations they present, including the high level of unrecorded crimes, that is those crimes that are not reported by victims or discovered by penal agencies). In Italy, there are no official statistics recording crime perpetrated by gangs, since there is not a specific definition of such

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3   By concept of *gangs in process* are designated "street groups … composed of young people … in which some members have ties to illegal activities without such activities necessarily forming part of the group's identity" (Feixa, 2020, p. 101).

groups in Italian penal laws (Prina, 2019). For this reason, in the paragraph, we will rely on data on juvenile delinquency to have some indirect information on youth groups' illegal activities.

The most recent available data by the Ministry of the Interior (2023), and reported by several media in early 2023, would emphasize – after years of decline or, at least, stability – a steady and worrying growth in crimes committed by minors. Considering the pre-Covid situation (year 2019 - the year with the fewest number of minors reported or arrested -, data updated in October) and the first year of the slackening of restrictions imposed by the pandemic (2022, data updated in October), and focusing on crimes characterized by a significant data base, there would have been a significant increase in juveniles reported or arrested for the crimes of culpable injuries (+33.8%), blows (+50.0%), and robberies (+75.3%).

To deeply explore the phenomenon, we need to refer to Istat data (2023) which, although updated to 2021, allow to show a medium-term historical trend starting from 2007. We consider the number of offenders reported by the police to the judicial authority, noting that only 37.5% of crimes are recorded and that in more than 60% of cases the offender is unknown (Prina, 2019).

Based on available data, and with the awareness that the years 2020 and 2021 were affected by the pandemic, we can see that the incidence of juvenile crime on the total number of people reported or arrested does not increase, at least until 2021 (see Fig.1). These trends are the same in all three age groups that make up our target population: up to 13 years old, 14-17 years old, and young adults. Figure 1 also highlights female offenders: a minority compared to the male component, and not increasing over time.
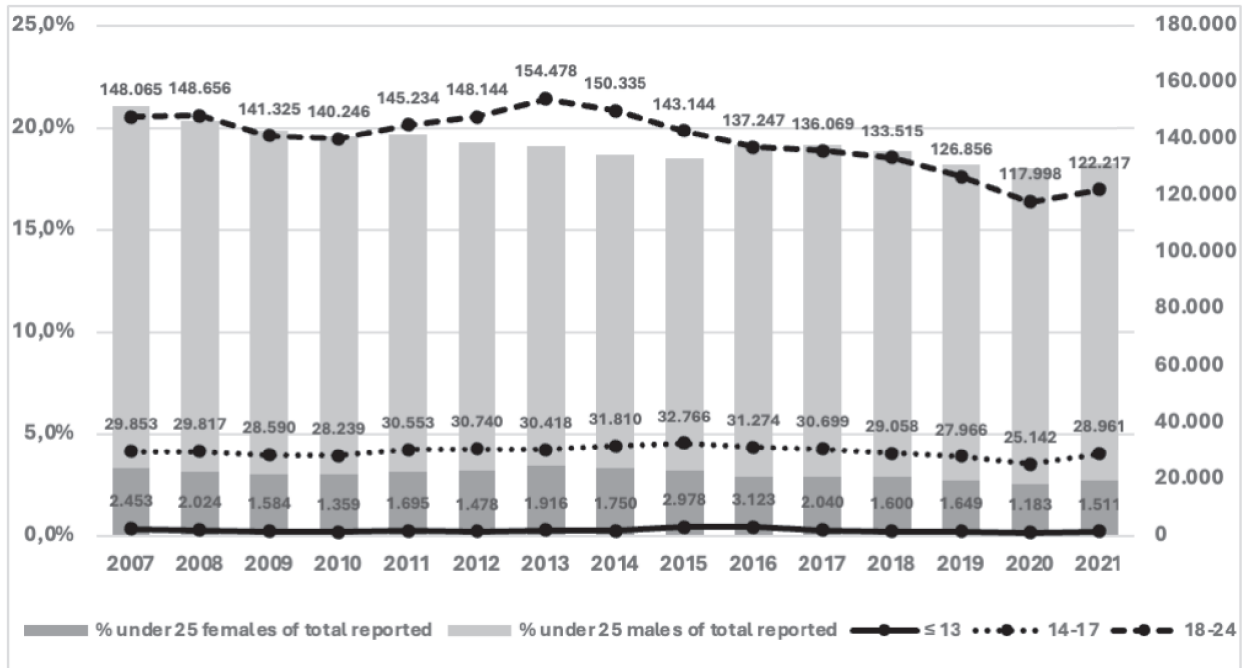
Source: Istat data, http://dati.istat.it/?lang=en&SubSessionId=32c3a186-4070-4518-8882-4d6a8efe941a, last access 16/05/2023
Figure 1 Number of offenders (up to 13 years old, 14-17 years old, and 18-24 years old) reported by the police to the judicial authority and breakdown by gender composition.

Figure 2 shows the number of offenders for crimes most attributed to street gang members: no crime among those considered denotes a clear upward trend. Blows and culpable injuries, as well as thefts and robberies, have in-

creased from the previous year, although the latter have not reached pre-pandemic levels. In contrast, other crimes show stable trends.

Figure 2 Number of offenders (under 25-years-old) reported by the police to the judicial authority by type of crime

Data closer to what can be considered crimes committed by a gang are those related to co-offense, which see the co-participation of several people in the commission of the same crime. These data should not be understood, uncritically, as gang-related data since most cases see the co-participation of 2 or 3 people, and since neither a territoriality of the actions enacted, nor a temporal continuity, nor, even less, a clear structuring of the group itself is necessarily evident. So, it is difficult to speak of 'youth gangs'. However, the reference to the number of offenders reported for criminal conspiracy (art. 416 of the Criminal Code, excluding art. 416-bis, i.e., mafia criminal organization) is the closest. The percentage of under-25s reported by police on the basis of art. 416 is very low: less than 1 percent of the total number reported for criminal conspiracy, amounting to about 800 reports nationwide, in line with previous years.

The reference to a purely quantitative methodology, mostly based on 'official sources' of penal institutions, to measure the numerosity of groups and the elements that characterize them risks representing youth society as static and predominantly delinquent (Miller, 2020), preventing the analysis of the underlying dynamics of group formation and the valorization of nonconformist but not deviant behaviors. For this reason, given the lack of a legal definition of youth gang and the absence of data to monitor it, some exploratory studies (e.g., Savona, Dugato and Villa, 2022) have attempted to map it on Italian territory on the basis of data collected from "key informants" – mostly law enforcement and social services – and through the systematic analysis of newspapers articles on juvenile gangs.

In the wake of qualitative studies is the research 'Youth street gangs in Emilia-Romagna between marginality, deviance and urban insecurity' (Selmini and Crocitti, 2022). In Emilia-Romagna, a region of more than 4,400,000 inhabitants located in North-Central Italy, trends in juvenile crime are similar to those highlighted by the Istat data presented earlier. Although less linear than the trend shown – as it is based on a smaller number of cases – until 2021 we cannot speak of an increase in juvenile delinquency at the regional level: the number of under-25s reported, although with some fluctuations, remains stable over years. The research analyzed youth groups' behaviors in public spaces, with a particular focus on crime and deviance, considered by the media to be a cause of urban insecurity, through the view of privileged witnesses – such as school personnel, educators, social workers, representatives of local services, police – and the reconstruction of family, school, economic and social trajectories of the members of so-called *street gangs* (Selmini and Crocitti, 2022). Moving from preliminary results of this research, carried out between 2021 and 2022, the following paragraphs on media representations and juvenile antisocial behavior are developed.

Media representations between crime and moral panic

Youth violence, especially when perpetrated in groups, strongly affects the public perception of safety. The data presented before testify to a presence, albeit not alarming and not increasing over time, of violent behavior among youth. The central question, however, is whether such practices can fit into what the literature considers to be 'youth gang' actions. This is not a mere exercise in defini-

tional style since, as we will discuss in the following paragraphs, such a narrative framework is likely to have effects on institutional responses to juvenile behaviors in public spaces.

In talking about narrative frame, it needs to consider the role of the media in the "proliferation" (Feixa, 2020) of discourses that see youth street gangs as new *folk devils*. For decades now, it has been pointed out that mass media play a role "in defining and shaping social problems: the reporting of certain 'facts' can be sufficient to generate concern, anxiety, indignation or panic" (Cohen, 1972, p. 16). Through this highly symbolic process, media respond to the normative concerns of the public by inserting into the narrative frame certain moral directives that can lead to building of sudden and urgent social problems (*ibidem*). News provided by the media inform us about the normative contours of a society (Erikson, 1966): they make manifest what is right and what is wrong, the boundaries not to be crossed, the forms the *devil* can take. And this narrative, initially passed down orally to a limited number of people, reaches an increasingly wide audience through mass media and, today, through social networks.

The role played by the media is therefore crucial: the framing of the dynamics we are focusing on, which attributes to 'baby-gangs' (like juvenile street groups are called by Italian media) any conflictual event in public space in which young people are involved, contributes to creating a social climate of intolerance and fear, even if official crime statistics do not justify such alarm. Considering as 'baby gang' actions all events that can be framed in a different way – e.g., disorder, protest or urban violence – reinforces the visibility of the phenomenon, giving room for emulative behavior and contributing to strengthening the sense of belonging and the process of building a "gang" identity, even when this gang does not exist, or does not yet exist.

In other words, while much of the knowledge of the phenomenon comes from the media, research shows that this knowledge is often distorted: if "the media create subcultures in the process of naming them and draw boundaries around them in the act of describing them" (Thornton, 1995, p. 162), thinking of strictly criminal policies in response to these dynamics seems wholly inadequate, tending to "demonize" social groups and giving rise to "periodic waves of moral panic" (Feixa, 2020, p. 20).

Defining characteristics of the moral panic allows us, in the next section, to understand how this is applied toward the youth population. According to Cohen (1972, p. 9), moral panic occurs when "a condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests". A social fact, often already present, is then transformed into a public policy issue upon which feelings of concern and condemnation are poured by a public opinion conditioned by media and politicians, who assume the role of 'moral entrepreneurs' by activating conflicts against easily identifiable scapegoats.

Such moral politics, inextricably intertwined with the interests of the dominant classes, plays a significant role in contemporary society: scholars have mostly interpreted them through the lens of the *elite-engineered model* (Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke and Roberts, 1978), according to which moral panic is the conscious result of campaigns constructed to divert attention from the real social crises inherent in the capitalist system, or through the *interest group model* (Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 1994), according to which it is the unintended result of moral crusades undertaken by particular interest groups in an attempt to draw public attention to a specific set of actions.

Contemporary societies seem to be characterized by an endemic crisis on the economic-social level, cause of increasingly harsh conflicts. Given the difficulties of resolving such critical issues but, at the same time, considering the need to reassure public opinion, moral entrepreneurs need to make their voices heard. The reference to the need to enact expected, disciplined, 'decorous' behavior within the urban context can be interpreted in this way. And which populations are the easiest to discipline and punish? Those that are immediately visible, occupying public space inappropriately. Also because of the absence – already pointed out – of official data that can delineate the phenomenon, the narrative provided by the media contributes to determining the emergence of feelings of insecurity and fear toward youngsters who choose urban place to meet and socialize.

Once thought to be the unintended outcome of journalistic practices, moral panic would become a goal of daily news reporting (McRobbie and Thornton, 1995): once a person – or a group – is identified as a threat to social values or interests, it is described in a simple and easily understandable way that is useful in creating opposition that causes a response from authorities and policymakers. Such stereotyping has some effects: the exaggeration of certain characteristics of individuals or groups, useful to the narrative, can lead the folk devils to perceive themselves as more deviant (Wilkins, 1964). Such labeling would lead them to commit further deviant behavior, justifying and confirming the moral characteristics attributed to them, thus giving rise to a vicious cycle that is difficult to stop except through the criminal justice intervention.

Another characteristic peculiar to moral panics is their volatility. Populations targeted by moral entrepreneurs (e.g., migrants, refugees or asylum seekers, and now young people), receive attention in the press and are the subject of repressive policies for a few times, only to disappear as quickly as they appeared (Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 2009). The 'volatility of moralization' (Hier, 2008) means that sensational discourses that articulate moral transgressions skyrocket suddenly, tend to be temporally limited, and run out rather quickly because public interest wanes or because they are replaced by other issues. Since volatile

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4   "Pinot" refers to the average police officer working on the streets.

moralizing discourses would be localized manifestations of cultural representation patterns endemic to both media and society (Watney, 1987), episodes of moral panic would be ordinary rather than exceptional outcomes.

A firm point is that moral panic arises from a complex chain of social interactions involving claims-makers, moral guardians and the media, in order to reproduce structures of domination (Hier, 2008). In other words, news is not itself a creation of the media; rather, the media reflect pre-existing relations of domination (Hall et al., 1978). The media portrayal of youth gangs draws its main information source from institutions: news is taken from the police reports, thematic insights are based on the viewpoints of politicians and administrators. A narrative designed to reaffirm the stereotype of youth dangerousness only creates a strong interpretive circularity: mass media contribute to the 'hypervisibility' and 'spectacularization' of street groups through images narrated by others, that risk fostering the stereotype of the public enemy (Queirolo Palmas et al., 2021). In contrast, interpretations provided by associationism and social volunteering are rarely present, and there is almost no space for youngsters' voices.

To get a complete picture of the phenomenon, it is therefore necessary to explore the characteristics of youth groups, their interaction in the urban space and the dynamics of conflict and violence that may emerge within it moving from the standpoint of privileged witnesses who are in close contact with street groups. These insights can help us understand the reasons why, after years of a more protective approach toward youth in Italy (Nelken, 2005), there has been a moral panic toward it and the resort to punitive measures against juvenile antisocial behaviors.

Marginal youngsters' antisocial behaviors in public spaces

Urban space, far from being a neutral arena, is a site of claims based on interests and power relations (Valentine, 1996). The urban environment reflects existing social hierarchies and conflicts concerning the right to the city that emerge among the different populations living in it (Bauböck, 2003). Scholars of critical urbanism have argued that cities have been defined and are still structured around an idea of the adult, white, middle-aged, middleclass citizen (Caroll, Calder-Dawe, Witten and Asiasiga, 2019). Conversely, ideas of city developed and enacted by marginal groups – including the youth population – are often ignored, rejected, or actively stigmatized.

In the struggle for urban space, young people are a highly visible social group: public space is for them a place where they can express their voice, carry out specific performances, or simply meet and socialize. Through its domestication – understood as a form of appropriation that escapes adult control (Lieberg, 1995) – certain parts of the city (parks, neighborhoods, but also benches or terminuses of public transports) take on a special significance

for them, becoming habitual places of intimacy and rootedness (Cresswell, 2009; De Luigi, Piro, Reutlinger and Zimmermann, 2020).

However, youth access to urban space is hindered by several barriers. On the one hand, from an economic point of view, youth usually have few resources for market access: since they cannot own, alter, or rent private property, they can only choose, use, and occupy the property of others (Childress, 2004). On the other hand, young people are often bearers and experimenters of ways of using spaces in innovative forms compared to the way the spaces were originally conceived, as well as of behaviors and relational styles judged inappropriate by adults (Matthews, Taylor, Percy-Smith and Limb, 2000).

Intergenerational conflict thus seems to be a useful interpretive lens of the presence of youth in public space. In particular, adult society aims to exclude youth from it or, at least, to control its activities by hiding it or confining it into designated spaces that enjoy institutional and symbolic legitimacy, while directing participation toward predefined tracks. When juvenile behaviors do not fall within these standards, they risk being labelled as source of moral panic.

The empirical research shows a composite picture of juvenile street groups, often far from the media representation conveyed by the term baby gang. The youth aggregations examined in the research carried out in Emilia-Romagna region are characterized by a fluid and heterogeneous nature – thus, cannot be defined as gangs, lacking those typical traits that, according to scholars (Hagedorn, 1998; Klein, 2001; Thrasher, 1927), distinguish these groups, such as territoriality, systematic involvement in crime of most members, and a well-defined structure.

Although the groups examined share a common living area, they are extremely mobile within the city and are not characterized by a specific territoriality: they move around the city in search of spaces 'to be' in order to spend leisure time in an informal, unstructured way. However, these spaces are designed for the enjoyment of a well-selected public, composed mainly of adult citizens and consumers. For young people from the marginal classes, the limited opportunities to use public spaces and the almost obligatory positioning in peripheral (and invisible) areas of cities reflect and amplify their subordinate role within society. Thus, there emerges a need for visibility, a desire to be in the same places of leisure as their peers. There is something symbolic, for example, about meeting in a shopping mall or 'occupying' the city center: these are the quintessential places of consumption and opportunity, from which many of the young people in these groups feel excluded but want to be part of (McDonald, 2003).

Urban centers, in particular, represent the showcases of cities, and this is precisely why they are chosen by juvenile groups seeking a space of visibility and recognition. Additionally, the scarcity of available urban places means that these must be shared with other generations, particularly older ones: interactions between generations can become problematic when spaces are used in different ways that are – or are perceived to be – incompatible.

The socialization practices of groups consist, in most cases and most of the time, of relational, recreational, and playful activities: whether in a square, a park, downtown streets, entertainment areas or shopping malls, young people construct and experience their identity within a group of peers. A characteristic of informal groups is the use of public spaces as "uncontrolled" places, where activities are "unstructured" and occur without adult supervision. This lack of control is, in itself, likely to be portrayed as a dangerous trait, regardless of the enactment of deviant or criminal behavior: the mere presence of a street group is perceived as a cause of insecurity. Highly patrolled cities and strict regulations on urban decorum also reflect an adult perspective on urban citizenship that stigmatizes youth practices – such as gathering in large numbers, playing music in a park, or even doing nothing in a square – as antisocial behavior (Massey, 2007; Walther, Batsleer, Loncle and Pohl, 2020).

Young people who are part of street groups construct their identity in constant interaction with the peers and other generations, using urban places as an arena to emerge from invisibility, satisfy relational and leisure needs, and gain a space within cities and society (Miller, 2020). Street subcultures combine ways of using urban spaces that are both an expression and a search for identity, albeit sometimes with marked traits of nonconformity and violent rebellion. Young people from the peripheral segments of the population, who do not find in the urban context a space in which to spend their free time, who do not have the opportunity to access the leisure places of their peers, and who do not have a role within society except in a marginal position, may react with deviant and violent behavior. In this sense, youth group violence can be interpreted in relation to the dynamics of tension and conflict between different generations and between peers in public spaces: to escape the invisibility of their life trajectories and exclusion and stigmatization by the 'established group' (Elias and Scotson, 1965), marginal youth resort to disorderly, unseemly, disruptive, even deviant and criminal behaviors.

To refer to these groups, in which criminal activity is not dominant but coexists with other community activities, we therefore want to reject, along the lines of Brotherton (2008), the concept of 'street gangs' to speak, rather, of 'street youth organizations'. The risk, otherwise, is that a short-circuit is created between the lack of a role for youth in the urban space and, more generally, in society, the nonconformist and deviant practices of juvenile groups, the representation of such groups as 'dangerous', and the punitive reaction of control agencies, with the risk of reinforcing the protest identity within the group, transforming it into a 'heroic subculture' in opposition to the dominant culture (Weinzierl and Muggleton, 2003), and causing youth to adhere to such a 'public stereotype of dangerousness' by developing criminal careers.

These dynamics are made more complex by the potential that social networks offer in terms of visibility of behavior, providing an additional stage for acts of distinction and rebellion. The growing spread of social networks has profoundly altered youth sociality and its spaces (Boyd, 2007), making groups fluid in composition, occasional in meeting and neither territorial nor settled in their choice of gathering places. The identity construction that characterizes youth aggregations has found an additional stage than urban places. The dynamics of group interaction and socialization are now played out in both real and virtual spaces (Schroeder, 2002). The virtual stage is not only alternative to physical places but becomes complementary: actions seem to acquire greater significance as they can be 'showcased' and disseminated through social networks to gain visibility and popularity.

Moreover, the audience that attends such performance is changing and expanding (Hodkinson, 2017; Hogan, 2010): if until a few years ago virtual content was disseminated mostly within an inner circle of people who also knew each other offline, today digital platforms allow words and images to be spread to an audience composed of unknown people. Through social media, style and cultural patterns are spread and can lead to emulation, and the same is for deviant forms of rebellion (Lim, 2013; Patton et al., 2014).

The Internet, on the one hand, amplifies the visibility of actions and allows a need for individual performance to be satisfied, while, on the other hand, it risks triggering a competition that requires performing increasingly spectacular actions to obtain and maintain that visibility (Storrod and Densley, 2017). Social media, especially for those young people who come from marginal trajectories, become a tool to break out of insignificance and cultivate expectations of social improvement if the opportunities for upward mobility are not provided by the society itself.

Finally, we cannot overlook the effect that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on young people. Increasing socioeconomic disparities, insecurity, feelings of loneliness and anger are some of the key words, highlighted by several surveys (Cooper et al., 2021; RER, 2021), that characterized youth conditions during the pandemic period and were also risk factors for violent behavior once they regained access to urban spaces. In particular, anger would be linked to situations of distress that, if not experienced through closure and social withdrawal, can be projected outward, even violently. What institutional responses can be put in place to deal with such manifestations?

Youth, urban disorder and the institutional response

In Italy, until few decades ago, youth deviance pertained exclusively to social policies and preventive measures; also the juvenile criminal justice system has been shaped in such a way to protect youngsters in their growth process.

The 1988 law on juvenile criminal trial, Juvenile Penal Institutions and the Juvenile Court (established in 1934 to decide on all proceedings that concern those who have not reached the majority age) are based on the principle of the 'best interest of the child', leading to limit the ju-

venile's stay in the criminal system in the shortest possible time, in order to avoid the effects of stigmatization, and, in some circumstances, setting back punitive needs of the State in the face of the child's priority social recovery.

It is the socialization paradigm that characterizes the State's response, with the obligation to modulate the penal reaction by resorting to the sanction most suitable for educating children. The restitutive paradigm has also been affirmed, recognizing centrality to the reparation of the damage caused to the victim or the community, and to mediation, through which the juvenile is able to understand the disvalue of his/her behavior (Pazè, 2013). In line with these principles, the Italian juvenile justice has made extensive use of probation (Pulvirenti, 2012, p. 390).

Scholars who studied the Italian or foreign nationality of juveniles entering the criminal justice system have, however, highlighted some aspects. Principles that inspired the 1988 reform, based on the "rapid exit of the child from the penal circuit" and the "residual nature of detention" (Mastropasqua and Colla, 2009, p. 11) have not been applied, in general, to foreign youth (Campesi, Re and Torrente, 2009) and, in particular, to 'unaccompanied foreign minors' and Roma people (Mastropasqua, 2013, p. 249).

Data on penal institutions "show the existence of differentiated forms of control depending on the social groups to which minors … belong (Italians, Roma people, immigrants)" (Favretto, Scarscelli and Scivoletto, 2010, p. 223). In the last years, the total number of minors in prison decreased – it was 474 in 2010 and 316 in 2022 – whereas the percentage of foreign inmates showed an increase from 34.8% in 2010 to 44.3% in 2022[4]. Therefore, the juvenile justice "is characterized by a 'double criminal trial', one for Italian minors, the other for members of the categories considered more socially dangerous (Roma people and immigrants), … thus coming to determine a scenario in which it is still possible to use the classic image of 'unequal law'" (*ibidem*, 2010).

In the last decades, a punitive turn involved all youth, together with the stigmatization and low tolerance toward street groups and urban violence described above. Youth behavior in public spaces has become an issue to be addressed not only through social policies but (also and especially) through security policies. Citizens' perceptions and demands for local government to ensure order in public spaces enter the urban security debate and agenda. Physical and social decay become the main source of concern of local communities.

In 2008, the power of mayors to issue 'ordinances' that provide an administrative sanction for those who engage in behavior that disturbs urban safety was strengthened (Crocitti and Selmini, 2017). In the aftermath of the re-

form, the main two areas of intervention have been the prohibition of street prostitution and the prohibition of alcohol consumption in public spaces (Cittalia and Anci, 2009). The latter (so-called ordinances *antimovida*) ban antisocial behaviors in leisure places (and provide penalties for violations) targeting also youth socialization.

In 2017, tools for controlling entertainment venues become more punitive. Those who engage in antisocial behavior resulting from drunkenness and disturbance in leisure time places may receive an *order of removal* from those places (lasting 48 hours), and a concomitant administrative penalty. Repetition of the behavior may result in the issuing by the police of a *ban* from the places for a longer period (until two years). Since 2018, violation of such a ban is punished as a crime.

Urban security policies have outlined a 'punitive administrative law' (Ruga Riva, 2008) functional to repressive and securitarian goals. On the one hand, the new measures have contributed to spreading "a culture of punitiveness", raising the "threshold of intolerance" and legitimizing "punitive attitudes in public opinion" (Selmini, 2020, p. 130). On the other hand, municipal punitive law has widened the net of criminalization, sanctioning behaviors that, although criminally lawful, are perceived as a danger for the decorum of cities.

These changes have affected juvenile behavior in public spaces and youth street groups, legitimizing, by virtue of the alleged dangerousness of such groups, fueled by alarmist media portrayals, preventive police checks at entertainment venues and the use of bans on access to such venues.

Emblematic of the punitive turn is the so-called crime of *rave parties* introduced in 2022 in the Italian penal code (article 633 bis). The punished behavior is "to organize or promote the arbitrary invasion of other people's land or buildings, public or private, in order to organize a musical gathering or other entertainment purpose". Recalling that youth groups use public spaces as a "scene", a stage to have visibility and recognition (Pitti and Tuorto, 2021, p. 62), the criminalization of rave parties falls within a security 'drift' of urban control instruments against cultural and nonconformist expressions.

Conclusions

Over the last decades, public and political debate on juvenile delinquency has lost the traditional benevolent tolerance toward younger offenders. Even youth socialization in public spaces has changed, also because different are the places of entertainment and different are the modes of consumption for leisure time purposes. Unchanged, however, are social and economic disadvantages experienced by marginal youngsters behaving disorderly in public space or belonging to street groups.

A first finding of our analysis is the fluid nature of contemporary juvenile aggregations, most of which cannot be defined as 'street gangs', lacking those features typical of

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4   Data are by Istat and by research reports available on https://www.ragazzidentro.it/i-numeri-degli-istituti-penali-per-i-minorenni/ and https://www.osservatoriodiritti.it/2022/02/11/-giustizia-minorile/.

gangs (organized structure, territoriality, systematic involvement in criminal activities). Street youth groups are characterized by forms of peer sociality that occur outside institutional contexts (family, school) and structured cultural, recreational and sports activities. Such spontaneous aggregations in 'unsupervised' spaces can sometimes be perceived as a danger to urban safety (Massey, 2007) and are often framed in the media narrative as 'baby-gangs', fostering punitive responses against them. However, such moral panic and following repressive measures are not effective. All the research on gangs shows that stigmatization and repression risk making the group more cohesive, amplifying involvement in delinquent activities and their progression to more serious crime, also because they lead to an increase of the 'us' versus 'them' attitude. Therefore, the Italian current tendency toward repressive measures should be reduced as much as possible, to prevent the problem from becoming much more serious in the long run, and the potential violence of some of these groups from spreading. Similar conclusions can be drawn on criminalization through media representations. The media framing of the problem, which defines 'baby-gangs' as almost every incident in public space in which more than one young person is involved, contributes to creating a social climate of insecurity and moral panic toward youth. This representation gives space for emulative behavior and, like the punitive response, helps reinforce a sense of belonging and the process of building a 'gang' identity.

Italian prevention policies concerning youth should be reshaped in order to foster social interventions (involving families, schools, community organizations) and the building of physical spaces where also marginal youngsters can have visibility. It is true that conflictual dynamics, well known in other Countries, started to appear in Italian cities and to acquire centrality as urban security issues. However, juvenile violence and antisocial behavior have something symbolic, for example, in meeting in a shopping mall, or in 'invading' the city center: these are the places of consumption par excellence from which many of the young people we are talking about feel excluded, but of which they want to be part. Most of the juvenile groups are not neighborhood-based, they move around the city looking for places presented to youth as *the* space of inclusion. But leisure spaces are designed for the enjoyment of a single, well-selected audience, made up mainly of consumers. Therefore, juvenile deviance and violence in public spaces may be interpreted as a reaction to marginality in search of recognition. To prevent juvenile delinquency, thus, an effort to rethink social interventions and urban place management strategies to support and give space even to a minority group of youngsters – but one that requires visibility – should be made.

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Looking at gender stereotypes to fight gender based violence

Maria Giuseppina Muratore | Claudia Villante | Lucilla Scarnicchia

Abstract
"Violence against women, including domestic violence, is one of the most serious forms of gender-based violations of human rights". This is the first statement of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, the so-called Istanbul Convention. As underlined by the Convention, violence against women (VAW) and gender-based violence (GBV) are structured on our society and their causes are mainly rooted in the culture of a stereotyped gender dimension. The stereotyped society is at the basis of GBV and of women discrimination and prevents to reach equal opportunities and complete the emancipation process of women from men. In this perspective, to study gender role stereotypes means to study causes of violence, how the violence is perpetuated and to detect reasons that make difficult to stop it. Interesting is the dualism between public and private context where VAW occur and the perception of safety women have. The increase concern for local and national governments about VAW can contribute to feelings of insecurity, if not well addressed. We argue that gender stereotypes are not only important to understand the phenomenon, but to avoid the risk to make our society less safe for women. The paper will look at the sources that Istat uses to deepen the framework that causes and reinforces GBV. Following the multi-source approach, data from population surveys and from big data are used, with a focus on the urban dimension, in order to depict GBV and identify some strategies to combat it.

Keywords: gender stereotypes, violence against women, attitudes towards violence, social media, urban dimension

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Looking at gender stereotypes to fight gender based violence

Introduction. Why is it important to study gender stereotypes?

Gender stereotypes concern beliefs about what men and women typically do and about what they should do. They are descriptive and prescriptive simultaneously and permeate all aspects of social life conditioning, for instance, educational and occupational choices, career opportunities, the access to the political arena, as well as the places where they decide to live. The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (2011), better known as the Istanbul Convention, recognises that gender stereotypes contribute to making violence against women acceptable in societies and therefore requires promoting a cultural change in their regard[1]. The Convention focuses on stereotyping as a major cause of violence. The gender-based violence (GBV) in fact, is mainly rooted in the culture of disparities and unequal power between men and women that is at the bases of our societies (Cornelli R., 2019). Even the dualism between the public and private spheres that distinguishes men's and women's lives, as reinforced by stereotypes, for which family life and the home, represent the safe places for women, as opposed to the street and the city which are seen as risky, shatter against a very different reality, as demonstrated by the data collected on violence.

Istat started to study gender-based stereotypes carrying out in 2018 (the second edition is now ongoing) a dedicated module on gender role stereotypes and the social image of violence[2], in the context of the agreement with the National Department of Equal Opportunity (Italian Presidency of Council), and, in 2020, developing out an experimental analysis of big data on gender based violence and stereotypes[3].

Based on these data, firstly, our goal is to measure how gender stereotypes are widespread, looking at differences in the population and trying to identify if there are protective and predictive risk factors for being stereotyped.

Secondly, we want to address questions about the urban context. Are gender stereotypes anchored to a certain territory or to the urban dimension? Can the urba-

nity dimension drive some changes? And yet, is the urban reality a place of real risk for women, to the point that it is right to believe that women should be protected and stay at home? Another point is how much safety perception is linked to violence against women?

The third important issue is the growing reach of the internet. The rapid spread of mobile information and communications technologies (ICTs), and the wide diffusion of social media, especially during the pandemic period, have spread online gender-based violence (UN Broadband commission, 2015). Consequently, our further questions are: how does these new forms of modern conversation affect gender stereotypes? How gender stereotypes should be studied from this perspective? How to observe what the users think, say and share, and how to monitor the discussions about gender stereotypes on the web?

These relevant and complex questions will be addressed considering different data sources, as described in the following.

Background: The cultural roots of violence

Before discussing the results of our analysis on gender stereotypes, we need to point out the causes and effects of GBV, related to cultural and social roots of violence, using data from the Istat surveys on violence against women (Istat, 2008, 2015). The Violence against women, the so called Women's Safety survey, was carried out by Istat in 2006 on 25,000 Italian women aged 16-70 by telephone (Cati, Computer Assisted Telephone Interview) and in 2014 on 21,000 Italians (CATI) and a sample of foreign women mostly interviewed in person. The next survey will be in 2023-2024.

The intergenerational transmission
From data results (Istat, 2008; 2015), as well as in the international literature (Baldry and Ferraro 2008; Baldry 2007; Corazziari and Barletta 2012; Culross 1999; Cummings, Pepler and Moore 1999; Dauvergne and Johnson 2000; Prinz and Feerick 2003; Riggs, Caulfield and Street 2000; Baldry, Ferraro and Ferraro 2011), it emerges that the violent context of the family of origin is associated with the level of violence that characterises the current history of abuses. Violence by current partner (5.2% of women) rise to 35.9% if men were physically abused in childhood, to 22% if they witnessed the violence of their father against their mother. Analogously, when women suffered sexual violence before the age of 16, the occurrence of sexual or physical violence as adults reach 58.5% (compared to the average of 31.5%), 64.2% amongst women who were bea-

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ten as children by their father, and 64.8% in cases they suffered physical violence from their mother.

These results are reinforced by the application of two models of logistic regression. For physical violence[4] (by current partner) were meaningful the variables about witnessing violence, and the physical violence suffered by the

victim from her mother. While for sexual violence[5], the higher factor risks were again the experience of having witnessed the violence of own father on own mother and the physical violence suffered by the mother, in addition to the sexual violence suffered in childhood.

EFFECTS	ODDSRATIO	Pr>ChiSquare
Victim graduate vs primary school/no school degree	1.902	<.0001
Sexual violence in childhood: yes vs no	1.703	<.0001
Partner physically violent outside family: yes vs no	2.115	<.0001
Partner verbally violent outside the family: yes vs no	2.957	<.0001
Victim's father battered his wife: yes vs no	2.577	<.0001
Victim's father battered the woman: yes vs no	1.579	0.0008
Victim's mother battered the woman: yes vs no	2.079	<.0001
Partner father battered his wife: yes vs no	3.967	<.0001
Any form of psychological violence from partner: yes vs no	7.629	<.0001

Table 1 Risk factors that increase the physical violence (by current partner) probability

EFFECTS	ODDSRATIO	Pr>ChiSquare
Sexual violence in childhood: yes vs no	2.264	<.0001
Partner physically violent outside family: yes vs no	2.055	0.0003
Partner verbally violent outside family: yes vs no	2.385	<.0001
Victim's father battered his wife: yes vs no	2.202	<.0001
Victim's mother battered the woman: yes vs no	2.288	<.0001
Partner's father battered his wife: yes vs no	2.903	0.0013
Psychological violence: yes vs no	10.179	<.0001

Table 2. Risk factors that increase the sexual violence (by current partner) probability

Other risk factors predicting physical and sexual violence are mainly associated with social and cultural behaviours: the partner being physically violent outside the family, the partner being psychologically abusive against the wife and especially, the denigration of women. Looking at women's characteristics, only low education is a factor of risk, while characteristics of the partner (like age, education and work) and territory, or the urban context are not meaningful.

Violence tolerance as a cause of violence

As emerging from the Italian GBV survey, women are socialised to consider violence as normal (Corazziari and Muratore, 2013, pp. 88-116). Forms of violence, also the most serious ones, are sometimes considered as something wrong but not as a crime, and when "victims considering the suffered serious violence as something wrong but not a crime have more difficulties to get out of it". Also, the analysis carried out on female students and girls that were raped by their partner (data from the 2006 GBV survey)

4　The logistic model followed the stepwise method and included as independent variables other characteristics of the woman (education, civil status, professional condition, geographical area, urban area) and of the partner (age, education, problems with the police, battered by father or by his mother).

5　For the logistic model on "sexual violence perpetrated by the current partner", as a dependent variable, the independent variables were very similar to those for the physical violence and, in addition, was considered if the partner was getting drunk.

show how the rape was considered just as something that happened (Sabbadini and Muratore, 2007, pp. 253-256), with dangerous consequences on the possibility to acquire awareness and starting the process to go out of violence. Most of these girls, in fact, remain with the fiancé, even if he is an abuser. This message assumes the normality of the men's sexual needs that have to be satisfied, and on the contrary, the same messages assume that women's willing is to be denied. A woman is, by definition, a weak actor in life, an object for the other's wishes that likes to be conquered.

Over time the situation has been changing and the awareness increased: in the second VAW survey, doubled the women who recognised violence suffered as a crime, those who reported to the police the suffered violence, those who sought help in anti-violence centres (Istat, 2015). The increase in awareness is also visible in the increase of requests for help to 1522, the national helpline against violence against women (by phone and chat) (Istat, 2022a).

Methods of analysis

Surveys data: the module on gender stereotypes
The module addressing gender role stereotypes[6] and, for the first time in Istat, opinions on the acceptability of violence, its permeation and its causes, as well as stereotypes about sexual violence was carried out in 2018.

The module was organised into six main areas in order to reach specific purposes:
1) stereotypes about gender roles;
2) the acceptability of intimate partner violence (IPV);
3) the perception of the extent of the violence;
4) the causes of intimate partner violence;
5) the reactions to violence;
6) stereotypes about sexual violence.

In 2023 this module was extended and became a web survey, focusing on the following areas:

Area of questions	Purpose
A series of questions on stereotypes of gender roles at work, in education and in the family	To understand what are the prevailing gender stereotypes in a given society/country and their prevalence.
Tolerance and acceptance of physical and psychological violence committed on women	To understand how pervasive the culture of violence is in a given society/country and people's awareness of it.
The causes of gender-based violence	To understand the population's awareness of gender-based violence and its causes in a given society/country.
Stereotypes relating to sexual violence	To understand the social representation of sexual violence and how widespread the idea is that women are responsible for the violence committed upon them in a given society/country (victim-blaming attitudes).
Social representation of women and men	Understanding how women and men think of each other, and themselves is a nuanced way to understand gender stereotypes in a given society/country.
Socio-demographic data (sex, age, education level, variables on socioeconomic status, citizenship) and questions on life satisfaction.	These variables are useful for analysis and data interpretation.

Table 3 Thematic areas and research purposes, Survey on Gender stereotypes and the social image of Violence 2023

6   Istat already studied gender stereotypes in two previous surveys, the Time use survey, carried out in 2014 (Istat, 2014) and the Survey on discrimination on the base of gender, sexual orientation and ethnicity (Istat, 2011).

Respondents of the survey were asked to express their degree of agreement with some descriptions of gender roles, with some behaviours regarding family relationships and, in the last part of the questionnaire, with some opinions about sexual violence that place responsibility on the victim and other issues regarding attitudes towards violence (Istat, 2019b).

The questions were addressed to individuals aged 18 to 74 years in 2018, interviewed with the CATI technique.

In order to describe aspects linked to the urban context, the analysis compares the results of the survey that refer to persons living in big towns and those who live in smaller places. The distinction made with this purpose is between municipalities of at least 200,000 inhabitants and those with less than 200,000. In 2018 in Italy municipalities with at least 200,000 inhabitants were: Rome, Milan, Naples, Turin, Palermo, Genoa, Bologna, Florence, Bari, Catania, Venice, Verona, Messina, Padua and Trieste. In this analysis is included also Cagliari, the biggest town in Sardinia, despite having a lower number of inhabitants. With the aim to highlight the most significant differences, the attention focuses only on the most common stereotypes among those included in the survey.

The Big Data Sources: machine learning method

In 2020 Istat started an experimental study using Big Data (methodology is still ongoing) intended to analyse and monitor the different uses of social media: when the main effect is raising awareness about GBV or, on the opposite, when they lead to reinforce the related stereotypes. An additional reason to further develop methods of analysis of social media contents is the fact that they can also be used to perpetrate some forms of violence (cyberviolence, cyberbullying).

In the experimental study, the contents of social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, press review websites) were selected on the basis of specific keywords. They were processed using a machine learning process, which uses a supervised text classification methods based on machine learning algorithms. This allowed us to apply the sentiment and emotion analysis to the contents of interest (buzz). The Sentiment Analysis (SA), defined as the study of opinions and sentiments expressed by textual data, is a rapidly growing technique within the NLP research field, thanks also to the wide range of application. The SA techniques range from relatively simple rules and methods to advanced deep learning procedures.

The machine learning process has accomplished 3 phases of work:

1) *Step 1 - Definition of the requirements of the study and of the criteria for extraction, processing and assembling of the corpus of the annotation.* A specific platform provides the recovery of public conversations produced by users on social and web channels by setting a set of keywords. The keywords allow to create specific filters for the extraction of contents of interest from the identified sources. The keywords may be subject to periodic changes and additions during the supply, in order to create a consistent and inherent data flow to the object of the survey. Once the data of interest have been collected, the dataset is composed by choosing the sentences that present a maximum degree of heterogeneity. In this way, the sample is expected to be representative of the population from which it was extracted. The annotation dataset consists of a sampling of tweets acquired from Twitter connectors. The sampled tweets are included among those in Italian language published in the period 01/06/2020 - 30/09/2020.

2) *Step 2 - Dataset preparation.* The corpus of tweets extracted has been divided and repeated on several files, suitably formatted to facilitate the annotation process: the repetition of the tweets allows multiple readings of the same tweet by different annotators in order to enable a majority pre-award mechanism. According with the literature concerning goodness of annotation, the sample to annotate has been re-labelled until the value for the Fleiss Kappa index reached the minimum value of 0.8 and the value for the IRA index reached the minimum value of 0.6 (Interrater reliability: the kappa statistic)

3) *Step 3 - Identification of trained classification models.* The classification models implemented are based on an algorithm called Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers (BERT) proposed by Google researchers, part of the Google Brain and Google Research departments, representing the state of the art in Natural Language Processing. After this stage of the project the algorithm is ready to analyse other social media message, as planned from Facebook and Instagram (public pages), YouTube channel, Public forums (Web), Press review (to monitor a maximum of 5 keywords out of 100 newspapers).

Evidence-based results from the survey and big data
The Stereotypes' survey results

Stereotypes about gender roles and sexual violence

The survey results show that in Italy, stereotyped ideas about gender roles are still spread among the population. If we consider those who say to strongly or somewhat agree with the proposed ideas of roles, the most common stereotypes about gender roles are: 'for the man, more than for the woman, it is very important to be successful at work' (32.5%), 'men are less suited to do housework' (31.5%), 'it is up to the man to provide for the family's financial needs (27.9%). The statement with the lowest level of agreement is 'it is up to the man to take the most important decisions about the family' (8.8%), somehow recognising to women their contributions to decisions however related to the family. It is worth highlighting that 58.8% of the population (aged 18-74 years) have at least one of these stereotypes, without particular differences bet-

ween men and women. These opinions are more widespread as age increases (65.7% of those aged 60 to 74 and 45.3% of people aged 18 to 29) and among the less educated. Correlation that is observed about people's opinions about sexual violence too.

Considering the territory, people living in the South and in Sicily show the highest percentage of agreement with the stereotypes. In Bolzano, Lombardy, and Basilicata, women hold fewer open opinions than the men in the same geographic area; in contrast, the men in Abruzzo, Calabria, Liguria, Veneto, Apulia and Molise have more prejudices than the women do.

Looking at stereotypes towards sexual violence, the prejudice that assigns responsibility to the woman who suffers sexual violence persists: 39.3% of the population believes that a woman is able to avoid having sexual intercourse if she really doesn't want to and the percentage of those who think that 'women can provoke sexual violence by how they dress' is also high (23.9%). Also, 15.1% believe that a woman who suffers sexual violence when affected by alcohol or drugs is at least partially responsible and for 10.3% of the population, 'often accusations of sexual violence are false' (more men, 12.7%, than women, 7.9%). For 7.2% of citizens, 'faced with a sexual proposition, women often say no but in reality mean yes', and for 6.2%, 'serious women do not get raped'. Basilicata represents the region where persist more stereotypes about sexual violence (69.8% of the population, 79.8% of men and 60% of women). The minimum level is reached by Liguria (40.4% of the population agrees with at least one statement, 42.1% of men and 38.7% of women).

The acceptability of violence

Attitudes towards intimate partner violence show a limited tolerance of violence: only 7.4% of people think it is always or under certain circumstances acceptable that "a young man slaps his girlfriend because she flirted with another man", and 6.2% think that "in a relationship, a slap might occasionally occur". Opinions change when addressing a different type of IPV: control. In fact, more than double, the 17.7%, consider acceptable always or under certain circumstances that "a man habitually controls his wife's/girlfriend's cell phone and/or activities on social media". The younger people (aged 18 to 29), in this case, find it acceptable much more than the average (28.8%).

Again in the South and in Sicily the percentage of people who accept some form of IPV is higher. Also, in this case, in some regions, there are huge differences between sexes (in Basilicata and Abruzzo, for instance, men show more tolerance than women, while in Veneto, Aosta Valley, Umbria and in the Autonomous Province of Trento, women accept more violence than men of the same regions).

Gender Stereotypes and urban areas

Opinions on gender roles show that some differences exist between municipalities of at least 200,000 inhabitants and those with less than 200,000. Persons who agree at least with one stereotype on gender roles are 55.0% among those living in the biggest towns, while they are 59.6% among those living in smaller places. The less stereotyped people seem to be men living in the big cities (53.6%).

However, when analysing data by age, differences between big and less big cities become less meaningful.

Considering the gender stereotypes, namely those that turned out to be the most pervasive and rooted among the population, we can find some interesting results.

The stereotype that makes the difference between bigger and smaller cities is 'it is up to the man to provide for the family's financial needs' (22.3% of persons in the big towns and 29.0% of those living elsewhere). In this case, also, the difference is due especially to the opinions of men (24.4% against 32.8% of men living elsewhere).

The minimum is for women aged 30-44 living in big cities (12.8% of women of this age), and the maximum is for men aged 60-74 who do not live in big cities (43.1%). Only among the youngest men and women (aged 18-29) there are no differences, and they represent the most open opinions in both contexts (agree 18.5% and 17.5%).

SEX AND AGE		MEN ARE LESS SUITED TO DO HOUSEWORK		FOR THE MAN, MORE THAN FOR THE WOMAN IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO BE SUCCESSFUL AT WORK		IT'S UP TO THE MAN TO PROVIDE FOR THE FAMILY'S FINANCIAL NEEDS	
		>200.000 inhabitants	<200.000 inhabitants	>200.000 inhabitants	<200.000 inhabitants	>200.000 inhabitants	<200.000 inhabitants
Men	18-29	26.9	17.4	30.2	23.4	19.6	16.6
	30-44	29.2	28.2	36.0	31.7	25.3	35.7
	45-59	26.3	31.7	25.8	29.8	21.1	32.2
	60-74	35.9	43.0	30.1	34.8	30.9	43.1
	Total	**29.5**	**30.8**	**30.5**	**30.3**	**24.4**	**32.8**
Women	18-29	23.1	23.0	33.9	27.9	17.1	18.4
	30-44	24.0	30.8	29.7	38.0	12.8	25.9
	45-59	29.0	32.8	37.4	35.4	20.0	22.8
	60-74	35.7	42.2	35.1	35.0	29.1	33.1
	Total	**28.6**	**33.0**	**34.4**	**34.7**	**20.1**	**25.4**
Total	18-29	25.3	20.2	31.8	25.6	18.5	17.5
	30-44	26.8	29.5	33.2	34.8	19.7	30.8
	45-59	27.7	32.3	31.8	32.7	20.5	27.3
	60-74	35.8	42.6	32.6	34.9	30.0	37.8
	Total	**29.1**	**31.9**	**32.4**	**32.5**	**22.3**	**29.0**

Source: Istat, The module on gender role stereotypes and the social image of violence, 2018.
Table 4 People aged 18-74 years who agree with some stereotypes on gender roles, by type of municipalities, sex and age - Year 2018
(per 100 persons aged 18-74 years with same sex, age and type of municipalities)

Big city dwellers also have less stereotypical views with respect to sexual violence prejudice, although again, the differences are slight, by about 3-4 percentage points compared to others.

The difference is bigger for women living in big cities that less agree with the prejudice "a woman who suffers sexual violence when affected by alcohol or drugs is at least partially responsible' (10.8% of women in the biggest cities against 15.1% of women elsewhere) and again for people of 30-44 years old.

The higher differences are by age, people aged 30-44 living in big cities report less stereotyped opinion: 15.7% agrees that 'women can provoke sexual violence by how they dress' versus 23% elsewhere. Youngest adults (aged 18-29) show different patterns. In general, it seems that they have similar ideas about sexual violence in all types of towns, but huge differences emerge when taking into consideration the sex of respondents. In the biggest cities, young women report positions more open than women of the same age living elsewhere, while young men in big towns have positions more stereotyped than those living elsewhere. Moreover, in the big towns, young men result to have more stereotyped ideas than other men in general.

SEX AND AG		WOMEN WHO DON'T WANT TO HAVE A SEXUAL INTERCOURSE ARE ABLE TO AVOID IT		WOMEN CAN PROVOKE SEXUAL VIOLENCE BY HOW THEY DRESS		IF A WOMAN SUFFERS SEXUAL VIOLENCE WHEN SHE IS AFFECTED BY ALCOHOL OR DRUGS, SHE IS AT LEAST PARTIALLY RESPONSIBLE	
		>200.000 inhabitants	<200.000 inhabitants	>200.000 inhabitants	<200.000 inhabitants	>200.000 inhabitants	<200.000 inhabitants
Men	18-29	43.6	41.0	14.1	15.0	21.1	14.7
	30-44	33.8	44.0	17.1	23.3	11.6	17.8
	45-59	38.7	41.2	20.7	24.8	10.5	13.3
	60-74	43.6	44.0	29.4	32.5	18.5	19.1
	Total	**39.2**	**42.5**	**20.6**	**24.4**	**14.5**	**16.0**
Women	18-29	20.0	34.3	13.8	16.2	6.4	13.2
	30-44	34.2	37.6	13.9	22.7	10.1	14.0
	45-59	37.2	37.5	15.6	24.8	7.1	14.1
	60-74	37.7	38.0	34.2	32.5	19.2	19.1
	Total	**34.3**	**37.1**	**19.6**	**24.8**	**10.8**	**15.1**
Total	18-29	33.5	37.7	14.0	15.6	14.8	14.0
	30-44	34.0	40.8	15.7	23.0	10.9	15.9
	45-59	37.9	39.3	18.1	24.8	8.7	13.7
	60-74	40.7	40.8	31.8	32.5	18.8	19.1
	Total	**36.9**	**39.8**	**20.1**	**24.6**	**12.7**	**15.6**

Source: Istat, The module on gender role stereotypes and the social image of violence, 2018.
Table 5 People aged 18-74 years who agree with some stereotypes about sexual violence, by type of municipalities, sex and age. Year 2018
(per 100 persons aged 18-74 years with same sex, age and type of municipalities)

The level of acceptability of intimate partner violence does not change when considering the population living in big towns or in smaller places. The only slight differences are about "the control of partner", which is less accepted for people living in the bigger towns (16.8% against 18.0 of those living elsewhere), especially for women (14.6 % against 18.6% elsewhere). The attitudes of the youngest towards the behaviour of control raise some attention. In fact, as already said, in contrast to their less stereotyped profile, they result to accept more control, especially those living in big cities (32.7% of those living in big towns, 28.1% elsewhere, while the average is 17.7%); differences due to men. 40.0% of young men living in big towns consider acceptable the partner's control, against 22,8% of women. At the same time, there are no meaningful differences between young women and men living in smaller towns.

SEX AND AGE		A MAN HABITUALLY CONTROL HIS WIFE'S/PARTNER'S MOBILE PHONE AND ACTIVITIES ON SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK, CHATS, ETC.).		IN A COUPLE'S RELATIONSHIP, IT IS NORMAL THAT A SLAP MIGHT OCCASIONALLY OCCUR		A YOUNG MAN SLAPS HIS GIRLFRIEND BECAUSE SHE FLIRTED WITH ANOTHER MAN	
		>200.000 inhabitants	<200.000 inhabitants	>200.000 inhabitants	<200.000 inhabitants	>200.000 inhabitants	<200.000 inhabitants
Men	18-29	40.0	28.5	18.4	9.4	2.2	10.8
	30-44	22.8	22.2	7.5	7.8	4.9	8.9
	45-59	13.8	12.4	4.9	6.9	9.8	8.2
	60-74	5.4	9.9	11.5	8.8	10.1	11.3
	Total	**18.8**	**17.3**	**9.4**	**8.0**	**7.2**	**9.6**
Women	18-29	22.8	27.6	2.3	4.9	0.8	5.3
	30-44	20.2	22.7	2.8	3.8	5.3	5.2
	45-59	11.7	15.7	4.5	3.9	4.6	6.2
	60-74	8.5	12.3	3.5	5.0	6.1	6.6
	Total	**14.6**	**18.6**	**3.5**	**4.3**	**4.7**	**5.9**
Total	18-29	32.7	28.1	11.5	7.2	1.6	8.1
	30-44	21.6	22.4	5.4	5.8	5.1	7.0
	45-59	12.8	14.1	4.7	5.4	7.2	7.2
	60-74	6.9	11.2	7.5	6.8	8.1	8.8
	Total	**16.8**	**18.0**	**6.6**	**6.1**	**6.0**	**7.7**

Source: Istat, The module on gender role stereotypes and the social image of violence, 2018.
Table 6 People aged 18-74 years who find acceptable some behaviours related to intimate partner violence, by type of municipalities, sex and age - Year 2018 (per 100 persons aged 18-74 years with same sex, age and type of municipalities)

How much social media reinforces and spreads gender stereotypes?

Social media can foster and reinforce gender stereotypes. Some research shows that girls and women are more affected by cyber-attacks than boys and men (Drakett, Rickett, Day and Milnes, 2018). Female journalists, YouTubers, and influencers receive more negative comments to their comments, videos, and content (including sexist, racist, and sexually aggressive hate speech) than men. With this form of digital gender violence, some users push people off social media (silencing), preventing them from further expressing themselves and shaping public opinion.

Based on the data collected from social media, by using the machine learning process mentioned above, we can consider quite relevant the volume of conversations related to gender stereotypes. As the table below shows, the conversation volume about gender stereotyping from January 1 to the 31 of May 2023, is quite high, coinciding with related Tweets.

Total buzz	Twitter	Instagram	Facebook	WEB
208,995	132,820	1,466	7,894	66,818

Source, Istat 2023 – Experimental statistics "Sentiment analysis of Gender Stereotypes".
Table 7 Number of social contents on gender stereotypes (1st of January 2023 to 31st of May 2023)

Which are the events that generate these conversations? Even if there are some external events that polarise the conversation (such as the March 8 celebration of Women's Day), it is interesting to see how the debate on gender stereotypes comes alive around the social role of mother and father stimulated by a TikTok video of a European politician on February 12, 2023. The topic addressed regards the traditional female and male roles in a "traditional" family against new forms of families. The volume of likes, comments, and retweets has generated an increase in the volume of conversation that the blue line on the chart describes, more linked to this Tweet rather than the volume of discussion around the 8th of March Women's celebration Day.
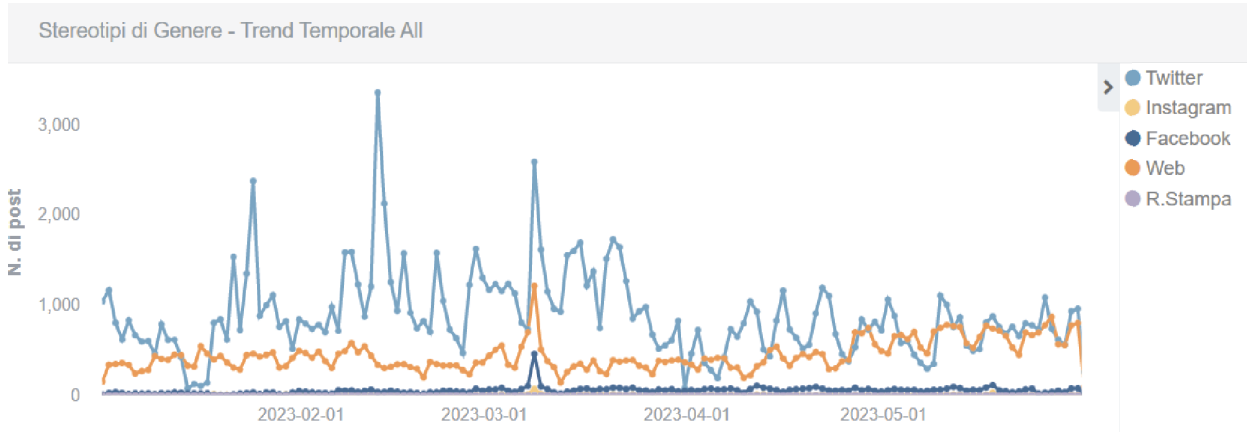
Source, Istat 2023 – Experimental statistics "Sentiment analysis of Gender Stereotypes".
Graph 1 Number and trend of content on Gender Stereotypes (1st of January 2023 to 31st of May 2023)

Even in the virtual discussion space, therefore, we see that the classic stereotypes of women's and men's roles in society being crystallised are still recurring. Looking at the sentiment driving this discussion (Chart 2), we detect an overall positive sentiment toward the celebration of Women's Day and also a clear (positive) agreement with the stereotypical role of mother and father in a traditional family (the green line shows positive comments).

Source, Istat 2023 – Experimental statistics "Sentiment analysis of Gender Stereotypes".
Graph 2 Sentiment Analysis (Positive, Negative and Neutral) of the content on Gender Stereotypes (1st of January 2023 to 31st of May 2023)

Filtering the post using one of the topics addressed in this paper, such as the "urban dimension" (the keyword is "city"), it is also fascinating to discover that social media contributes to discussion around the role of gender stereotypes in that topic, not only strictly connected to the Internation Women's Day celebration (the 8th of March), but also with other topics.

In particular, the discussions (mainly the feeds that are depicted in the graph below with the orange line) show the top hashtag #sicurezzavera (true safety), which evokes one of the topics already highlighted as one of the main issues to consider when raising the matter of gender stereotyping and the urban dimension: the women's and girl's safety. It is a hashtag generated by a local administration initiative aimed at increasing the level of urban safety against GBV, as the word cloud explains.

Source, Istat 2023 – Experimental statistics "Sentiment analysis of Gender Stereotypes".
Graph 3 Number and trend of content on Gender Stereotypes and keyword "city" (1st of January 2023 to 31st of May 2023)

The table below shows the total number of posts on this topic during the same period.

Total buzz	Twitter	Instagram	Facebook	WEB
14,194	1,601	22	404	12,157

Source, Istat 2023 – Experimental statistics "Sentiment analysis of Gender Stereotypes".
Table 8 Number of social content on gender stereotypes and keyword "city" (1st of January 2023 to 31st of May 2023)

Discussion

How much gender stereotypes are still spread?
The application of multidimensional analyses of data on gender role stereotypes and the social image of violence highlights situations diversified based on the position taken on gender roles and sexual violence, the acceptability of violence and the cultural vision people have of gender-based violence.

The statistical analysis revealed five clusters of individuals: two clusters (36.3% of those interviewed) are individuals with the most stereotyped convictions, the 'strong stereotypes'; two clusters are individuals less supportive of stereotypes, the 'no stereotypes' (who make up 62% of the total) and, finally, one cluster is characterised by indifference (1.8%), the 'aloof'.

What discriminate people is not only the level of prejudices, but also the different opinions about the causes of violence and the role they would perform if they knew a victim of violence.

The less stereotyped people show more awareness about the cultural roots of violence: are more likely to associate the causes of violence to a lack of acceptance of women's empowered identities, the need of men to rein-

force their superiority, the idea of woman as a property. They also suggest to survivors to report to the police or call the emergency dedicated number 1522 or to seek help in shelters.

On the contrary, the two 'strong stereotypes' clusters differ on strength and typology of stereotype. The most stereotyped cluster accepts physical violence as normal in the intimate relationship and strongly agree with negative attitudes towards sexual violence, looking at women as the main guilty, or not trusting them. The other cluster presents more nuanced positions, even if shows important gender roles and considers acceptable that a man controls his partner's activities on social media. For this last group, the violence is more a kind of conflict in the couple, in fact they would recommend to the victim to talk to the partner but not report to the police the event.

The residual cluster, the "aloof", the smallest one, contains individuals without a position, as they did not provide opinions on possible reasons for violence and state they do not know or do not want to give advice to any violence survivors so as not to intrude. More than 60% of the people in this cluster are male, while the most associated age group is those aged 45-59.

Urbanization and gender stereotypes: can we say that there are links?

The analysis reveals that stereotyped opinions that are the most common across the country might show some differences when considering the population living in big towns or in small places. Often persons living in bigger towns have more open opinions, despite the fact that differences are limited and do not occur in all the considered topics.

Data confirm that generational and gender dimensions drive the main differences. Living in big towns or smaller places results in different attitudes depending on age and sex.

Persons in the oldest age group of the survey (aged 60-74) have similar attitudes regardless of the place where they live and with limited differences between sexes.

Living in bigger towns influence attitudes of persons aged between 30 and 59. These generations show more open opinions when living in the bigger towns and especially if women. Concerning their opinions on gender roles, in the big towns the idea that 'it is up to the man to provide for the family's financial needs' is probably going to be obsolete. However, the importance of success at work and a limited suitability for housework are still assigned to men, with no relevant differences according to the sex or the type of town in these age groups.

The youngest generation (aged 18-29) have the less stereotyped opinions when addressing the topic of gender roles, regardless the place where they live and with limited differences between sexes. But concerning sexual violence, the attitudes of the youngest generation change depending on the place where they live, even if following a different pattern compared to the other generations. The youngest women and men living in towns smaller than 200.000 in-

habitants are the most open compared to persons of other ages. In the bigger towns, instead, there are evident differences between young women and young men. Young women living in the big cities represent the group with least stereotypes about sexual violence. On the other hand, young men living there show more stereotyped ideas than those living elsewhere and also more often than men with higher age in the big towns. The urban context seems to catalyse the differences. Young women who want to 'behave freely', away from prejudices about sexuality, and young men who also want to 'behave freely', blaming the woman for any sexual violence they may cause. How to interpret this finding: are young men frightened of the emancipation of their female companions and consequently support more traditional views? Or they just want to behave without thinking at the responsibility of their actions? Does life in big cities urge young men to more negotiate their interpersonal relationships with the opposite sex? Or do big cities not help them build a strong identity, so to anchor their identity in a more traditional culture, where old stereotypes more clearly assign gender roles?

Even in the case of acceptability of violence, the young men show different opinions. In particular the behaviour of 'a man habitually controlling his wife's/girlfriend's cell phone and/or activities on social media' is acceptable for 40.0% of young men living in big towns (against the 28.5% living elsewhere, while among young women is the lowest (22.8%).

On the contrary, results about the acceptability of IPV show attitudes very similar in all persons aged 30 and over, regardless of the sex and the place where they live.

Urban context, safety perception and violence against women

Safety has both an objective and a subjective dimension and both are important on personal wellbeing. Economic and violent crimes, that constitute the objective safety, affect directly the life of persons, having health, psychological and economic consequences; but also fear of crime and worries of crime impact on life, especially women's life. Women are indeed much more scared than men are. In 2022 about 70% of men felt safety when walking alone in their area in the dark, against the 50% of women (Istat, 2023). Anyway, it is also important to add that the most vulnerable groups as the eldest or less educated people or persons that live in less advantaged socio-economic situation are more scared by crime. The higher fear is the answer to a rational choice, because crimes have worse and serious consequences for these groups, like for women.

Also people living in bigger cities feel less safety (Istat, 2023): all the indicators of safety – fear of crime, social decay indicators, perception of risk of own area – are higher in metropolitan areas, with important differences with smaller municipalities (for instance, safety perception reaches around 70% in small villages against 51,4% of metropolitan cities), and even greater for women living in the big cities. Nevertheless, not all crimes are more wide-

spread in metropolitan area. In Italy it is true for bag-snatching and pickpocketing, but not for burglary, or vehicle theft for instance (Istat, 2019a). And the same analogy can be done for sexual violence.

The issue is complex; the urban reality takes on different characteristics depending on different situations. Consider, for example, the phenomenon of violence: sexual harassment is more frequent in large cities (unwanted touching is 25.2% for women living in big cities against about 14% of the other municipalities, Istat, 2018), but they do not present a specific risk for rape or attempted rape (the average is 5.1% for the Italian women, and is about 6.2% for those leaving in the metropolitan cities as well as in municipalities with less of 2.000 inhabitants, Istat, 2015). Yet the concern of suffering sexual violence and insecurity is more prevalent in metropolitan cities (35.5% of citizens living in big cities are worried about suffering sexual violence against 25.8% of those living in small areas)[7], especially for women (43.2%). The stereotype of rape occurring against lone women in isolated streets when it is dark is still very prominent, and it limits women's lives and freedom.

The link established between the violence against women and the urban context on one side, and the public sphere, on the other, is quite dangerous. Women are more scared by crime and violence, due to one of the most common prejudice that violence happens outside, in public space, in the urban context and this is the reason for which women have to remain at home, the only safe place. This is a way to perpetuate stereotypes, that relegate women at home, which reinforce the idea that they need to be protected by men – the father, the brother, the partner and the male children, when old –. The stereotype of protection reinforces their inferiority and produce again disadvantages to them. The reality is different, it tells another story. Women are raped in 62.7% of cases by partners, 3.6% by relatives, and 9.4% by friends. Only in the 6% of cases the perpetrator is an unknown person to the victim. The same framework occurs for most serious physical violence and for femicide (Istat, 2022b). Homicides of women are not more frequent in the urban context than in others and very rarely happen from unknown persons. Only sexual harassment is more frequent from unknown persons to the victim, besides to happen most frequently in the biggest cities.

Social Media boost the gender stereotypes?

As the analysis shows, some interesting results highlight the persistence of gender stereotypes, especially related to the role of women and men as a consequence of the increasing importance and diffusion of social media. Sentiment analysis shows that the Tweets that have generated the discussion, produced positive sentiment, which therefore expresses a closeness/agreement with the stigma-

tized and traditional view of the family, with its rigid division of female and male roles. Social media also contributes to the discussion about the role of gender stereotypes in urban safety, and the number of conversations seems to represent the growth of awareness about the need to consider the role of gender stereotypes when addressing issues of urban development and well-being.

Extracting statistically relevant information from these new sources of data is a challenging task and, even though no linkages are possible between Big Data and other sources, the idea to find new sources of data try to reply to a relevant research's questions. At the same time it is indeed possible to catch the gender stereotype in a changing society and framing social changes of cultural stereotypes from offline to online digital society. The Big Data time series is derived from social media messages and reflects the sentiment in the text of the messages. Even though these messages cannot be linked to individuals, and cannot be disaggregated at a sufficiently detailed level, this approach allows for exploiting temporal correlation and the link with recurrent topics where the gender stereotypes are more and more developed. Alongside the increase in empirical and methodological studies based on sentiment analysis (Agarwal, Xie, Vovsha, Rambow and Passonneau, 2011, pp. 30-38; Alicante, Corazza and Pironti, 2016, pp. 34-39; Kumar and Jaiswal, 2019; Gagliardi, Gregori and Suozzi, 2020, pp. 205-210), the Istat experimental statistics on gender stereotypes and GBV allow us to explore its new contents and forms, adding data and information from virtual life of the people.

Conclusion

The data show women's increased awareness, which is one of the main keys to emancipating themselves from violence and stereotypes. However, interpretations of violence are not the same among women, as reflected in many studies: education, variety of cultural competencies among women, and belonging to different cohorts provide different interpretations of reality, some of which help women to emancipate themselves from violence, making them more self-aware with higher self-esteem, while others hide problems that remain as such, unresolved.

Tolerant messages about violence need to be modified appropriately, and messages need to be clearly defined. Touching a young woman or a girl with a sexual attitude when she does not want is a sexual harassment; speaking with abusive language on social media, commenting heavily on women's bodies, is verbal harassment, or boosting the traditional social role of the woman[8]. On the one hand, we can observe the impact of gender policies to combat gender stereotypes in an urban context; on the

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7   This figure was decreased from the other surveys (2008-2009 and 2002), particularly the concern for sexual violence.

8   In the Italian Victimization survey, the Istat Citizens's Safety Survey, edition 2023, more information are collected on harassment and cyber harassment.

other hand, we cannot deny that social transformation, as a process that occurs in response to social demand, is now also driven by a new form of collective discussion such as social media. The persistence of gender stereotypes, also amplified by social media, as our research shows, suggests that more work needs to be done on education.

From the Big data analysis two opposite aspects of rape emerged, the words 'streets, bright lights, sex', referring to the rape carried out by strangers, the minority part from VAW results, on the other hand the rape of Franca Rame, a political rape, marked by deep cultural roots. The press and media, in general, focuses attention only on the first type of rape. They act as a sounding board for certain kind of rape, putting in the spotlight only a part of the violence, the most sensational, the one that makes the headlines and at the same time the one that politicians can exploit, on the one hand proposing campaigns for safety, on the other hand letting the real problem remain out of focus and letting the stereotype continue that the woman must stay at home for her safety. But, as we have already shown, urban safety is not linked to violence, at least no more than in other places. The risk is that instrumental policies reinforce fears and make women unsafe. This opens up the need for good national and local policies. At the same time, new strategic policies for the future are still gender blind, if we look at official documents. We especially mention the European Green deal and Digital strategy (EU Commission, 2019), and European Commission Digital strategy next generation digital (EU Commission, 2022).

As we can observe from our data, gender stereotypes among the population are still widespread, especially those about sexual violence, such as the opinion 'women say no, while they mean yes'. While in general people living in big cities have more open attitudes, different generations have different ideas. Young women and men are the least represented by traditional gender roles, but they tend to underestimate controlling behaviours. In large cities, young men have some prejudices about sexual violence more often than older men and also more often than men of the same age living in small places.

Monitoring gender stereotypes is crucial not only to overcome the persistent and entrenched causes of gender-based violence, which are still in place as we have shown, but also to look at improvements in social and cultural changes. With this in mind, the study of gender stereotypes in different areas of public life, such as women in politics, education (with particular reference to STEM), the economy, and digital society, is very important, and data on these dimensions are lacking. Despite some improvements, implicit barriers to human rights and equal participation in public/economic life still remain entrenched in our society.

It is therefore not surprising not to find the gender dimension in the new challenges of tomorrow's society and economy, such as the debate and the data related to the role of women in a current discussion about climate change, urban policy and digital society (Moser, 2015; Tummers, 2015).

Thus, there is also a need to rethink the issue of gender equality in the broader context of urban policies, addressing the global challenges of the SDGs by rethinking the design and planning actions of the urban environment.

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Comparing research methods to understand feelings of unsafety and fear of crime

Fabio Ferretti | Allison Uvelli | Giacomo Gualtieri | Anna Coluccia

Abstract
Since the late 90's a large body of criminological, sociological and psychological literature was dedicated to the fear of crime measurement, not only because of the relevance of this topic, but also for the need of deepening the methodological issues implied in its assessment. Fear of crime has been traditionally explained by the resulting effect of combined factors, such as affective, cognitive, and situational factors, and this made so complex its understanding and therefore its measurement.
A significant debate was devoted to operationalize the concept of fear of crime: a number of studies have found that fear is only weakly correlated with objective measures of crime, suggesting that fear of crime is not simply a response to high crime rates, but it appears to be more consistently associated with conditions in the physical and social environment. Although the measurement of these constructs has been mainly entrusted to quantitative research methods, raising the criticisms of some scholars, qualitative methods and mixed methods are also frequent in literature. The aim of this work is to carry out a comparative review of the methods for measuring fear of crime. The main quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research methods will be illustrated, trying to focus on their elective field of application, and, where possible, the robustness of the methodologies.

Keywords: fear of crime, measurement methods, qualitative methods, quantitative methods, mixed methods

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Comparing research methods to understand feelings of unsafety and fear of crime

Introduction

During the last decades, fear of crime has been one of the criminological themes that showed a broad flourishing of scientific literature. Safety from crime still represents a relevant social problem, and a main subject in local and national governments political agendas (Stefano Caneppele, 2010); most important, fear of crime constitutes a threat to communities' health and quality of life. Several studies reported a significant association between fear of crime and well-being outcomes at the individual level (OECD, 2011; Jackson and Stafford, 2009; Lorenc et al., 2012; Stafford, Chandola and Marmot, 2007), mainly concerning mental health. The review of Lorenc and colleagues (2012) emphasised that the impact of fear of crime on well-being may have pathways that are often indirect and mediated by environmental factors.

Researchers used many approaches and empirical tools without being supported by a shared definition of the meaning, and the content, of fear of crime. This uncertain theoretical framework allowed overlapping concepts that partly misrepresent the meaning of fear of crime (i.e., the concept of safety). Many studies demonstrated that fear is only weakly correlated with objective measures of crime (Farrall, Gray and Jackson, 2007; Hale, 1996; Lorenc et al. 2013), suggesting that fear of crime is not simply a response to high crime rates or, probably, what was meant to be measured wasn't the true level of concerns about crime but a general feeling of worry provoked by environmental and individual factors. Indeed, it is generally accepted that fear of crime is a multi-faceted phenomenon resulting from a complex network of relationships between the physical and social environment, individual characteristics, and cognitive and emotional processes about the risk of being the victim of a crime. In addition, anxiety and worries related to feelings of unsafety are contextual to time and space (Bannister, 1993), making it more challenging to obtain a reliable assessment of fear of crime.

The scholars' debate about measurement issues never reached a conclusive solution. In 1997, Farrall and colleagues argued that the results of fear of crime surveys appeared to be a function of the way the topic is researched, rather than the way it is, due to the extensive use of quantitative measures, but also because of the challenging attempt of conceptualising and operationalising the construct of fear of crime. During the following years, criticism was raised upon the use of appropriate terms describing worries about crime, the dimensions that contribute to portraying this phenomenon, and the reliability of the methods used for its assessment. Qualitative me-

thods were employed too, due to their contribution to a finer understanding of the individual processes explaining the feelings of unsafety. These methods provided a deeper focus on important contextual variables (time and space), but they cannot represent a measure of fear of crime. More recently, mixed methods also were used in research to achieve a more comprehensive analysis of the fear of crime, but this approach needs a more accurate methodological framework.

Despite the large body of literature on fear of crime and its assessment, some issues are still unsolved and still claim answers. Are we measuring fear of crime, or are we dealing with feelings of unsafety that are partially related to crime and experiences of victimisation? Sometimes concerns about crime and unsafety were used interchangeably, but is there evidence that they belong to the same conceptual domain? Some scholars recommended more attention to the validity and reliability of the assessment tools (Farrall, 1997; Hart, Chataway and Mellberg, 2022), but at the same time, they suggested that qualitative and mixed methods may improve its understanding: if different methodological approaches are needed, do they aim to the same research objective?

This article has the goal to answer these questions providing some ideas on methods for measuring fear of crime according to the goals to be achieved.

Fear of crime: a landscape of definitions

At the beginning of the 80s, Garofalo (1981) proposed a conceptualisation of fear of crime as an emotional reaction resulting from a perception of danger and a threat of physical harm, defining fear as anxiety. A few years later, Ferraro and LaGrange (1987) operationalized this concept, distinguishing between "formless" and "concrete" fears: the first refers to situational fears, while the second is related to specific crime threats that an individual may experience. For the first time, they described the facets of this feeling, specifying that the perception of crime is generated by judgements about the risk of being a victim (Jackson, 2006), concerns about its consequences and the emotional status deriving from the two (fear of crime). They agreed with Garofalo's definition. However, according to these authors, the concept of fear of crime is limited to the emotional component since it portrays a distinct domain from concerns and perceived risk. During the following years, this distinction (particularly with perceived risk) was underlined by other scholars (Rader, 2017; Rountree and Land, 1996; Warr, 2000), who argued that judgments about being a victim of crime can be considered a predictor of fear.

Later, the scholars' debate focused on the psychological meaning of fear. Warr (2000) agreed to classify it as an adverse emotional reaction. This definition was considered by researchers still ambiguous, since it includes different feelings, such as sadness or anger, that do not correctly express fear.

At the beginning of the 2000s, multiple conceptualisations of this construct were proposed in the literature to highlight the psychological component of fear of crime. However, the distinction between fear and other emotional status remained unsolved. Fear was conceptualised as a worry about victimisation (Williams, McShane and Akers, 2000), but the researcher also used different terms, such as concern and anxiety. Gabriel and Grieve (2003) attempted a new categorisation of fear, remarking on the difference between dispositional and situational fear of crime: the first showed someone's attitude of being afraid, while the second pointed out the feelings of concern felt in a specific condition. Criticism was raised against this conceptualisation since it is practically impossible to measure situational fear, but this suggested a new perspective: behaviours can be considered an indicator of fear.

During the first decade of the new century, many authors indicated the three components of fear in cognitive, affective and behavioural aspects (Farrall, Jackson and Gray, 2009; Greve, Leipold and Kappes, 2018; May, Rader and Goodrum, 2010; Rader, 2004; Rader, May and Goodrum, 2007; Cornelli, 2019), bringing the concept of perceived risk, represented by the cognitive component out of the three aspects, to the fore. Rader (2004) argued that these indicators are responses to the threat of victimisation. This conceptualisation is a novelty compared to earlier definitions taking into consideration distinct domains for fear and perceived risk. Still, it suggested a more comprehensive interpretation of the interrelationships describing the fear of crime.

Indeed, in the following years, many authors tried to explore the multidimensional construct of this phenomenon, aiming to reach a shared and universal definition of fear of crime. Recent attempts to identify commonalities in fear of crime defined it as the resulting emotion from a perceived threat in the immediate environment, and its multidimensionality relies upon the interconnections between factors that express affective, behavioural and cognitive responses (Chataway and Bourke, 2020; Henson and Reyns, 2015; Lane, Rader, Henson, Fisher and May, 2014).
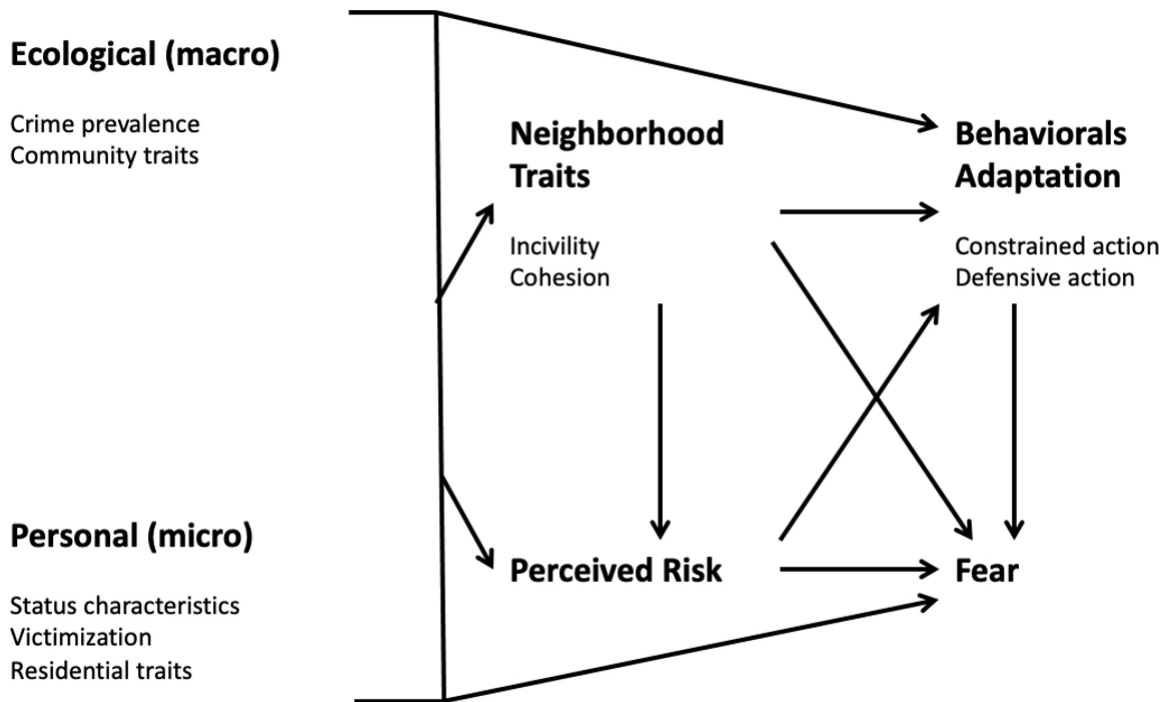
The importance of the environment in determining fear of crime has been well-known since the beginning of the scholars' debate, supported by theoretical frameworks that added robustness to how researchers analysed fear. For example, in the late '70s, researchers highlighted that fear in an urban environment results from social disorder and that the signs of incivility represent symbols that increase concern about the risk of being a victim of offences (Hunter, 1978), with reference to two types of phenomena: social disorder and physical signs of incivility. These signs are more visible in daily life than crime events and

they may generate more extreme variations in the perception of insecurity rather than the actual crime rate (Perkins, Wandersman, Rich and Taylor, 1993). Individuals would interpret the disorder unevenly, and these differences would be related to individual characteristics (vulnerability), the routine activities of the individuals and the feeling of belonging to the area of residence (Simon, Dent and Sussman, 1997; Wallace, Louton and Fornango, 2015). Although the concept of disorder seemed unanimously recognised as two-dimensional (physical disorder vs social disorder), there is disagreement about the items used for its measurement.

Another theoretical framework that inspired scholars was the Social Disorganization Theory, which emphasised the importance of formal and informal networks as a means of deterrence against crime. The connection between the quality of social ties and safety was also studied through social cohesion, which refers to the individual's sense of belonging to a group (Bollen and Hoyle, 1990). However, the interest among scholars focused on collective efficacy, a dimension grounded in Social Disorganization Theory. Collective efficacy was defined as the strength of mutual relations within a community (social cohesion), together with the propensity to intervene in favour of the common good (informal social control/willingness to intervene) (Sampson, Raudenbush and Earls, 1997). An intriguing finding of Swatt and colleagues (2013) demonstrated that collective efficacy was also a good predictor of fear of crime and unsafety.

As mentioned above, individual characteristics are essential in cognitive processes related to fear of crime and unsafety (Ferretti et al., 2018). The vulnerability theory, based upon the individuals' perception of being more exposed than others to the risk of victimisation, tried to explain why distinct sub-groups of the population (e.g., women, the elderly etc.) expressed more significant concern about crime without being more victimised. In 1990 Killias proposed three conditions that the individuals perceive and that cause the sense of vulnerability: a) the exposure to criminal risk, b) the seriousness of the consequences that such an event could have, and c) the skills to deal with this situation. In his review, Hale (1996) underlined that vulnerability was considered a predictor of unsafety in many studies about fear of crime.

In the early 90s, scholars tried to systematise this complex set of definitions, theories and interrelationships from which the fear of crime originates. Ferraro (1995) proposed a model of causal relationships (Fig. 1) where macro-level variables (community characteristics, prevalence of crime) and micro-level variables (individual factors, e.g., gender, age, experiences of victimisation, ...) influenced the traits of the neighbourhood, the adaptive behaviours, the risk perception and finally the fear of crime itself. This model included the concepts of incivility and cohesion among the aspects describing the characteristics of the neighbourhood.

Ecological (macro)

Crime prevalence
Community traits

**Neighborhood
Traits**

Incivility
Cohesion

**Behaviorals
Adaptation**

Constrained action
Defensive action

Personal (micro)

Status characteristics
Victimization
Residential traits

Perceived Risk

Fear

Although Ferraro's model was considered one of the first meaningful attempts to describe the factors and processes underlying fear of crime, some scholars criticised the lack of a hooplike interpretation of the phenomenon. Some model factors can be affected by the levels of fear: an adverse effect of a high level of unsafety on social cohesion was found by Sampson and Raudenbush (1999), while the fear, caused by high violent-crime rates, alters the neighbourhood conditions (Liska and Bellair, 1995; Cornelli et al., 2020).

These feedback effects were modelled by Markovitz and colleagues (2001). According to these authors, macro-level factors are responsible for determining the degree of cohesion in the neighbourhood: a decrease in cohesion results in more social disorder and crime, which in turn creates the feeling of unsafety and fear of crime. At the same time, fear causes a decline in neighbourhood cohesion, triggering a loop that feeds further disorder, crime, and a further increase in fear of crime.

Farrall and colleagues (2007) made one step forward defining this new patterning as a 'unified' theory of the fear of crime (Fig. 2), accounting for elements from the previous major theories about the topic. In short, fear of crime involves experience – everyday worries about personal risk – and the expression of attitudes towards social change, stability, order and cohesion. The research progress in fear of crime enriched the authors' perspective: a more significant number of factors was included in this model, and a more explicit connection with the reference theories was formulated as well. It's worth mentioning that fear of crime was not explicitly pointed out in this model, but it was designed to express the emotional response to risk in terms of anxiety and worry. The contribution of individual traits was not depicted clearly. Still, presumably, the authors believed these factors could be expressed by dimensions such as attitudes towards social change and perceived risk of crime, for example, through the cognitive processes that characterise the perception of vulnerability.

Circulating representations of crime, risk and social change
Mass media
Interpersonal communication

Ecological (Macro)
Crime levels
Deprivation
Long-term social
change

**Attitudes towards
social change &
moral consensus**

Neighbourhood Concerns
Disorder,
composition

Perceived risk of crime
Likelihood, control,
consequence, vividness

Neighbourhood Concerns
Social cohesion
Collective efficacy

Emotional response towards risk
Anxiety
Worry

**Victimisation
experience**
Direct
Indirect

Source: Farrall, Gray and Jackson, 2007.

Figure 2: Experience and expression in the fear of crime.

A few years later, Lorenc and colleagues released a review of theories and pathways (2014), encompassing the main factors contributing to the fear of crime and their interrelationships. The causal map that they proposed (Fig. 3) was organised by scale, with the micro-level factors on the top (individual characteristics), the meso-level factors in the centre of the map (representing environmental factors), and the macro-level determinants nearer the bottom (national policies). This map resumes six key concepts, several subconcepts, and the hypothesised relations between them. The six key concepts synthesized years of debates about the definition of fear of crime and its determining factors: 1) crime and disorder (violent or po-

tentially violent crimes against the person, drug- and alcohol-related crimes, 'environmental' crimes such as criminal damage, vandalism and graffiti; 2) fear of crime (perceived risk, emotional responses, individual attitudes, perceived vulnerability); 3) health and well-being (physical activity, social well-being, interpersonal interaction and social capital); 4) built environment (design of public spaces, architecture and design of residential housing, …); 5) social environment (socioeconomic status, ethnicity, structural inequalities and individual discrimination, social cohesion or integration); 6) national policies (economy, crime and justice, …).
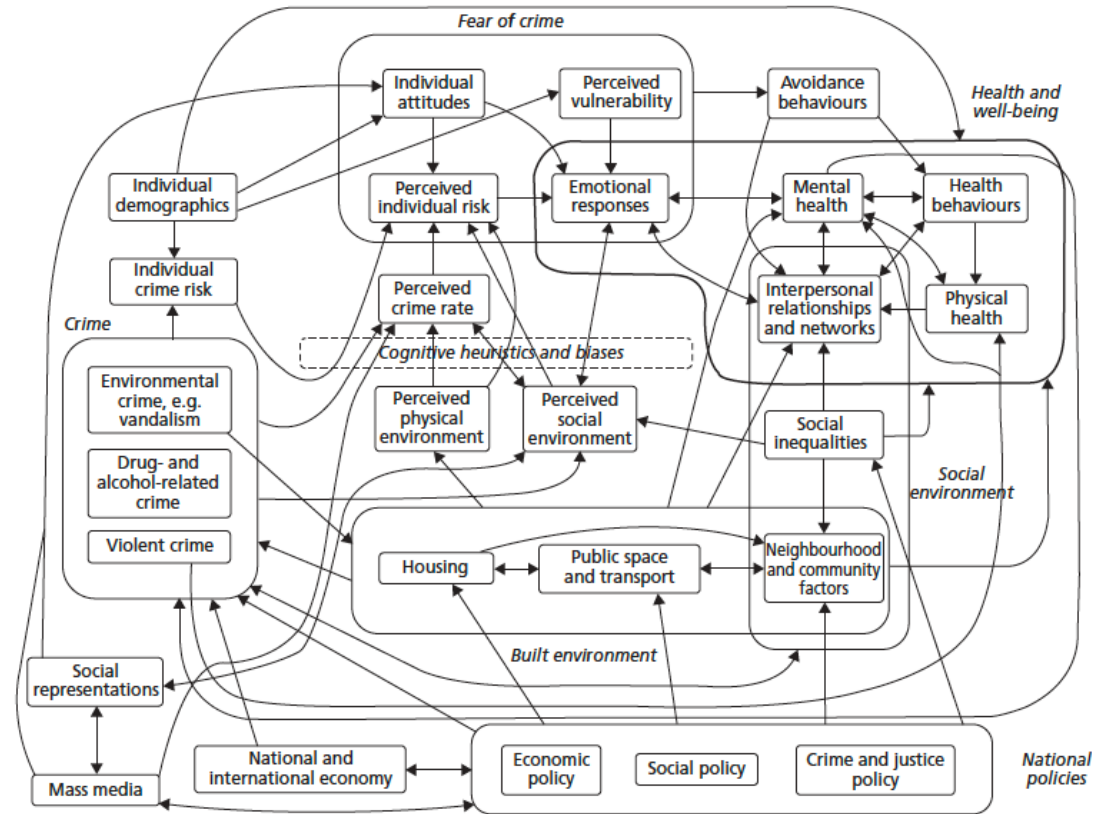
Source: Lorenc et al., 2014.

Figure 3: Causal map.

Although what Lorenc and colleagues proposed represents an appreciable interpretative effort of a complex and multidimensional phenomenon, the definition of fear of crime utilised by these scholars remains anchored to the traditional paradigm of the emotional response to a perceived threat in the immediate environment. As the authors pointed out, the model resulting from a thorough literature review aims to summarise all the points of view expressed by researchers, even if it cannot be considered universally accepted by all scholars. Many other scholars have proposed their own modelling of the phenomenon over the years, and this brief review does not do justice to the debate. However, rarely these studies were supported by empirical validation. Among the few, Jackson (2005) proposed a model based on multiple constructs that combined emotion, risk perception and vulnerability, and environmental perception, which was analysed using confirmatory factor analysis to test its validity.

The evidences from the most recent literature are still discussing these conceptualization issues. Some recent attempts to identify commonalities in the definition of fear of crime confirmed the multidimensional nature of this construct, consisting of interconnected affective, behavioral, and cognitive responses to an immediate and perceived threat of crime (Chataway and Bourke, 2020; Henson and Reyns, 2015; Lane et al., 2014).

Indeed, the research development in fear of crime showed significant progress over the years, but some topics are still on the agenda: a) a definition of this phenomenon shared as much as possible among scholars; b) a multidimensional perspective of the research object, not only in describing the concept of fear of crime but to analyse all the factors that contribute to it.

Measuring fear of crime: a short review

The previous section of the paper aimed to give a more precise understanding of the conceptualisation issues that the scholars tried to overcome in defining fear of crime. This paragraph summarises how the methodologies reflect its operationalization, and their evolution in time.

Quantitative methods
From the beginning, the most common approach in research on fear of crime has used quantitative measures collected through questionnaires with closed questions, but the problems deriving from this methodology were soon highlighted.

Initially, safety measurement (not yet the fear of crime) was entrusted on general questions asking about someone's feelings being in a place during a certain period of the day

(e.g., "How safe do you feel walking alone in your neighbourhood at night?", or the question "Is there any area right around here – that is, within a mile – where you would be afraid to walk alone at night?" created in early 70s by the National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago). In his seminal review on the fear of crime, Hale (1996) underlined the inappropriateness of these measures since a single indicator cannot capture the multiple aspects of a complex phenomenon as the fear of crime.

Farrall and colleagues in 1997 agreed with the suggestions of Hale and underlined that this methodology does not allow to analyse of the multidimensionality of the phenomenon, proposes a poor conceptualisation of the concept of fear, aims to represent the events and not the processes creating the feeling of fear and finally, does not take into account critical contextual variables such as time and space. They described some mismatches that explain why the reported incidence of the fear of crime partly depends on the nature of the measurement instrument. The following list summarises these mismatches: a) quantitative instruments appear to measure feelings on a very general level; b) «formless» fear is higher if compared to a question related to a specific crime (concrete); c) these tools don't catch genuine changes in fear; d) the meaning of the word "worry" is variously interpreted by the respondents (and debated by the scholars). These authors concluded their work by recommending that future crime surveys should incorporate validation techniques and that fear of crime could fruitfully be measured as a multi-faceted phenomenon, adding emotional, cognitive and affective elements.

In the following years, scholars have proposed numerous tools for measuring fear of crime consistent with the developing theories on this topic. Omitting the debate on using the term «worry» instead of «anxiety» to describe the emotional component of the fear of crime, as previously mentioned, there are many indicators in the literature. In some cases, scholars used measures referring to the specific risk of victimisation (for instance, for theft) and the relative concern. In other cases, researchers designed indicators including the characteristics of the surrounding environment (incivility, social cohesion, etc.) to describe the cognitive, behavioural and affective aspects of the fear of crime.

Considering the multiplicity of solutions offered to solve the problem of the fear of crime measurement, two examples are of particular interest. In 2008, Gray and colleagues sought a solution to the poor reliability of fear of crime surveys. Once again, the authors underlined how these provided only vague 'global' summaries of the intensity of worry or feelings of unsafety and that these vague summaries may diverge from the reality of everyday emotions that affect people's lives. Therefore, they proposed a "new" set of questions referring to specific crimes that allowed to evaluate the frequency and intensity of concern. In the example reported by the authors (p. 368), the formulation of the questions is as follows:

Q1: 'In the past year, have you ever felt worried about … ?' (car theft/burglary/robbery)
Q2: [if YES at Q1] 'How frequently have you felt like this in the last year?' [n times recorded]
Q3: [if YES at Q1] 'On the last occasion, how fearful did you feel?' [not very worried, a little bit worried, quite worried, very worried or cannot remember]

Questions 1 and 2 focus on the frequency of crime worries, allowing an estimation of the regularity with which people fear crime that is arguably more precise. The third provides the intensity of the last event of worry. The authors focused on sampling events rather than individuals and the number of times each individual worries. The results confirmed that this new formulation of the questions effectively reduces the overestimation of the level of concern provided by the traditional questions. Furthermore, the authors point out that 'worry about crime' is often best seen as a diffuse anxiety about risk rather than any pattern of everyday concerns over personal safety.

Jackson (2005), on the other hand, starting from the conceptualisation of fear of crime as a range of distinct but related constructs comprising the interplay between emotion, risk perception and environmental perception, proposed and validated a measurement tool that analysed several dimensions of fear of crime: the frequency of worry about becoming a victim of three personal crimes and two property crimes in the immediate neighbourhood of respondents (five individual questions asked respondents about their worry about every single crime); estimates of the likelihood of falling victim to each crime locally; perceptions of control over the possibility of becoming a victim of each crime locally; perceptions of the seriousness of the consequences of each crime; beliefs about the incidence of each crime locally; perceptions of the extent of social and physical incivilities in the neighbourhood; perceptions of community cohesion, including informal social control and trust/social capital.

In these last two examples, although their papers were almost contemporaneous, Gray and Jackson debated measurement issues from two different points of view: on the one hand, obtaining measures that were not affected by an overestimation of the true feeling of concern (concern, anxiety) about the crime, on the other, identifying tools that would allow interpreting a highly complex phenomenon.

These two authors proposed methodological works that influenced scholars towards a robust methodological approach in measuring the fear of crime. However, the 2022 review by Hart and colleagues highlights that many studies on this topic did not follow these recommendations. The authors reviewed 547 papers published over the past 25 years involving quantitative studies. The results displayed a significant heterogeneity. During this period, the authors observed a progressive increase in studies using multiple indicators compared to studies that measure fear of crime through a single indicator. Among those using multiple indicators, 45% tapped into the personal

emotion dimension of fear and 37% personal judgement. A few studies tapped into behavioural (about 7% of all indicators) and physiological (less than 1% of all indicators) dimensions of fear of crime. Another essential finding this review highlighted was the quality of measures used in these studies. 6 out of 10 papers using multiple indicators reported results about the measurement's reliability (mainly through Cronbach's Alpha) and the validity of the construct measured (confirmatory factor analysis-CFA or exploratory factor analysis-EFA).

The analysis of some recent articles confirms the multiple ways the fear of crime is now measured. Macassa and colleagues (2023) assessed this construct with only one question, asking if respondents avoided going out alone for fear of being assaulted, robbed, or otherwise victimised. The one-indicator choice was made by Srivarathan and colleagues (2022), who asked, "To what extent do you feel safe when you are outdoors in the neighbourhood?". Benavente and Goya (2023) used multiple indicators. Still, they originated from the single-item indicator used to measure safety adapted to different situations (e.g., walking alone around your neighbourhood, in shopping centres and their surroundings,). The authors administered two sets of indicators: one for the feeling of safety in general, the second for the same feeling during the dark (all indicators were measured on a four-point scale: from «very unsafe» to «very safe»). Another recent study (Burt et al., 2022) measured the fear of crime through four rather generic questions, asking participants: 1. how fearful respondents are of crime in their neighbourhood; 2. how respondents perceive the crime rate in their neighbourhood compared to other neighbourhoods; 3. how dangerous or safe it is to walk in the respondent's neighbourhood during the daytime; 4. how dangerous or safe it is to walk in the respondent's neighbourhood after dark. Although the authors provided the reliability of their measurement (Cronbach's = 0.85), it is hard to believe that these indicators can capture the phenomenon's complexity. Golovchanova and colleagues (2023) aimed to analyse the perception of unsafety in the neighbourhood (two single items: «During the last year, did you ever feel unsafe in the area where you live?» and «During the last year, did you ever feel unsafe in the apartment in which you live?» and the Fear of crime (affective aspect) was assessed (six-item index in which each item represented worry about a specific type of crime). Similar examples can be found in other recently published works (Chadee, Ng Ying, Chadee and Heath, 2019; Lee, Ang and Chan, 2021; Binik et al., 2021).

Concluding this review of quantitative methods, it is necessary to mention some examples of authors who aspired to go beyond the traditional use of indicators, despite these measures being the most widespread and used in the literature. There are few examples in the literature of researchers who tried to build and validate psychometric tools based on a solid theoretical background that would allow the «fear of crime» construct to be measured. Among these, Jackson's paper mentioned above (2005)

proposed a valid measure of the fear of crime based on multiple constructs that combined emotion, risk perception and vulnerability, and environmental perception.

In 2022 Etopio and Berthelot proposed a validated scale that integrated the Constructed Emotion theory (Barrett, 2017) from the field of psychology with the criminological study of fear of crime. The authors used a rigorous methodology: first, in-depth interviews were administered for item identification, and then the validity was studied with exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. In addition to assessing reliability, the authors also analysed convergent and divergent validity. This unidimensional 10-item scale explores mainly the affective dimension of fear of crime. Its items describe situations such as «Crime worries me in my day-to-day life» or «I'm afraid of a crime happening to me», but they do not seem able to capture emotions coming from the social and physique of the individual.

An Italian group of researchers (Ferretti et al., 2019; Coluccia, 2008) has developed a measurement scale of urban security starting from some of the most used constructs in the literature. This tool, called PUSAS (Perceived Urban Safety Assessment Scale), is characterised by three dimensions: physical and social disorder (10 items), collective efficacy (9 items) and concern about crime and sense of vulnerability (8 items). The 27 items of the scale return a total value which expresses the perception of safety in an urban environment. Each dimension and the whole scale were analysed for the reliability of the measures, while the construct validity was studied with exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. Furthermore, the authors performed a test-retest to assess convergent validity. During 2015-2017, the tool's development passed three validation steps that enrolled a national sample of 788 subjects. According to our knowledge, PUSAS represents the first Italian scale measuring feelings of unsafety with known psychometric properties. This tool was administered in 2019 and 2022 in two surveys, just before and after the COVID pandemic. These studies helped a local administration (the municipality of Grosseto, Tuscany) understand the perception of safety and which of the three dimensions (physical and social disorder, collective efficacy, and concern about crime) primarily affected the community's worries.

In response to the lack of instruments that capture the cognitive and behavioural processes creating emotional responses to fear of crime, Gray and colleagues (2011) developed an ordinal measure locating emotional and behavioural reactions to crime on a scale. This tool improved the understanding of a large-scale complex pattern of emotional and behavioural responses to fear of crime. Unfortunately, the authors did not assess this scale's reliability and validity.

Qualitative methods
Traditionally, qualitative methods offer a deeper investigation of the phenomena, even though they cannot provide evidence. Due to the limitations of quantitative

methods, some scholars pointed out that they are useless in understanding the peculiarities and the circumstances surrounding the fear of crime as an individual experience (Pain, 2000), while qualitative methods helped researchers contextualise events that generate fear in time and space. Already since the 90s, some authors recommended that the knowledge based on quantitative data should have been enriched with qualitative methods (Farrall, Bannister, Ditton and Gilchrist, 1997; Hale, 1996).

An interesting review of qualitative studies on fear of crime published in 2011 by a group of Canadian researchers (Paris, Beaulieu, Dube, Cousineau and Lachance, 2011) identified 18 papers, examining conceptual, methodological and epistemological aspects. The authors highlighted that in a few cases, the studies collected for this review provided a clear conceptualisation of the fear of crime. However, they admitted that using qualitative methods can contribute to better defining this concept. From a methodological point of view, the review underlines the lack of detailed information on the sampling, observation and data analysis process, favouring criticisms of the robustness of this approach. In summary, the authors complained that scholars of fear of crime pay little attention to qualitative methods, contrary to other fields of criminological research where this approach is more common.

A few years later, another review of qualitative studies on the specific relationship between fear of crime and the environment (Lorenc et al., 2013) enrolled 40 qualitative studies carried on in the UK, which represents a significantly higher number of papers. The authors found great heterogeneity among the topics of the papers included in the review. Although the majority of the 40 studies focused on the relationships between the physical environment and fear of crime, the other papers included in the review aimed to analyse various research questions: for example, perceptions of safety in pedestrian journeys, perceptions of safety and fear of crime on public transport, parents' perceptions of child safety, gender differences in fear of crime, perceptions of street lighting and fear of crime, evaluation of CCTV system. The majority of the study was based on focus groups (63%) or individual interviews (53%), but also on many other different methods: participant observation, virtual reality «walk-through», escorted journeys and participatory approaches.

Many of the qualitative research methods are well-known and widely used (in-depth interviews, focus groups, participatory observation, ...), while others are less widespread, especially those involving the application of new technologies. In a study by some English researchers (Waters and Neale, 2010), virtual reality was applied to simulate a walk in six paths defined by the researchers and to analyse the reactions from the participants. The six walk-throughs captured in each community were then used as environmental stimuli in a series of four focus groups. Each group was asked a series of semi-structured questions on whether they felt safe or unsafe and what environmental features made them feel this way. Virtual reality walk-through was used previously by Cozens and

colleagues (2003). In their study about crime and fear of crime at railway stations, they built 360-degree 'panoramas' at various points in the environment whereby respondents could 'virtually' travel through the station approach and railway station environment, view in and out and pan left or right at any stage of their 'journey'. During the virtual reality experience, the participants were asked whether they had fears for their personal safety.

Recent literature shows numerous examples of qualitative methods applied to fear of crime research. For example, the study by Silva and Guedes (2022), explored the consequences of media consumption in the fear of crime. They used semi-structured interviews with a sample of 20 participants, finding that media do not completely shape the fear of crime experiences. The lack of relationship between media consumption and fear of crime had been yet founded by Chadee and Ditton (2005). A recent review (De Silva, 2023) underlined that although most reviewed studies indicate a positive correlation which can be attributed to the media's tendency to focus on sensationalised and dramatic crimes, several studies have discovered a negative correlation, which can be explained by desensitisation and heightened awareness among media consumers.

The examples of qualitative research on fear of crime are numerous and apply to specific study contexts. Shepperd and colleagues (2022) used a qualitative approach to understand the experiences of safety and unsafety for older adults in public housing. In particular, a mix of semi-structured interviews and focus groups provided insights into the perception of higher risk in this urban environment. An interesting application of a qualitative approach was described by Etiaba and colleagues (2020). They used 35 in-depth interviews and 24 focus groups to gather data that were analysed and reported according to the Context-Mechanism-Outcome heuristic of the Realist Evaluation methodology. The study aimed to explore the role of security and the feeling of safety in maternal health services in primary healthcare facilities in Nigeria. For these authors, the concept of security was expressed by the absence of fear of crime and the feeling of safety within healthcare facilities.

Mixed methods

The third category of methods is the least common among studies on fear of crime. The term "mixed method research" and its synonymous ("multi-method research," "mixed methodology") refers to research that combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques and approaches into a single study. Mixed method research, almost by definition, is more time-consuming, challenging, and complex than monomethodological studies. This methodology outlines five primary purposes (Green, Caracelli and Graham, 1989): 1) to analyse the convergence of results via different methods (triangulation); 2) to clarify the results of one method using another (complementarity); 3) to find contradictory results that could help reframe the research (initiation); 4) to use the findings

from one type of research to inform another (development); 4) to expand the breadth of the research through multiple methods (expansion).

Mixed methods can concretely contribute to an enrichment of the results of the studies. In 2003 Johnson and Turner defined the «fundamental principle of mixed method research»: methods should be mixed in a way that has complementary strengths and nonoverlapping weaknesses. According to these authors, researchers should follow this principle for at least three reasons: (a) to obtain convergence or corroboration of findings, (b) to eliminate or minimise critical plausible alternative explanations for conclusions drawn from the research data, and (c) to elucidate the divergent aspects of a phenomenon.

Some scholars criticised the use of mixed methods. Since qualitative and quantitative researches have such different strengths and weaknesses, scholars frequently experienced many problems with the complementarity of the methods, or in achieving triangulation for the study results, ending with two quite different studies on very different aspects of a related topic. In a paper concerning mixed methods in criminology, Maruna (2010) provided many answers to the criticisms raised against mixed methods, "Indeed, the very idea of "mixed methods" research as a special category of work – or indeed the idea of "pure" quantitative or "pure" qualitative" research – may be seen as an anachronistic oddity of a peculiar moment in the development of the social sciences» (p. 137).

In spite of these problems, fear-of-crime researchers have been experimenting with mixed methods for a long time. Farrall and colleagues (1997) enrolled 64 subjects administering quantitative and qualitative interviews (quantitative data were collected before the qualitative interviews). They used the triangulation approach to understand if the quantitative measurement overestimated the actual level of fear, which was verified through qualitative interviews. The importance and relevance of multi-methods research into fear of crime were highlighted by Lee and Ellis (2018), who reported the results of a study concerning the perceptions of crime and safety in Sidney (Lee, Ellis, Balmer, Jackson and Clancey, 2017). They explored the frequency of fear and collective efficacy as two examples of how qualitative research can bring to life the rather static and disembodied results of survey instruments. The authors used the complementarity approach, collecting quantitative data before qualitative interviews.

In literature, some mixed methods studies are based on different qualitative methods for the same research objective. In the article mentioned above by Waters and Neale (2010), virtual walk-throughs provided essential information for the semi-structured questions used in subsequent focus groups (complementarity approach again).

A misrepresented conceptualisation or a misused measurement method?

There is no universal definition of fear of crime within the established literature, and its meaning varies so substantially in the literature that its measurement is in danger of losing any specificity. As currently accepted by scholars, fear of crime is a multidimensional construct that, during the last decades, was conceptualised and operationalised with increasingly complex models. But, in our opinion, the lack of a solid theory of reference is not the main problem in measuring fear of crime. Removing the ambiguity deriving from using terms such as fear of crime and unsafety as synonyms would be helpful to a more explicit definition of these phenomena.

The literature clearly evidenced that: a) quantitative measurement of fear of crime provides an overestimate of the actual likelihood of being the victim of a crime; b) this discrepancy relies upon environmental and individual factors that influence the individual's emotions; c) these negative emotions can, in turn, have impacts on the same environmental and social characteristics that caused them, producing more concerns about crime.

The latest interpretative models offered by the literature (Lorenc et al., 2014) fully capture these interrelationships' complexity levels. The complexity this model depicts makes it difficult for any measurement to reproduce the effects on the fear of crime (assuming that this can be considered the only dependent variable, or rather one of the factors contributing to these exchanges). It may then be legitimate to ask the question: are we measuring fear of crime, or are we dealing with feelings of unsafety that are partially related to crime and experiences of victimisation? Although the two concepts (fear of crime and insecurity) have been used interchangeably in the literature, perhaps it would be appropriate not to overlap their content entirely.

Amerio and Roccato (2007) defined unsafety as the confluence of perceptions, judgments, feelings, emotions and concerns that emerge from the individual's material, social and symbolic environment, a mixture of emotional and cognitive states. The individual's perception of safety/unsafety was rooted in the characteristics of the ecological and social relationships rather than ruled by the objective assessment of the criminal risk due to the environment. This definition would also explain the discrepancy between the perception of unsafety and the actual levels of crime since unsafety is not to be attributed to the actual fear of being victimised (in many urban contexts, a rather improbable event) but to the signals that come from the surrounding environment and that create a feeling of unease in individuals, perhaps only because these signals do not correspond to values and traditions accepted in the community.

As showed by the previous examples, many authors, more or less recently in the literature, have continued to measure the perception of safety through the traditional single indicator, i.e., for example, how safe one feels while

being out alone in one's neighbourhood at night (Breetzke and Pearson, 2015; Greve et al., 2018; Hinkle, 2015; Zhao, Lawton and Longmire, 2015). They decided on this method even if there's literature pointing out that this kind of measurement typically results in a more fearful response than more specific questions regarding cognition, affect, or behaviour change limited to time, crime, place, and frequency do (Farrall and Gadd, 2004; Farrall et al., 2009). But this type of measurement can never be adequate for a complex construct as described by Amerio and Roccato, which Lorenc's model better represents. Therefore, on the one hand, the difficulty of scholars in finding tools for evaluating a phenomenon whose shapes have not yet been wholly outlined and, on the other, the acceptance, even today, of methodological reductionism (the single indicator) of such a level high enough to compromise the sense of what is being measured. A no-way-out situation?

After decades of scholars who debated about the intricate network of relationships defining fear of crime and unsafety, the knowledge about the phenomenon reached a high degree of maturity. Even if these refinements have not yet produced a complete agreement among the authors, it's impossible to point out that the phenomenon has been misrepresented. However, there is no clear discrimination between the two concepts (fear of crime and insecurity). From a conceptual point of view and considering the many theoretical approaches analysed in this work, the latter should represent a broader construct, which includes the concern for crime. Researchers should also consider different tools: measuring the feelings of unsafety requires an assessment of several domains that are larger in number and higher in complexity than that related to fear of crime.

In the same way, it would be false to claim that there has been an improper use of measurement methods, which have also evolved together with the reference theories. Although since the dawn of this criminological field (e.g., Farrall et al., 1997), scholars urged that the validation techniques should be incorporated into future crime surveys, this lack is also underlined in much more recent times: the recent review by Hart and colleagues (2022) reported that still few multi-item studies present information on construct validity.

If, on the one hand, with the absence of a solid theory, it is challenging to apply techniques aiming at the validation of the measurements, on the other, a compromise can be sought, recognising that today there is no preferred instrument but that this choice must be established on the awareness of the objectives to be fulfilled, perhaps distinguishing between multi-item tools that effectively measure the fear of crime from those that instead measure insecurity. For example, the set of questions proposed by Gray and colleagues (2008), in which the frequency and intensity of concern about specific crimes are used, may represent an appropriate tool to measure fear of crime, as it reduces that overestimation of which the literature has always debated, probably induced by other ecological fac-

tors that tend to influence these emotions. If, on the other hand, the goal is to evaluate unsafety, then it may be necessary to resort to tools that allow for a more effective evaluation of the multidimensionality of this phenomenon (social disorder, concern for crime, collective effectiveness), as some authors have proposed (Ferretti et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2017). This last research perspective, compared to the previous one, would require a more rigorous methodological approach oriented towards the creation of psychometric tools capable of measuring multidimensional constructs.

In all of this, the role of qualitative research and mixed methods will remain fundamental, even if with different purposes from those of measurement methods. Modern criminological literature has fully revealed the interpretative richness that these methods provide, compensating for the reductionism of quantitative methods, reliable in measuring the intensity of phenomena and the relationships between the constructs that define them, but unable to examine in depth the processes underlying these relationships.

Conclusions

It is difficult to summarise the decades-long debate regarding the measurement of fear of crime and insecurity in one paper. Many years after the first research experiences on this topic, some scholars' recommendations still have not been entirely accepted, although many signals are encouraging. For example, the propensity to use valid and reliable measures of the researched phenomena has increased. However, there is poor awareness that the absence of instruments with such characteristics can profoundly affect the study results. In the face of increasingly complex interpretative models, new research will be necessary to provide scholars with robust tools capable of examining domains that are only apparently superimposable (e.g.: fear of crime vs unsafety). Greater integration between qualitative and quantitative methods is desirable as a means to improve the understanding of the processes regulating these phenomena.

But the most challenging aspect concerns the application of these concepts with the introduction of new technologies. Some examples of this new research frontier were reported in the systematic review by Solymosi and colleagues (2020), which examined the impact of new technologies on the measurement of fear of crime. This review often mentions the use of apps installed on mobile phones to report situations of perceived risk and feelings of unsafety. On this and other aspects, such as virtual reality and artificial intelligence, the measurement of fear of crime and insecurity remains a largely unexplored field.

Unfortunately, it was impossible to delve into all the methodological aspects related to the insecurity measurement. Some of these are crucial and deserve a specific research space. For example, some peculiar selection strategies reported in the literature to enroll study parti-

cipants, or enhanced statistical methods for data analysis. In future publications, it will be necessary to enrich with these topics the discussion about measurement issues in fear of crime.

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Transitioning from dynamic security in italian prisons:
assessing the influence of perceived insecurity on prison management

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Abstract

In the earlier part of the decade, italian prisons inplemented the open-cell regime (custodia aperta) and dynamic security, partly as a response to being convicted of overcrowding by the European Court of Human Rights. However, the Penitentiary Administration Circular No. 3693/6143 of 2022 significantly scaled back these interventions, (re)proposing the closed-cell regime and static security to govern prisons. This study aims to clarify the reasons that prompted the shift in the paradigm. It achieved this by first outlining the strategies for prison security management promoted in Italy in the last decades. Second, it investigates the recent departure from dynamic security by looking both at the 'inside' and 'outside' of prisons. Specifically, on the one hand, prison officers' perspectives on dynamic security are considered to understand their views on this mode of surveillance. On the other hand, policies that respond to perceived insecurity in Italian society are examined to assess their impact on both the implementation of dynamic security and the return to static security. While the study acknowledges some officers' resistance to dynamic security, it found that the return to static security can be traced primarily to the policies of the Italian government. They have involved an increase in the inmate population (of which a high percentage is foreign) and the enhancement of the neutralising (not rehabilitating) function of punishment; these factors likely prevented the establishment of positive relationships in prison, which are at the core of dynamic security.

Keywords: prison management, order and security, dynamic security, prison officers, perceived insecurity.

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1. Introduction

At the end of the 20th century, strong collective anguish began to emerge in the public discourse of Western countries as a result of globalisation and the loss of the legitimacy of states, which has left citizens distrustful, disillusioned, and very fearful (Cornelli, 2008; Garland, 2001; Wacquant, 1999). In connection with this growing sense of fear, demands for security started arising; people began demanding politicians to protect their "right to not be afraid" (Ceretti and Cornelli, 2019, p. 1482, my translation) from a perceived rise in crime and disorder.

The authorities did not take long to respond. In the Italian context, the country experienced a tightening of criminal policies since 1990 (Ceretti and Cornelli, 2018; Cornelli, 2008), which, in turn, contributed to a dramatic increase in incarcerations (Pavarini, 2004). The consequent rise in the inmate population led to overcrowding in Italian prisons that reached a level deemed unsustainable, and Italy being convicted of human rights violations by the European Court of Human Rights (*Sulejmanovic v. Italy* No. 22635/03 and *Torreggiani et al. v. Italy* Nos. 43517/09, 46882/09, 55400/09; 57875/09, 61535/09, 35315/10, 37818/10).

Consequently, Italy began taking several steps to comply with international standards. Alongside deflationary measures (for further discussion, Corvi, 2013; Della Bella, 2013; 2014; Porchetti, 2021, pp. 346-347), the open-cell regime and dynamic security[1] were introduced in 2011 for medium-security inmates, who constitute most of the prison population. The value of this renewal lies not only in the attempt to ensure humane treatment in detention, but also in the implementation of cutting-edge models for maintaining order and security in prisons. Indeed, it is widely believed that security provided through physical barriers should be complemented by dynamic security, which is based on building positive relationships between inmates and prison staff (CoE, Rec(2003)23, para. 18. a; Rec(2006)2-rev, Rule 51.2).

These interventions have recently been scaled back following the issuing of the Penitentiary Administration Circular No. 3693/6143 of 2022, which has (re)introduced static security and the closed-cell regime as privileged tools in prison security management. Dynamic security has not been abolished but has been reduced to an exceptional mode for the surveillance of prisoners most engaged in rehabilitation. These changes are currently being implemented; thus, operational aspects have not yet been considered. However, there is a lack of clarity regarding the factors that led the Italian administration to favour static surveillance in providing order and security in prisons.

Building on this question, this study first considers the ways in which Italy fostered order and security in its prisons, focusing on the establishment of dynamic security and the recent move towards static security. For this purpose, all circulars issued by the Italian Prison Administration on the subject are examined, and connections are made with the body of socio-criminological research concerning order and security in prisons. Furthermore, the reasons for the shift from dynamic to static security are explored, focusing on both the 'inside' and the 'outside' of prisons; the insider perspective of prison officers on how they experienced dynamic security is considered, as well as the criminal policies promoted in the outside Italian society in the last decades, which may have affected prison management. The analysis relies on academic research and documents and releases from prison officers' unions, opinions, and comments published in Corps magazines or blogs. This lead to the assumption that, while initial attempts to appease social insecurity and the related use of incarceration as a tool of social control indirectly fostered the implementation of dynamic security, they ended up paradoxically undermining its success, probably contributing to the decision to depart from it.

For a proper understanding of the following analysis, it is worth pointing out that this study does not perceive prisons as places where rationality prevails. According to the Weberian bureaucratic model, prisons are highly disciplined to ensure regular and predictable performance. However, the attempt to predict their functioning runs into some internal resistance, which is the result of the perceptions and actions of its members (referring to organisations at large, Bonazzi, 2008, p. 277; Friedberg, 1993/1994, p. 65). Simultaneously, prisons are subject to transformative boosts from the outside; the decisions they make never obey the sole purpose of pursuing official goals but are always influenced by particular situations (Garland, 2001, p. 206; referring to organisations at large, Catino, 2012, p. 173; Esposito, 2021, p. 19). Within this framework, the formal rules set by the prison administration are not irre-

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1   Open-cell regime (*custodia aperta*) is a mode of organising the custody of prisoners. Prisoners assigned to the open-cell regime can spend between eight and 14 hours outside their cells and enjoy special treatment programmes (Circular 3663/6113, 2015). According to the European Prison Rules, dynamic security is "provided by an alert staff who know the prisoners who are under their control" (Rec(2006)2-rev, Rule 51.2). It refers to a working method by which prison staff develop "positive relationships with prisoners based on firmness and fairness, in combination with an understanding of their personal situation and any risk posed by individual prisoners" (CoE, Rec(2003)23, para. 18. a).

levant, not only because they incorporate the sensitivities of the actors outside and inside the prison but also because they structure thoughts and actions in the sense that they constitute a map guiding the choices of those who must comply with them (Lippi and Morisi, 2005, pp. 85-86).

2. Strategies for maintaining order and security in Italian prisons

In the Italian penitentiary system, order and security are guaranteed by a range of custodial and surveillance arrangements that vary according to the characteristics of the prison population. Importantly, they are conceived not only as a need *per se*, but also as a fundamental condition for inmates' rehabilitation, which is detention's primary aim (Art. 27, para. 3, Constitution). Specifically, Article 2 of Presidential Decree No. 230/2000 stipulates that "Order and discipline in penitentiary institutions ensure security, which is the condition for the realisation of the purposes of treatment of prisoners and internees" (my translation). Although well-established today, such a close interdependence between security and treatment has been achieved over time.

The starting point is represented by Law No. 354 of 1975, which marked a moment of great discontinuity (*ex multis*, Di Somma, 2005, p. 2; Di Gennaro, 2005, p. 15). Through this Law, the prison went from being conceived as a place of exclusion to a place of opportunity, where the inmate was no longer a mere object of control but an actor on an empowering path. Following this trajectory, steps have been taken to realise the redesign of the detention system since the 1980s; new professional profiles were hired, and efforts were made to modernise the organisational structure of Italian prisons (for further discussion, Di Somma, 2005). Within this framework, Circular No. 3337-5787 of 7 February 1992 was the first to recall "the interconnection and interdependence between the goal of legality and the need for security", and to state that security is the tool for achieving inmate rehabilitation.

On 21 April 1993, Circular No. 3359/5809 issued provisions for organising the location of inmates within prisons; security regimes (*circuiti penitenziari*) were established, namely "logistical entities" (Ardita, 2007, p. 43, my translation) to which inmates are assigned taking into account their risk level or specific treatment needs. Specifically, the Circular classified inmates into three categories, resulting in the creation of three different security regimes: (i) a high-security regime (*circuito di alta sicurezza*), which was meant for the most dangerous inmates, mainly those convicted of mafia crimes; (ii) a low-security regime (*circuito a custodia attenuata*), for inmates classified as non-dangerous, namely drug addicts; and (iii) a medium security regime (*circuito di media sicurezza*), designed to house inmates who did not fit into the other two regimes. This new organisation aimed to allow the implementation of individualised treatment programmes for inmates (Aiello and Rizzo, 2017, p. 54), as required by Article

13, Law No. 354 of 1975. In addition, the idea was to balance surveillance efforts according to the danger of detainees, even to contain the risks of criminal overpowering and proselytising (Falzone, 2015, p. 2). However, while the procedures for the functioning of high- and low-security regimes were defined from the outset, the same did not occur for the medium-security regime. In the following, this study's focus is to investigate the management of the medium security regime over time, which is of special interest because it accommodates most of the prison population.

2.1 Dynamic security as a tool for prison governance

Due to the absence of proper regulations, medium-security inmates have been subjected to prolonged cell confinement for extended periods. This practice, which is inherently illegal, has become untenable over time, exacerbated by the growing issue of overcrowding of Italian prisons, resulting in the aforementioned convictions by the European Court of Human Rights. As a solution, the "revolutionary" (Della Bella, 2011) Circular No. 3594/6044 was issued in 2011, finally bringing order to the matter. Specifically, inmates considered less dangerous were admitted to the open-cell regime (*custodia aperta*), under which the perimeter of detention extends beyond the cell to the common spaces of the section (*sezione*). Only the most dangerous species remained in the closed-cell regime (*custodia chiusa*), which provides limited opportunities for movement[2]. In detailing these provisions, the Circular stated that it seeks to overcome the dichotomy between security and treatment; admission to the open-cell regime depended not only on the dangerousness of inmates but also on their adherence to prison rules, with the consequence that only those most responsible can enjoy it.

Regarding security tasks, the Circular stipulated that the new organisation entails "a *new and more dynamic approach to security*, in line with police tasks carried out outside prisons. ... Information-type activities … have to be complemented by *dynamic control of the open facility* and the option to intervene in cases of rule-breaking, with powers to reintroduce the previous more custodial regime" (Circular No. 3594/6044, 2011, my translation, emphasis added). Thus, the idea of dynamic security entered into the Italian scene.

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2   Circular No. 3663/6113 of 2015 clarifies that the assignment of a prisoner to the closed or open cell regime depends on the "different aggression and danger potential" (p. 3, my translation. See also Annex A to the Circular). Moreover, the difference between the two regimes is not limited to the number of hours spent outside the cell, which is eight hours in the case of the closed cell regime and between eight and 14 hours in the case of the open cell regime. Rather, it consists of the different treatment programmes offered (p. 5. See also Annex B to the Circular).

Already recognised internationally (CoE, Rec(2006)2-rev, Rule 51.2), dynamic security "aims at better understanding prisoners and assessing the risks they may pose as well as ensuring safety, security and good order, contributing to rehabilitation and preparation for release" (CoE, 2016, para. 115). Circular No. G-DAP 0206745-2012 of 2012 dwelled more on this concept, invoking the need to prevent the open-cell regime from becoming a burden on prison officers. However, Circulars GDAP-0251644-2013 of 2013 and 3663/6113 of 2015 have definitively established dynamic security as a mode of control for inmates in the open-cell regime. Upon closer examination, dynamic security is defined as a "working method", or "a more effective system for ensuring order within prisons, without hindering treatment activities, based on simplification, rationalisation, qualification of workloads, the distinction of expertise, and sharing of information among staff" (Circular GDAP-0251644-2013, 2013, p. 2, my translation). At the heart of dynamic security is the "knowledge of the inmate", which would be limited if their life remained confined within the cell (Circular GDAP-0251644-2013, 2013, p. 3; see also Giordano, Salvato and Sangiovanni, 2021, p. 48). For this reason, the differentiation of prison spaces has been promoted, distinguishing between cells that should be used only for sleeping and places where rehabilitation programmes are carried out. This should prompt prison officers to serve outside the sections, implementing indirect control according to the model of "patrols presiding over territories" (Circular G-DAP 0206745-2012, 2012, para. 5, my translation; see also Circular GDAP-0251644-2013, 2013, p. 3; Circular 3663/6113, 2015, p. 6). From this perspective, dynamic security embodies a shift from a custody-based model of surveillance to a knowledge-based model of the surveillance of inmates (De Pascalis, 2013), which, according to international prescriptions, must involve building positive relationships (CoE; Rec, (2003)23, para. 18. a; Rec(2006)2-rev, Rule 51.2; UNOHCHR, 2005, p. 86).

Noteworthily, relationships are critical to ensuring order and security within prisons. In the collective imagination, a safe place implies raising physical and emotional barriers to keep danger at a distance. However, barriers seem insufficient to ensure security in a prison; "[an] officer in a watchtower on the perimeter is likely to see an escape attempt only after it has begun. An officer who works closely with prisoners and knows what they are doing will be much more aware of possible threats to security before they occur" (UNOHCHR, 2005, p. 86). Therefore, as much as a prison cannot eliminate its physical barriers, breaking down interpersonal barriers can assist staff in maintaining security by enabling them to anticipate critical incidents (CoE, Revised Commentary on Cm/Rec(2006)2, Rule 51; UNODC, 2015, p. 31).

More broadly, research has shown that the production sites of order in prisons are placed outside hierarchical structures; prison order is not the mere effect of issuing and executing commands but rests on balances established in interpersonal relationships (Buffa, 2001, p. 83; Sarzotti,

1999, pp. 13-16; 2010, p. 184; Vianello, 2018, p. 74). Sykes's studies already found that officers, "far from being omnipotent rulers" who have total control over inmates, "are engaged in a continuous struggle to maintain order", which frequently results in compromise (Sykes, 1958, p. 42). Thus, the order in prison is consolidated in the relational dynamics of negotiations between staff and inmates, where the cooperation of inmates is always necessary (Drake, 2008, p. 153. See also the definition of order given by Sparks, Bottoms and Hay, 1996, p. 119).

However, it is not only the existence of relationships that is important for maintaining order in prison but also the quality of these relationships. In this regard, it must be highlighted that legitimacy problems often affect the interaction between officers and prisoners. This is due to the officers' indirect and ambiguous way of exercising power (Crewe, 2011, pp. 456-463), which is based on the logic of exchange and blackmail or otherwise on strategies that do not involve direct staff intervention, but aim at the self-regulation of prisoners (on different strategies for negotiating order with prisoners, see Fassin, 2015, pp. 337-415; Gariglio, 2018; Goffman, 1961, pp. 12-48; Rostaing, 2014, pp. 316-317). Moreover, the officers' authority is imposed upon inmates, a circumstance that may imply that they are not seen as worthy of respect and obedience (Sparks, Bottoms and Hay, 1996, pp. 86-87).

From this perspective, the challenge of maintaining effective order – and, correlatively, security – in prison ends up becoming a matter of "getting relationships right" (Home Office, 1984, para. 16). Following the procedural justice approach (Cornelli, 2014; Hough, Jackson and Bradford, 2010; Tyler, 1990; 2004; 2006; 2011), officers succeed in governing prisons through communication and the exercise of fair and respectful behaviour in formal and informal interactions with inmates. Indeed, this legitimises officers in the eyes of inmates, with consequences, such as a greater willingness to cooperate with the officers to ensure orderly coexistence (Leggett and Hirons, 2007, p. 234; Liebling, Price and Shefer, 2012, pp. 101-102; Sparks et al., 1996, pp. 88-89, 307-309. See also Sparks and Bottoms, 1995).

Against this background, the value of introducing dynamic security into Italian prisons becomes clear since it is about getting to know the inmates and forging the right relationships with them. It is also worth noting that the implementation of dynamic security created an inextricable link between 'security' and 'treatment' in Italian prisons. This is not only because the open-cell regime and dynamic security require inmates to manage their behaviours with relative autonomy (De Simone, 2018, pp. 3-4, Giordano et al., 2021, p. 47), but also because building genuinely positive relationships between prison officers and inmates encourages inmates to take steps towards positive changes (Liebling et al., 2012, p. 103).

2.2 Circular 3693/6143 of 2022: towards the revival of static security?

The framework outlined above was recently altered by Circular No. 3693/6143 of 2022. It explicitly aims at "overcoming the dualism between the open and the closed cell regime", to achieve true individualisation of the treatment of prisoners (Circular No. 3693/6143, 2022, p. 3, my translation). In other words, the idea was to review custody regimes to promote gradual rehabilitative interventions. Before introducing the new rules in all Italian prisons, the Circular envisaged an experimentation phase in several regions (p. 25), which is ongoing to date. In the analysis that follows, reference will also be made to the Operational Guidelines adopted by the Regional Prison Administration Board (*Provveditorato Regionale dell'Amministrazione Penitenziaria (PRAP)*) of Lombardy region for the experimental implementation of the Circular[3] [hereafter PRAP Lombardy, 2022].

Within the medium-security regime, the Circular identifies four types of detention sections (*sezioni detentive*), namely "reception rooms" (*stanze per l'accoglienza*), "ordinary sections (preparing for intensified treatment)" (*sezioni ordinarie (di preparazione al trattamento intensificato)*) [hereafter ordinary sections], "ordinary sections for intensified treatment" (*sezioni ordinarie a trattamento intensificato*) [hereafter intensified treatment sections], "sections under Article 32 Presidential Decree 230/2000" (*sezioni ex art. 32 d.p.r. 230/2000*) [hereafter sections under Article 32], "solitary confinement sections under Article 33, Law No. 354 of 1975" (*sezioni di isolamento ex art. 33 Ord. pen.*) and "other types of institutions and sections" (*altre tipologie di istituti e sezioni*).

Focusing on what changed in the security management, the distinction between ordinary and intensified treatment sections deserves special attention. The former are intended for all first-time inmates, inmates coming out of the sections under Article 32, and, more generally, those who are deemed unready for intensified treatment (Circular 3693/6143, 2022, pp. 7-9; PRAP Lombardy, 2022, p. 11). In these sections, the cells are open for at least eight hours a day, but inmates cannot circulate in the corridor of the section. Prison officers must serve within the section, which means that direct control is preferred over dynamic security – it applies the so-called "in-person service" (*servizio in presenza*) (Circular 3693/6143, 2022, p. 8). However, inmates who demonstrate compliance with prison rules and are committed to rehabilitation have access to intensified treatment sections. They can be out of the cells for no less than 10 hours a day and should

have access to several rehabilitative activities. In these sections, inmates' self-determination is encouraged (Circular 3693/6143, 2022, p. 13; PRAP Lombardy, 2022, p. 13) and security tasks are performed in the dynamic mode (Circular 3693/6143, 2022, pp. 10-11).

Inmates who lack interest in rehabilitation and exhibit behaviour detrimental to prison order and security are assigned to sections under Article 32, following a specific decision, and for a maximum of six months, which may be extended (Circular 3693/6143, 2022, p. 14; PRAP Lombardy, 2022, p. 13). More supervision is provided here than in the ordinary sections; prison officers permanently monitor inmates who are entitled to be out of their cells for at least four hours a day and can participate in treatment programmes only if they are deemed fit (Circular 3693/6143, 2022, pp. 14-16).

In reference to these changes, mixed reactions have emerged among the prison officers' unions. Some have praised the Circular, deeming it necessary to reorganise the medium security regime (Durante, 2021; FPCGIL, 2021). However, others have raised issues regarding the new rules, sometimes suggesting amendments. Along these lines, it has been pointed out that officers will be forced into the role of "butlers" of inmates who are "violent" and "prone to aggression" without any support from the prison administration (Osapp, 2022a, my translation). Accordingly, it has been recommended that inmates responsible for aggression against officers be placed in sections under Article 32 without any prior evaluation (Sappe, 2021).

From a shifting perspective, the associations involved in supporting prisoners have been critical of the establishment of ordinary sections, which not only reintroduce the closed-cell regime for several inmates, but could also degenerate into a predominantly disciplinary model of detention. Similar considerations are made regarding sections under Article 32, as there is fear that they may become ghettos for the most problematic inmates, places of punishment that will eventually fuel conflict and violence (FPCGIL, 2021; Gonnella, 2021).

Prison observers did not consider the security regime promoted by the Circular. As shown, dynamic security is significantly scaled back, remaining in place only in the intensified treatment sections to which a limited portion of the inmate population has access. In this regard, several aspects require further attention. First, the introduction of direct control in ordinary sections has been justified by emphasising that it is instrumental in getting to know inmates to assess their intramural behaviour and prevent critical incidents (Circular 3693/6143, 2022, p. 8; PRAP Lombardy, 2022, p. 11). On closer inspection, however, the same was said in previous Circulars in reference to the indirect control of dynamic security (Circular GDAP-0251644-2013, 2013, p. 3), a circumstance that raises concerns. Second, the documents analysed recommend the use of video surveillance in implementing dynamic security, in part to address staff shortages (Circular 3693/6143, 2022, p. 12; see also PRAP Lombardy, 2022,

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3   Ministero della Giustizia, Dipartimento dell'Amministrazione Penitenziaria, Provveditorato Regionale per la Lombardia, Ufficio detenuti e Trattamento, *Circuito Media Sicurezza, Circolare Dap 18.07.2022 nr. 3693/6143, Linee Operative per l'Attuazione della Nuova Direttiva per il Rilancio del Regime e del Trattamento Penitenziario*, 2022.

p. 3). In this regard, if remote surveillance allows for the monitoring of inmates, it does not enable the establishment of those relationships that, according to dynamic security dictates, are crucial in maintaining order and security in prison.

This confused attitude of the Prison Administration testifies to a misunderstanding of dynamic security. However, this is not a novel finding. In 2020, the Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment noted that, as much as Italian authorities claimed to have implemented dynamic security, "officers were not in continuous interaction with prisoners or involved in any offender management programmes; instead, they performed static security duties by way of observing prisoners and unlocking doors as required" (CoE, 2020, para. 27). The 2022 Circular is perfectly consistent with this scheme and may be more transparent on this point. At the very least, it is now clear that Italy has chosen to avoid dynamic approaches in providing security in prisons. The next section attempts to understand why this is the case.

3. The challenge of building positive relationships in prison

The reasons why the Italian Penitentiary Administration departed from dynamic security remain unclear. Circular 3693/6143 of 2022 does not provide much detail on this matter, indicating that the reform is intended to better differentiate between rehabilitation interventions. However, it is easy to see that the issue is more complex. As mentioned earlier, organisations rarely act simply in the rational pursuit of their purposes. Rather, they rely on complex dynamics in making decisions that respond to conversations with the 'inside' and 'outside' of the organisations themselves. This dialogue in the context of Italian prison management is currently being investigated.

First, the internal perspective of the Penitentiary Police[4] regarding dynamic security is considered. This is particularly important since officers' views have historically influenced prison administrations' decision-making (Torrente, 2019, p. 7). Furthermore, its significance lies in the direct involvement of prison officers in implementing dynamic security, making examining their perspectives crucial in identifying any challenges that have arisen. Second, the analysis moves outside the prison to assess whether criminal policies promoted before and in parallel with dynamic security contributed to the partial departure from this security regime.

3.1 A look at the inside: how prison officers experienced dynamic security

Prison officers have unenthusiastically embraced dynamic security since its inception. First, they believed that the new regime ridiculed their role, which was reduced to servile and auxiliary duties not befitting police officers. In addition, officers worried that indirect control would not guarantee prison security: "One cannot ... even remotely imagine leaving entire sections … in the open-cell regime in the hands of droves of inmates without any form of control, and relegating only the outside areas to the control of patrols that are expected to intervene where the needs of order and security require it" (Osapp, 2015, my translation).

Regarding the first issue, the idea of caring for inmates admittedly conflicts with the traditional custodial duties assigned to the Penitentiary Police. Many years have passed since the 1975 reform, which focused on promoting the prison as a place of opportunity and support. However, it was not until 1990 that provisions for the reorganisation of the Corps[5] were implemented, which, among others, should have fostered cultural transformation (in a critical sense, Margara, 2005, pp. 33-34; more generally on the inadequacy of the organisational interventions that followed the 1975 reform Buffa, 2013, pp. 69-76). Prior to that period, the rules[6] that officers had to follow were fascist in nature, with the result that the rehabilitative ideal of the 1975 reform coexisted for many years with the belief that prison officers had to maintain a custodial, if not purely punitive, attitude towards their inmates (Artale, 1976, pp. 371-372).

It is, therefore, of little wonder that officers have developed a formal-authoritarian cultural code, as opposed to the empathic-treatment code of healthcare, social, and psychological care prison workers (Sarzotti, 1999, pp. 17-21). Accordingly, the bewilderment experienced by officers due to the implementation of dynamic security should not be considered surprising. Dynamic security requires officers to adopt an attitude of understanding and empowerment towards inmates, emphasising their rehabilitation. Consequently, it poses great challenges in terms of redefining their role identity (Signori, 2016, p. 250). In the officers' opinion, "Penitentiary Police do not have a vocation for treatment ... Its spirit and identity allow for

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4   Penitentiary Police (*Corpo di Polizia Penitenziaria*) is the correctional law enforcement agency that operates in the Italian prisons.

5   The reference is to Law No. 395 of 15 December 1990, which demilitarizes and abolishes the Prison Officers' Corps (*Corpo degli Agenti di Custodia*), which is replaced by the civilian-run Penitentiary Police Corps (*Corpo di Polizia Penitenziaria*). Article 5 of the same law provides that, among other things, the Penitentiary Police participate in rehabilitation programmes of prisoners within working groups.

6   Royal Decree No. 2584 of 30 December 1937, Regulations for the Corps of Prison Officers of Prevention and Punishment Institutions (*Regolamento per il Corpo degli agenti di custodia degli istituti di prevenzione e di pena*).

tasks securitarian in nature" (Ripa, 2020, my translation). In line with these considerations, research has highlighted the link between dynamic security implementation and role conflict among prison officers (Santorso, 2021, p. 1568), which also testifies to cultural resistance to organisational change.

Moreover, officers worried about the challenges of maintaining order through dynamic security. While this may also be rooted in their reluctance to change, their concerns seem to have materialised. Officers testified that the new regime moved the balance of control towards the inmates (Antigone, 2018, p. 138; Santorso, 2018, p. 74; 2021, pp. 1566-1567), affecting their negotiating skills and, more generally, their authority (Santorso, 2021, p. 1567). In addition, they reported an increase in the number of aggressive incidents under the new regime (Antigone, 2018, p. 138). Some spoke of a "spiral of violence", in which even the weakest inmates would be caught up (Askanews, 2022, my translation). A survey conducted by a prison officer's union (Sappe, 2018) found that, according to 79% of respondents (n = 397 officers), dynamic security has increased critical incidents; this was mainly because officers have been asked to settle outside sections, whereas proximity to inmates would have allowed for a deterrent effect. Furthermore, a recent study conducted in the prisons of Piemonte, Liguria, and Valle d'Aosta found that although most officers felt that indirect control affects prisons' security, for 90.7% of the sample (n = 380) the new regime did not make prisons safer. In addition, approximately 70% of the respondents perceived a decrease in their authority (n = 290 officers) and felt more at risk (n = 289) (Cornelli, Chisari, Sacino and Squillace, 2023, p. 32). Data from the Prison Administration confirm that aggressive incidents against prison staff by inmates, as well as inter-prisoner violence, disciplinary offences and self-harm, have increased over the past 10 years (Figure 1).
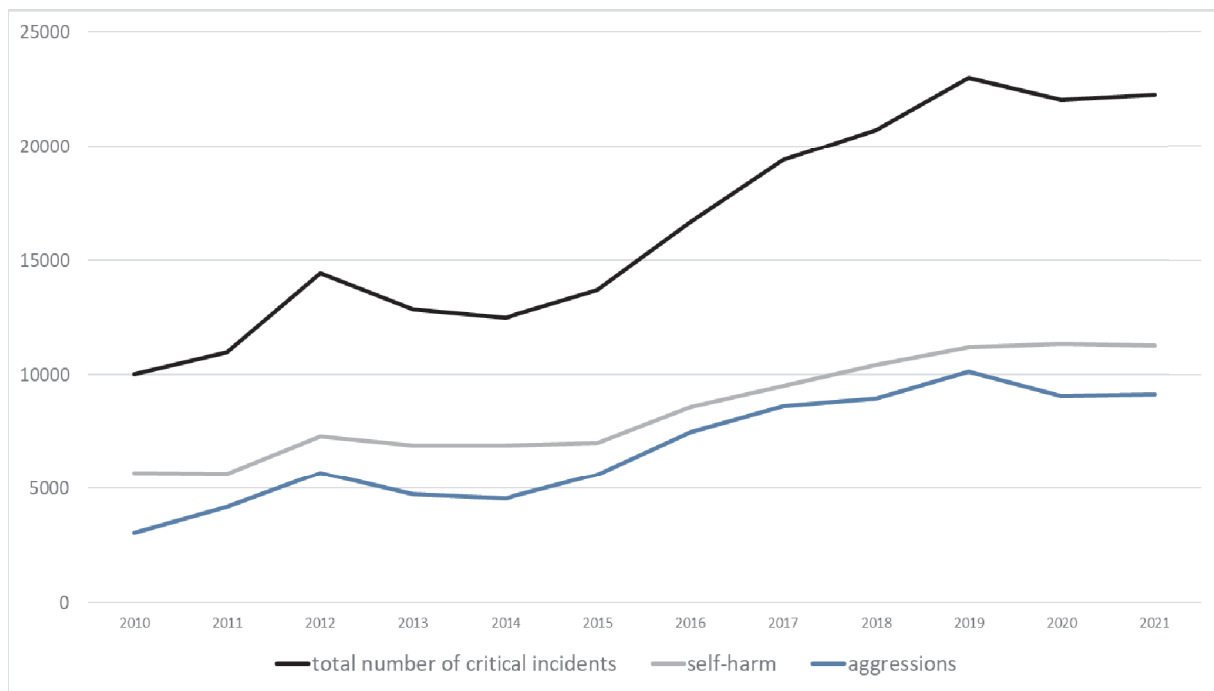
Source: Ministry of Justice, data processed by Roberto Cornelli. Report to the Italian School for the Judiciary "La realtà della pena detentiva attraverso la lettura delle statistiche", 15 February 2023.
Fig. 1: Total number of critical incidents, self-harm, and aggressions to officers and among inmates (2010-2021)

While this figure clearly shows that security and order in Italian prisons have not improved following the implementation of dynamic security, it also reveals the poor quality of the relationship between prison officers and inmates. Indeed, it seems reasonable to assume that aggressive incidents against prison staff would have occurred to a lesser extent in positive relationships. These assertions are supported by empirical research, which found that dynamic security did not bring about improvements in officer–prisoner relationships (Cornelli et al., 2023, p. 31) but exacerbated the conflict among them, even in light of the role problems suffered by officers (Santorso, 2021, pp. 1567-1568). Thus, despite the intended role of relationships as the driving force behind dynamic security, they have paradoxically emerged as its weakness.

In this regard, it should be acknowledged that building positive relationships in prison is a very ambitious goal. There are several reasons for this observation. First, priso-

ners are perceived as agents of insecurity since they are responsible for criminal acts; no one wants to be near a source of danger and tend to raise relational barriers (Maculan, 2022, p. 72). Second, officers' subculture and the training they receive promote personal detachment from inmates and an aversion to engaging with them proactively; they are called upon not to be too friendly towards their antagonists and rather to be suspicious (Arnold, 2008, pp. 413-414; Crawley, 2004, p. 98; Crawley and Crawley, 2008, p. 143; Giordano et al., 2021, pp. 271-272; Kauffman, 1988, p. 86; Maculan, 2022, pp. 77-81). In parallel, the inmates' code requires prisoners not to engage with officers who are seen as enemies (Ricciardelli and Perry, 2016, p. 406; *contra* Crewe, 2011, p. 456, who found that barriers between prisoners and staff are falling apart, and relationships are improving). Third, officers' availability for relationships with inmates is marked by profound ambiguity, since their openness to others could easily be misinterpreted (Crewe, 2011, p. 458). In this regard, dynamic security requires officers to develop "positive relationships with prisoners based on firmness and fairness, in combination with an understanding of their personal situation and any risk posed by individual prisoners" (CoE Rec(2003)23, para. 18. a). These must be professional and unfriendly relationships (UNODC, 2015, p. 31). However, it is difficult for the officers to be friendly and understanding and not become friends with the prisoners, while also remaining firm or authoritative simultaneously.

Looking at the Italian context, all of the above lead to the hypothesis that officers' cultural attitudes do not foster their involvement in positive relationships with inmates. Moreover, the fact that some officers experienced the implementation of dynamic security as complicating their work to improve the lives of undeserving inmates arguably did not help[7]. More broadly, it seemed that officers were not well disposed to this change in pace. However, blaming the departure from dynamic security on officers is overly simplistic. It has already been mentioned that the Prison Administration has never fully understood dynamic security, having set up indirect control as a remote observation of inmates without any interaction (CoE 2020, para. 27). This suggests that officers have not been properly addressed when assuming new roles. In addition, one wonders whether the right conditions were in place in prisons to build positive relationships with inmates, specifically considering the external political and social dynamics that affected the implementation of the dynamic-security reform.

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[7] In this regard, it was noted that, especially in the face of the unionisation of Penitentiary Police, a policy of competition between staff and inmates' needs has developed. An additional right for prisoners is accepted only when it is compatible with staff rights and expectations (Buffa, 2013, pp. 79-81).

3.2 A look at the outside: fear and its effects on prison environment

To understand how the outside environment has affected the implementation of dynamic security in Italian prisons, the fact that fear of crime has prevailed on the Italian political and social scene since the mid-1990s should not be overlooked. These complex dynamics cannot be fully covered here (for further discussion, Ceretti and Cornelli, 2018; Cornelli, 2008; Cornelli, Selmini and Nobili, this volume; De Giorgi, 2000). Just remember that certain events occurring during those years (see Ginsborg, 1998, pp. 471-472) led to the emergence of feelings such as anger, exasperation, and distrust in public debate (Cornelli, 2016) along with demands for security, which had to be provided "immediately" and "in an exemplary way" (Ceretti and Cornelli, 2019, p. 1486, my translation).

In response to the imperative of re-establishing control, the realm of politics has adopted strategies such as reducing public spending on social policies while prioritising the maintenance of public order and security. These strategies involve targeted interventions aimed at protecting citizens from any (real or perceived) threat (Ceretti and Cornelli, 2018, pp. 127-136; Selmini, 2005, p. 313. In general terms, Garland, 2001, p. 234; Wacquant, 1999, pp. 20-27). Criminal law becomes an instrument for public reassurance, directed at quelling collective anguish instead of seriously addressing crime. This also implied a gradual increase in the prison population, especially among those perceived to be a source of danger, namely immigrants, drug addicts, and petty offenders (Anastasia, 2022, pp. 30-32; Buffa, 2011, pp. 50-53; Margara, 2005, pp. 36-38; Wacquant, 1999, pp. 58, 70-73). The growth in imprisonment proceeded almost steadily until the deflective interventions that accompanied, just before and immediately after, the 2013 European Court of Human Rights ruling in the case of *Torreggiani et al. v. Italy* (Torrente, 2019, pp. 2-4; on the judgment, *ex multis* Della Morte, 2013). Within this framework, the percentage of foreign components in the total number of prison admissions increased tangibly (Aebi and Delgrande, 2011, p. 79; Santorso, 2015, p. 161; Vianello, 2019, p. 85; Wacquant, 1999, pp. 78-79).

It has already been mentioned that these events led to the implementation of dynamic security, which was considered beneficial in ensuring more dignified living conditions for the numerous inmates confined in Italian prisons. Dynamic security, however, has not addressed the issues surrounding perceived insecurity, which persisted over time. Thus, beginning in 2015, the prison population increased again, declining in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic but then rising again, reaching an overcrowding rate of 107.4% in 2021 (Antigone, 2022, p. 12). It is worth noting that these numbers of inmates can no longer be explained solely by reference to policies aimed at removing undesirables from society but must also be traced to the lengthening of sentences imposed by courts, coupled with the retaining in prison of vulnerable

inmates, although eligible for alternative sanctions (CoE, 2020, para. 7. On the many factors affecting the trend in prison population rates, see Anastasia, 2022, pp. 33-37; Pavarini, 1997; 2004). However, the political approach to the (in)security issue still seems to be to 'neutralise the enemy'; prisons are used as weapons of compensatory vengeance, according to the idea that imprisonment equals justice and guarantees security.

Against this background, the main assumption is that poor welfare interventions in recent years, the chronic overcrowding of prisons, and the specific characteristics of the prison population have undermined the success of dynamic security and, more specifically, the possibility for officers to establish positive relationships with inmates.

From a first perspective, it should be noted that overcrowding has challenged the functioning of prisons. In the absence of adequate resources to deal with all inmates, the prison administration had to set its priorities; considering not only organisational shortcomings but also social and political pressures from the outside, it was chosen to emphasise the neutralising function of imprisonment at the expense of rehabilitation (Sarzotti, 2010, p. 218; not referring to the Italian context, Garland, 2001, p. 206). For the purposes of this study, this is relevant for several reasons. First, this process may have reinforced the custodial attitude of officers operating in an institutional environment that did not value taking care of prisoners. Second, the use of most resources to strengthen the prison security branch precluded the recruitment of sufficient staff for rehabilitation activities[8], which is a key element in the effective implementation of dynamic security. Finally, limited resources have been spent on providing prison officers with training to properly perform their new tasks, although the importance of increasing officers' skills for dynamic security success is well known (UNODC, 2015, pp. 32-34). Greater investment in the professionalisation of the Corps would have probably helped the staff to better cope with the role conflict they experience and overcome the cultural resistance that motivated the early opposition to the new security regime.

Moreover, it can be assumed that overcrowding does not facilitate *per se* dynamic security. Officers have complained about the inadequacy of uniform staff compared with the number of inmates (Osapp, 2022b). Specifically, they have stressed that the combination of overcrowding and staff shortage "certainly is not the starting point for real 'knowledge' of the inmate and his needs" (SiNAPPe, 2022, my translation), where knowledge of the inmates is at the heart of dynamic security. Beyond numbers, however, one can perceive the difficulty of establishing rela-

tionships in a chaotic environment where interpersonal tensions may inevitably arise. Simultaneously, as noted by the officers, the significant presence of foreign inmates in Italian prisons has posed challenges to fostering interpersonal relationships, primarily due to language barriers (Santorso, 2021, p. 1566).

This framework indicates that if prison officers did not succeed in adequately fulfilling their role in the implementation of dynamic security, it's due to the absence of proper conditions to do so. In other words, the insecurity perceived by Italian society seems to have indirectly implied the shaping of a prison environment in which it is difficult to establish relationships. In parallel, it is interesting to note that just as research already found that the size of the prison population and its ethnic heterogeneity erode the convict code (Seagren and Skarbek, 2021) with detrimental consequences for maintaining control, these same elements appear to have affected Italian prison officers' ability to build positive relationships with inmates and, by extension, viable security regimes. Although the dynamics of the two phenomena are very different, these findings are very meaningful if the goal is to advance 'relational' paradigms of order and security in prisons.

Conclusions

Recently, Circular No. 3693/6143 was issued, which overturned the way prisons' medium-security regimes are managed by limiting the use of the open-cell regime and dynamic security. This is despite dynamic security generally being framed as the most effective solution for prison governance, which is consistent with research findings that order and security in prisons are built in the relationships among all those who live and work there.

To understand this paradigm shift, it must be said that dynamic security has failed to deliver all the expected results; critical incidents have increased in recent years, and the relationships between officers and prisoners have worsened. The reasons for these outcomes are diverse. However, a crucial role has been played by the sense of insecurity that has emerged in Italian society since the 1990s, and the policies implemented to reassure the population, which have impacted the two interconnected fronts. First, they implied an increase in the number of prisoners – a high percentage of whom are foreigners – a circumstance that has made it difficult for officers to build positive relationships with them. Second, they have resulted in the enhancement of the neutralising (not rehabilitating) function of prisons, with the consequence of few investments in staff training and recruitment to implement dynamic security effectively.

Without neglecting some resistance of officers to dynamic security, these elements are believed to have encouraged a shift towards a more custodial security regime in prisons. From this perspective, this study highlighted the role that political and social dynamics may play in the effective management of prisons, something that is not al-

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8   In 2017, more than 70 percent of the Italian Department of Prison Administration spending went to the Prison Police, while only six percent went to the reintegration of prisoners into society (Antigone, 2017). In 2021, the average ratio of the total number of inmates to the total number of educators employed in Italian prisons was 83 inmates to one educator (Antigone, 2022, p. 153).

ways duly considered. However, these findings amount merely to a hypothesis, that needs to be tested empirically for corroboration. In particular, qualitative research in prisons would be desirable, consisting not only of discussions with prison officers, but also with members of the prison administration, with the final aim of clarifying methods to promote a positive relational environment in prison.

Time will indicate whether the static security based on suspicion and coercion yields positive results. What can now be said is that just as dialogue, trust, respect, and solidarity turn out to be crucial in guaranteeing the maintenance of order in the outside society (Ceretti and Cornelli, 2018, pp. 209-210), these same elements should also ground order and security inside prisons, since respect for the rules can only be based on the "expectation of reciprocity" (Cornelli, 2021, p. 214, my translation). Perhaps one idea would be to start moving in this direction 'outside' prisons, believing that something will consequently change 'inside' prisons as well.

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Istruzioni per la compilazione dei testi

Il testo deve essere corredato di:

1) titolo del lavoro (in italiano ed inglese);
2) summary (in italiano e inglese) compreso tra le 200 e le 250 parole ognuno;
3) cinque parole chiave (in italiano e inglese);
4) titolo e didascalie delle tabelle e delle figure.

Nella prima pagina del file devono comparire:
- il titolo; le parole chiave; i nomi degli Autori e l'Istituto o Ente di appartenenza; il nome, l'indirizzo, il recapito telefonico e l'indirizzo e-mail dell'Autore cui sono destinate la corrispondenza e le bozze.
- A seguire il summary e, nelle ultime, la bibliografia, le didascalie di tabelle e figure e l'eventuale menzione del Congresso al quale i dati dell'articolo siano stati comunicati (tutti o in parte).
- Il file dovrà essere salvato e nominato con il titolo dell'articolo. Software: Microsoft Word, carattere Times New Roman 12, spaziatura 1,5, margini da 2 cm. Il numero massimo di cartelle dovrà essere 25, comprensive di ogni parte (titolo, parole chiave, riassunti, tabelle, etc.), numero ridotto a 12 per la presentazione di *case report*. La Direzione della Rivista si riserva la facoltà di decidere sulla possibilità di deroga a dette indicazioni. Non utilizzare programmi di impaginazione grafica quali Publisher, Aldus Pagemaker. Non usare formattazioni speciali (evitare stili, bordi, ombreggiature …).
- Tabelle: devono essere contenute nel numero e numerate progressivamente con numerazione romana.
- Figure: inviare immagini esclusivamente in formato JPEG, in scala di grigio, con risoluzione 300 dpi; associare il nome del file (per ciascuna figura) comprensivo di estensione (jpeg).

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Si seguono i criteri internazionale dell'American Psychological Association (APA). I criteri sono reperibili all'indirizzo www.rassegnaitalianadicriminologia.it del sito ufficiale della R.I.C.