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**CORSO DI LAUREA IN  
SCIENZE DEL LAVORO**

**FROM EDUCATION TO CRIME.  
A CRITICAL APPROACH OF ITALIAN  
QUESTION**

**Tesi di Laurea di:** Tania Risoleo  
**Relatore:** Daniele Checchi  
**Correlatore:** Fernando dalla Chiesa  
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*To Sara and Erica M.*

*'Ahi serva Italia, di dolore ostello,  
nave senza nocchiere in gran tempesta,  
non donna di province, ma bordello!'*

Dante, *Divina Commedia*, Purgatorio, Canto VI

*'Considerate la vostra semenza:  
fatti non foste a viver come bruti,  
ma per seguir virtute e canoscenza.'*

Dante, *Divina Commedia*, Inferno, Canto XXVI

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## **Preface**

Among convicted criminals the number of individuals who had attained a high level of education is low, whilst, on the contrary, those who did not complete high school are in the majority. The empirical evidence, then, suggests that criminals tend to be less educated and from poorer and often disadvantaged backgrounds than non-criminals. Despite this evidence, few scholars and these only recently have studied the relationship between education and crime. It is a common belief that education has a great effect on the individual's life due to its direct economic implications as well as the non-market effect, altering the individual's rationality and preferences and increasing the opportunity for social control. Moreover, education may indirectly affect the individual's decision to engage in criminal activities in several ways. However the influence of education may be neutralized by other environmental and cultural factors, specific to each country, or even more precisely to each region. For this reason, when questioning the real impact that education has on criminality in our country, we seek to identify Italian peculiarities, and to take them into account.

When conducting this study into the relation between crime and education, we felt the need to explore the theories and thoughts on crime. However, it is not our intention, nor do we think it is to our advantage, to focus on each and every theory. In the first part of this dissertation we looked at the opinions on crime that prevailed in criminology throughout the centuries, starting with the Eighteenth century Classical theory. The viewpoint of the Classical School, known within the field criminology as the Classical Tradition and outside of criminology as the Rational-Choice Model, was abandoned by the end of the 1800s in favour of a more scientific viewpoint. This new approach, referred to as Positivism, dominated criminology throughout the twentieth century. It emphasised causation and determinism, and denied the self-seeking in the Classical school. While Lombroso and other scholars associated with the positive school thought believed that crime was determined bio-anthropologically, sociologists, by the beginning of the 1900s, had begun looked at social class, culture and organization to explain criminal behaviour.

Chapters 1 to 3 are a theoretical perspective on crime whilst the second part – chapters 4 and 5- is more empirical. In the second part we will discuss the previous studies on the relationship between crime and education and verify whether in Italy there is evidence of a negative correlation between them. We begin by first describing crime itself, and then we will discuss crime theories from the past. However, as stated before, some theories are absent in the current work. Neither the Labelling theories- those concerned with the social reaction to crime, a reaction supposed to promote the criminal behaviour of the labelled individual-, nor the Conflict theories- those that explain crime as the product of political and economic struggles between those in power and those who are without power or are seeking power- are discussed in this study.

The second part, constituted by chapters 4 and 5, is the core of the dissertation. It analyzes the relationship between education and crime, by initially reconsidering the important factors that may drive this correlation and the current empirical literature on the education-crime relationship. Later on, an empirical analysis will be presented in attempt to verify if there is a negative correlation between education and criminal activity in Italy. Furthermore, a discussion of the obstacles which schools may be confronted within a community will be presented, along with an examination of the strategies implemented to counter such obstacles.

The work proceeds as follows.

Chapter 1, “Crime”, is an introductory chapter that defines crime and criminal behaviour.

Chapter 2, “Criminological Theories” discusses: “Classical criminology” – section 2.1- , the tradition of Beccaria and Bentham and recent contributions to the study of crime and the administration of criminal justice; “Positive School of criminology” - section 2.2-, is concerned with the second great school of thought, the Lombrosian perspective, and its emphasis on the bio-anthropological root of crime; “Social Structure Theories of Crime Causation” - section 2.3 -, that is, the major class-based sociological theories that emphasize the effects of poverty and the individual’s location within the lower class as an explanation for crime and criminality; “Anomie/Strain Theories” - section 2.4-, analysing the theories that consider crime as a consequence of the *American Dream* and the frustration of the

individual's desire; "Learning Theories of Crime"- section 2.5-, investigating the major social learning theories for criminal behaviour, which consider the interactions through which criminal and deviant behaviours are learned and reinforced; lastly, "Control Theories"- section 2.6-, those concerned with explaining why the individual conforms, rather than investigating the causes of the deviant behaviour.

Chapter 3 will discuss the effect of education on criminality, examining the link between criminal behaviour and the role of education. Section 3.1 reconsiders the effect of education on many of the causes of crime; in Section 3.2 we discuss the role of the school in socialization.

Chapter 4 will briefly explore the economic approach to the study of crime - section 4.1; will analyse the most important investigations carried out in this field and the recent studies on the relationship between crime and education. Furthermore, our empirical investigation will be presented -section 4.2.

Chapter 5 will examine the difficulties that schools in disadvantaged areas have to face in order to fulfil their function of educating and socializing, thus playing an important role in combating social deviation -Section 5.1. Later, in Section 5.2, we present a discussion of a renowned example -the case of Naples-where education was required to solve problems of widespread illegal activity. In subsection 5.2.2 and 5.2.3 we will give an overview of some projects that were developed in schools and in the juvenile prison in Nisida, with the purpose of re-educating youths from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Section 5.3 will conclude this chapter by considering potential perspectives on crime which may emerge in the future.

The last chapter, the 6<sup>th</sup>, concludes the whole work. It will summarize and make comment on the most prominent ideas, concepts and findings contained within every chapter of this dissertation.

## 1. Crime

Criminology has always been concerned with defining what constitutes *crime*. It is now a rule of thumb that what constitutes crime cannot be separated from the State, its law, and statutory agencies of enforcement.

From a legal point of view, an offence is not just a behaviour against penal law for which a sanction is given: in fact crime does not always involve overt behaviour as action, but there are many situations where inactions rather than action can result in criminal prosecution. Crime is defined by law, and is *any culpable action or inaction prohibited by this and punishable by the state as a misdemeanour or a felony* (Thomas and Hepburn, 1983, p.19) and a human being is viewed as a criminal if he “[...] violates the law decreed by the State to regulate the relation between its citizens” (Lombroso and Lombroso, 1972, p. 3). So, first of all, we can affirm that without criminal law there would be no ‘crime’ because an offence is not set in stone definitely and once at all, but with reference to the law. But we know that laws change depending on time and place, and then, the definitions of crime are not stable, but continuously changing. Crimes are also dependant on rules and social context in which these rules are put in place, and the same modes of conduct may be allowed or forbidden in different historical periods or geographical areas: that is, there are some activities, some conducts, considered as normal and innocuous in a determined place and certain time, but not in others. We can take ‘child abuse’ as an example: in the European countries nowadays any sexual relationships between an adult and a young person are forbidden, but in the past, until the mid 1960s, it was not a social problem (Pfohl, 1977). Crime, then, is a relative or legalistic, rather than absolute concept and criminal law is constructed within a specific society. But the relativism of crime’s definition is dependent on different kinds of behaviour: the rules concerning sexual conduct, the use of drugs, particular financial questions, are some of those concerns which are continually changing. Abortion was an offence in Italy until 1978; keeping drugs for personal use was only sanctioned in 1993 after a *referendum*; homosexuality, legal in Italy and in most European countries, is forbidden in the legislation of other countries. On the contrary, robbery and murder are crimes which are almost universally recognised as such (Barbagli and Gatti, 2002, p. 9).

Having accepted this definition of crime, we can suppose that, broadly speaking, offenders are not always branded as criminals: generally, among young people, there is no negative stigma on such behaviour as smoking marijuana; and among the rest of society selling commodities or services without providing a receipt or an invoice, and so on. And yet, even if there aren't rules prohibiting going out on the street in bare feet or in pyjamas, this kind of behaviour is stigmatized. So called "normal people" won't dare to be associated with someone who is likely to go out strangely dressed, but won't have any problem if someone else is technically a "criminal" in the legal sense, to a certain limit and for a certain sort of crime (e.g. tax evasion). Nevertheless, our approach is to consider the word criminal in the legal sense, and not in the sense of deviation from society's rules in general; therefore we will discuss only the theory concerning crime as behaviour against legal rules, which will be developed in due course.

## **2. Criminological Theories**

Much work has been devoted to the explanation of crime, and now we are going to give an overview of the most influential theories and scholars in this field. We start far back, in the origins of the modern thought of justice, with Eighteenth century Classical theory.

The classical tradition of Beccaria and Bentham and recent contributions to the study of crime and the administration of criminal justice are recounted in section 2.1, while the second great school of thought, the Lombrosian one, and its emphasis on the bio-anthropological root of crime is discussed in Section 2.2.

Section 2.3, introduces the major class-based sociological theories that emphasize the effects of poverty and the individual's location in the lower classes as explanations for crime and criminality which are the theories of crime originating in the tradition of Chicago School.

Anomie/Strain theories, the theories that envisage crime as a consequence of the American Dream and the frustration of the individual's desire, are analysed in section 2.4.

Section 2.5, investigates the major social learning theories for crime and criminal behaviour, theories which focus on the social interactions through which criminal and deviant behaviours are learned and reinforced.

Lastly, in section 2.6, an account is given of the Control theories, the theories interested in explaining why individuals conform, rather than investigating the causes of the deviant behaviour.

### **2.1 Classical Criminology**

In this chapter we look at the Eighteenth century Classical theory of crime and its recent revitalizations. At the base of this approach is the belief in free will and rational individuals, with their actions directed towards the attainment of pleasures and avoidance of pain.

Section 2.1.1 is dedicated to the discussion of Beccaria and his ideas on the criminal, punishment and his criticisms of the existing legal system. Then, in section 2.1.2, we will examine Bentham's contribution to Criminology, his prison

project - the *Panopticon*- and his thoughts on punishment. In the final sections of this chapter, a review of the theories that revitalized the Classical School is given. In section 2.1.3 we will discuss the Rational Choice theory which places great emphasis on the importance of understanding the offender's decision-making process and takes into account the effect of both formal and informal punishment on criminal choice. In section 2.1.4, the Routine Activities approach is examined, while in section 2.1.5 is discussed the Deterrence Theory. However, these two last approaches are a rather different point of view on the study of crime. While the other Classical theories focused on the criminals, the Routine activity perspective redirects the attention toward the crime, in particular "predatory crimes"; Deterrence theory focuses on punishment and its features.

### ***2.1.1 Beccaria and the Classical School***

Modern thought on crime and on penal justice came in to being in Italy in the eighteenth century, with the Classical School. Classical theory, rooted in the Enlightenment philosophy of individual rights and free choice, was originally a radical reaction to pre- Enlightenment criminal justice policy and practice, seen by classical reformers as arbitrary, corrupt, harsh, and unjust (Henry and Einstadter, 1998, p.17). Cesare Beccaria (1738-1794) was the most prominent of these reformers. His thoughts became famous through *An Essay on Crimes and Punishments*, a book concerning his observations about what he considered very real problems in the penal system of his day. This book, first published in 1764 in Italy, had an unexpected success: it became quite suddenly popular in Italy as well as in other countries and had a profound impact on criminology and in the Western legal system. Beccaria, a great Italian jurist and economist, was the first to call public attention to the injustices perpetuated on criminals and suspected to be so, but his contribution to criminology was his theorization on criminal behaviour and on the way to control and reduce criminality. When *An Essay on Crimes and Punishments (Dei Delitti e delle Pene)* was first published, for much of Western history the dominant theory of crime had been the "demoniac perspective". According to this perspective, crime is sinful behaviour or an offence against God, and given the importance of religion in the period before the Enlightenment, this

perception of crime inspired very harsh reactions to deviance. Brutal methods were often used to determine whether people were possessed or had given into evil forces, and torture was the main method used (Cullen and Agnew, 2003, p.15). Torture was used to extract confessions from the alleged criminals, and those found guilty were often brutally punished, sometimes slowly being tortured to death, in a public ceremony, not only to show to the whole community what crime involves, in order to prevent deviant behaviour among individuals, but with the assumption that through these punishments the body of the offender would be purged of a sin and traces of the devil, thereby restoring the body both to the community and in relation to God<sup>1</sup>. Beccaria openly disagreed with the use of torture as a method of obtaining confessions, or to punish criminals, and in the essay he criticized this, considering it an ineffective way of maintaining social order and therefore an abuse of power against citizens. Thus, it is easy to imagine how many critical reactions the principles contained in this essay produced. But in spite of the critics, these innovative ideas had found great support<sup>2</sup> and Beccaria became immensely popular. Beccaria's book in its first edition was quickly sold out, and it was necessary to reprint a second edition in the same year. Other editions were published in the course of time, and in several languages. Nowadays the principles contained in this essay form the basis for the legal systems in the United States, France, Italy, and other countries (Cullen and Agnew, 2003, p.17). In order to give an example, we can mention the idea that the law must be applied equally to everyone: in fact, one of Beccaria's main revolutionary statements was that laws must be written and applied equally among different social classes. The poor and the rich should be equally treated by the judge. Moreover, in Beccaria's opinion, judges had no right to interpret the penal laws, because they were not legislators, and their office was only to examine if the accused had, or had not, committed an action contrary to the law of the land. But this process should not be done through use of torture, because this is not an effective way to discover and thus punish offenders (Beccaria, 1964).

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<sup>1</sup> Beccaria states that this is an abuse that should not be tolerated in the eighteenth century. For a critic to the use of torture to punish deviant individual through harsh physical pain in order to purge sin see also Beccaria C. (1964), pp. 43-44

<sup>2</sup> For an overview of the reactions Beccaria had provoked in his contemporary world, see Pisapia G. D., in the introduction of Beccaria, C. (1964), *ibid.*

As far as criminology is concerned, the major contribution made by classical theorists is the development of ideas concerning criminal behaviour and how best to control it. The underlying philosophy of the Classical school was free will, the assumption that all criminals, except in a few extreme cases, are endowed with intelligence and the human will controls behaviour. Individuals are rational beings who pursue their own interests, trying to maximize their pleasure and minimize their pain. Due to their egoistic nature, unless they are deterred by the threat of swift, certain, and appropriately severe punishments, they may commit crimes in their pursuit of self-interest. So, since they consciously commit misdeeds, if they know the law and what committing crime involves, they would not perpetrate any act against social rules. But the legal system should be both clear and just, and a reform to criminal justice was required by Beccaria because the laws in the 1700s were frequently vague and open to interpretation and judges would often interpret these laws to suit their own purposes. Thus punishment for a particular crime might vary widely depending on time and place, and judges, who held great power, might severely punish some people and not punish others at all. Beccaria and other classical theorists thought that such a system was both unjust and ineffective at controlling crime. They argued that people would be deterred from committing crime if the pain associated with the punishment outweighed the pleasures associated with the crime. For a rational system of criminal justice to work, punishment must be certain, swift, and proportional. The ultimate goal was to ensure that the benefits of crime never outweighed the potential pain from punishments the offender would receive. As rational, calculating human beings, most would avoid crime under such a system. Certainty required that all offenders be punished; in Beccaria's opinion crime is more effectively prevented by the certainty of a small punishment, than the fear of a more severe one which may not be imposed. The main idea was that the more criminals who escaped punishment, the less the impact on the minds of others contemplating similar behaviour. Swiftiness was also important, because the smaller the interval of time between the punishment and the crime, the stronger and more lasting will be the association of the two ideas of *crime* and *punishment*. Offenders will consider one as the cause, and the other as the unavoidable and necessary effect (Beccaria, 1964; p.70). So, if

too long a time lapsed between the crime and its punishment, this would also lessen the deterrent effect on future criminal actions. Beccaria's emphasis on proportionality led him to oppose the use of the death penalty; a truly rational system of criminal justice would be based on a scale of crimes and punishments. Each would be assigned a specific punishment that included ascending severity based on the level of seriousness of the offence, but if the criminal is not dangerous to the safety of the nation or if his existence does not put at risk the stability of the government, the death penalty must be avoided. Moreover, the idea of death does not frighten everyone: there are some individuals that, due to determinate circumstances, may evaluate the potential risk of death differently from other individuals. For example, poor people may choose to live a shorter but better life profiting from the pleasures deriving from crime. On the contrary, even the most desperate man would not risk spending the rest of his life without liberty: in fact punishment, in Beccaria's opinion, should not put an end to a miserable life, but to be a treat to a worse one (Beccaria, 1964, p.59).

Summing up, in Beccaria's opinion people acts rationally and pleasure and pain are the motors of human behaviour. Consequently the system will break down if the laws are unknown or obscure, if punishment is delayed, or if judges apply the laws in an arbitrary or discriminatory manner so that only some offenders are punished. Individuals must be conscious that if they commit a particular crime they will be quickly judged and will be objected to a punishment defined by the law. Accordingly, in his opinion punishment should be assigned to each crime in a degree that will result in more pain than pleasure for those who commit the forbidden acts and that condemnation should fit the crime and not the criminal.

### ***2.1.2 Jeremy Bentham and the Panopticon***

Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) is the second author representing the Classical school of criminology. He was a prolific author and his thoughts on punishment can be found in *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789), which should serve as an introduction to the English criminal code. The simplicity of the way in which he explains the purpose of punishment is most important in his work, that is, that it helps to increase the overall contentment in a population. In

Bentham's opinion, every law is, or must be, based on the principles of utilitarianism which assumes "the greatest happiness for the greatest number". But punishment can become an obstacle to this goal. However, the business of government is to promote the happiness of society by rewarding and punishing, especially by punishing acts tending to diminish happiness. Hence with regard to each action we have to consider its circumstances, the intention, motive and the consequences. Punishment, being primarily harmful, is out of place when groundless, inefficacious, unprofitable, or needless. But punishment is admitted in society when it permits us to avoid greater damage and so punishment is permissible and justified when it is of use in controlling crime (Cid Moliné and Larrauri Pijoan, 2007; pp 37-38).

Agreeing with Beccaria, Jeremy Bentham maintained that behaviour is impulsive and based on hedonism, the pleasure-pain principle, that is, human beings choose those actions that will give pleasure and avoid those that will bring pain (Reid, 1988, p.83). Among his many proposals for legal and social reform was a design for a prison building he called the *Panopticon*. Although it was never built, the idea had an important influence upon later generations of thinkers.

Bentham, with the *Panopticon*, created the theory of prison as an instrument to better exercise "discipline". The *Panopticon* was to be an architectural structure which incorporated a central tower looking out onto a surrounding circular building divided into cells, each cell extending the entire thickness of the building to allow inner and outer windows. The occupants of the cells would be isolated from one another by walls and subject to scrutiny both collectively and individually by an observer in the tower who would remain unseen. In this way, each prisoner could be observed secretly by whoever was in authority at the time. Bentham believed that this type of penal system would be self-disciplining. Lots of lighting and the ever-watching eyes of a supervisor would afford better discipline than the dark dungeons previously used. The constant fear of being observed would have an important psychological effect on the prisoners. Bentham states that this feeling of constant visibility and the related psychological condition that this situation would produce for inmates would ensure an automatic functioning of power (Bandini, Gatti, *et al.*, 2003).

Even though the Classical theory has had a large effect on our legal system and on contemporary theories of crime, its central assumptions have been challenged; during the eighteenth century flaws were revealed in the idea of identical punishment for identical crimes as well as in the concepts of free will and rationality.

In particular, criminologists during the nineteenth century began complaining about the need for individualized reaction to offenders, as they believed the classical approach was far too harsh, and in reality, unjust. In fact the penal code theorized by classical theorists does not provide for the separate treatment of children: this aspect was considered the most shocking. Thus it was during the neoclassical period that children younger than seven years old and those with mental illnesses were exempted from the law on the basis that they could not recognize the difference between right and wrong, and then, consciously choose between them (Reid, 1988, p.85).

### **2.1.3 Rational Choice Theory**

The Rational Choice theory is a recent revival of the eighteenth-century Classical School. This theory was first presented by Ronald V. Clarke and Derek B. Cornish in their work of 1985 "*Modeling Offenders*" *Decision: A framework for research and Policy* and in the 1986 *The reasoning Criminal. Rational Choice Perspectives on offending*. The Rational Choice approach is based upon the concept of free will and the belief in the rational human being: like the Classical theory, the Rational Choice theory assumes that offenders act rationally with the aim of achieving maximum pleasure at minimum cost. In agreement with this belief Clarke and Cornish's point of view is that in the study of criminality it is important to focus on offenders as rational decision makers calculating their own self-interests. Indeed Clarke and Cornish's belief in the rationality of criminals was suggested by several academic disciplines. As was stated by these authors

*"developments in the sociology of deviance, criminology, economics, and psychology suggest that it is useful to see criminal behaviour not as the result of psychologically and socially determined dispositions, but*

*as the outcome of the offender's broadly rational choices and decisions” (1985:147)*

The influence of the sociology of deviance, criminology, economics, and psychology on the Rational Choice theory is broadly reflected throughout the theory. In fact the belief that the study of crime has to be developed from the offender's perspective was suggested by the sociology of deviance: the Rational Choice approach recommends that the offence has to be described from the point of view of who committed it, in order to better understand the rational motivations standing behind the criminal choice, and thus improving the means to reduce criminality. The focus on the methods of crime prevention oriented on altering not the criminal's personality but instead environmental circumstances (e.g. trying to improve security on the streets through the installation of webcams and improving street lighting) was suggested to Clarke and Cornish by the study of criminology. The Economic approach contributed to the Rational Choice theory with Gary Becker's 1968 work *Crime and Punishment: An Economic Approach*<sup>3</sup>. Gary Becker's idea is that criminal activity involves, as with any other activities, a rational choice based on the weighing of both the benefits, consequences and the costs, and an individual will offend if he expects to gain an advantage from criminal activity. Lastly, another academic discipline that had influenced the Rational Choice theory is the Cognitive Psychology. From Cognitive Psychology Clarke and Cornish adopted the pattern of social learning which assumes that individuals learn through the reinforcement of behaviours and the punishments given to them by others (Cid Moliné and Larrauri Pijoan, 2007; p. 44). That is, individuals are involved in a continuous learning process and peers, family and friends as well as those that surround them who may encourage certain behaviours while discouraging others. So, on the one hand even if criminal behaviour is still considered by the Rational Choice Theory as purposeful and self-interested behaviour, an individual may be induced to commit crime by others. On the other hand, the “others” such as family, friends and the members of his group may also

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<sup>3</sup> In this work Gary Becker had applied the theory of rational behaviour and human capital on the study of crime and punishment. He assumes that a criminal, with the exception of a limited number of those who are psychologically disturbed, reacts to different stimuli in a predictable way, both with respect to returns and costs, such as in the form of an expected punishment.

deter the individual from crime through the threat of informal sanctions (e.g. not being allowed to join a club).

The main belief of the Rational Choice theory is that specific crimes are chosen and committed for specific reasons, the offenders being endowed with their full mental facets. However theorists on Rational Choice theory admit that this rationality is limited because individuals do not have all of the information on the risks and the advantages that committing a crime involves. So, lacking complete or accurate information about the actual risk and future advantage deriving from criminal activities, individuals act on the basis of the subjectively expected benefit and the subjectively expected risk of being apprehended; furthermore, they also evaluate these factors in respect of the expected punishment for a certain offence (Becker and Mehlkop, 2006). Thus, from the Rational Choice perspective an offence is a purposeful act which involves a rational and logical process of decision-making by a motivated individual.

In the assessment of the punishment that may be administered to them, individuals take in to consideration the costs of the specific punishment (e.g. wage loss should the punishment involve time in jail). Consequently, individuals do not become 'criminals' because they differ from other people in terms of their basic motivation but because their benefits, consequences and costs are different (Becker G., 1968 cited by Becker and Mehlkop, 2006).

Nevertheless the Rational Choice theory assumes that decisions to transgress the rules are influenced by the characteristics of the offenders and by the kind of offence. More specifically, there are certain background and situational factors that might predispose a person towards one crime and not another. Background factors might include intelligence, level of education and personality; situational factors might include peer pressure, drug dependency and the availability of the target (e.g. goods without electronic tags attached in stores). More specifically, background factors are responsible in estimating both the benefits and the costs, while the situational factors represent themselves alternatively as the benefits and the costs.

Further, personal experiences or differing associations might also contribute to the formation of subjective expectations of being apprehended for an offence. In fact it is likely that an individual aware of others who have avoided punishment for

a particular crime may be interested in committing the same offence if he expects that it will benefit him.

If the offender's rational process of decision-making is considered the main object of the study of the Rational Choice theory, Clarke and Cornish also admitted that a variety of individual and social factors influence the individual's estimation of the benefits and costs of crime. Indeed even if the benefits that are associated to an offence such as robbery may be the same for different individuals, the consequences may vary greatly, due to the fact that the consequences may involve not only a formal sanction but also an informal one - disapproval of parents and friends- and moral ones -such as the guilt one may experience from breaking the rules. Moreover, the informal and moral sanctions may have a much more deterrent effect than the formal ones. On first view the Rational Choice theory seems not to differ from the Classical theory. However this theory contrasts with the Classical theory because it puts emphasis on the role of the informal and moral sanctions, an aspect neglected by scholars of the Classical School, who had focused only on the effect of the formal punishment on the criminal's will. Moreover, the Rational Choice theory focuses on the choice, on the offender's process of decision-making. In fact, much of the research stimulated by the Rational Choice theory focuses on the factors that offenders consider when they are thinking about committing a particular crime. Rational Choice theorists also argue that it is necessary to adopt a "crime-specific focus" when examining a crime (Cullen and Agnew, 2003; p.268). That is, the focus of a study on crime should be on a particular type of crime, such as burglaries committed in a specific suburban area, rather than examining all types of crime together. Furthermore the study of the situational factors is important when the "crime-specific focus" is adopted, due to their determinant function in deciding to commit a specific offence. We can take shoplifting as an example. In fact an individual may decide to steal goods from a store, but he will offend only when there are certain situational factors, such a lack of security in the shop.

Rational Choice theory has stimulated the development of a number of crime prevention measures with emphasis on the situational factors that attempt to reduce the perceived benefits and increase the perceived costs of crime. This would involve concerted efforts by the manufacturers of standard equipment prone to

theft, to design better security systems so that stolen goods cannot be used without a PIN or can be tracked<sup>4</sup>. An attempt to reduce criminality also involves the adoption of surveillance technology to tag goods in stores electronically, install camera systems to monitor behaviour, improve street lighting, have more police officers on patrol, assist homeowners to improve their home security, etc. Moreover the Rational Choice theorists suggested that a coordinated strategy would potentially prevent more crime and so be more cost-effective than imprisoning the few offenders that are currently apprehended.

To conclude, the theory of Rational Choice assumes that people maximize the expected benefits. But rational choice theorists recognize that the benefits can be calculated differently by different but equally rational individuals. Subjective expected advantages will vary enormously depending on risk propensity and relative expectance of loss or gain. Situational factors such as a lack of security, the effect of drugs and so on are greatly important, because when an individual decides to commit a specific crime, these create a situation where he can premeditate criminal behaviour. Thus, in order to reduce criminality, society as a whole must invest in preventing crime not just by the threat of punishment, but by making crime disadvantageous, through the imposition of consequences which consistently outweigh the potential benefits. Lastly, an attempt to reduce criminality will be made by preventing the situational factors that enable a motivated and rational individual to carry out his decision to misbehave such as a lack of security.

#### ***2.1.4 Routine Activities Theory***

In 1979, Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson provided a new perspective on the criminological outlook on crime. While most existing theories at that time focused primarily on criminals and their motivations and environment, the Routine Activities theory simplified concepts generally taken for granted by criminologists; it took the focus away from the criminal and redirected it towards the criminal act. The Routine Activity approach started as an explanation of predatory crimes. It assumed that for such crimes to occur there must be a convergence in time and in

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<sup>4</sup> See also Clarke, R. V. (1999).

space of three elements: a likely offender, a suitable target, and the absence of a capable guardian against crime (Clarke and Felson; 1998, p. 12).

As with the Rational Choice theory, this theory has been considered an extension of Beccaria's Classical School because of its assumption that delinquents are rational people, and thus act with respect to the consideration of both the benefits and the consequences that criminal activity involves. Moreover, as Cohen and Felson stated in their first work in the 1979 *Social Change and Crime Rate Trends: A Routine Activity Approach*, they also considered certain concepts from the Chicago School, postulating on "[...] *the interdependence between the structure of illegal activities and the organization of everyday sustenance activities*" (Cohen and Felson, 1979; p. 589). In fact, Cohen and Felson's studies on criminality, led them to the idea that certain situations rather than others make the likelihood of an offence more probable. Rather than emphasizing the characteristics of offenders, the Routine Activities approach concentrates on the circumstances in which "predatory criminal acts" are carried out. This "predatory" crime is the focus of the Routine Activities theory and is identified as an illegal act consisting of direct physical contact between an offender and a victim<sup>5</sup> (e.g., rape, robbery, burglary, and theft). Damaging or stealing an object is also considered a predatory act (Boetig, 2006).

The main theory that Cohen and Felson presented in their work of 1979 is that the substantial increase in reported crime rates in the United States of America from 1960 until 1974<sup>6</sup> is linked to changes in the mode of life-style in American society and to a corresponding increase in target availability for the criminal because these new life-styles led to a decrease of presence in houses and neighbours able to deter the offender (Cohen and Felson, 1979; p. 598). According to both Cohen and Felson, neither the economic situation, nor the unemployment rate can explain the increase of criminality recorded in the United States, due to the economic expansion America was experiencing in these years. On the contrary, it was assumed by Cohen and Felson that it was exactly the increase in wellbeing which

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<sup>5</sup> However, in the Routine Activity approach, the term target is preferred over victim, who might be completely absent from the scene of the crime. See Clarke, R. V., Felson, M. (1998), p.12.

<sup>6</sup> In their study of 1979 Cohen and Felson analyzed the time-period of 1947- 1974. See Cohen, L. E., Felson, M. (1979).

was the root cause of the increase in criminality. That is, the individual would spend more time working, with more of his free time being spent outside of the house, due to the rise in wealth among the general population. Cohen and Felson hypothesized that it is the increase in activities taking place away from the household and the family that caused an increase in the opportunity for crime and thus generating higher crime rates. The Routine Activities approach takes the number of motivated offenders as a given, in a constant number, and explains variation in crime by the variations in the availability of suitable targets such as expensive, lightweight merchandise, and by a decline in their protectors, for example neighbours, property owners and police (Cullen and Agnew, 2003; p. 269). These suitable targets are the benefits that the offenders want to gain, and the capable protectors represent the obstacles which the offenders have to confront. So, criminality can be reduced by lowering the number of suitable targets and/or by increasing the number of protectors, because, as stated above, the number of motivated offenders is taken for granted.

According to the Routine Activities theory, the supply of suitable targets and the presence of guardians are a function of the habits of the individual, for example family work, leisure, and so on. The presence of an offender and the target and the absence of a protector make the best crime setting. The convergence of these conditions invites the occurrence of a criminal act. On the contrary, when one of these factors is absent, the crime would not take place. Indeed, according to the theoretical approach of the Routine Activities, three elements are necessary for predatory crime to occur: (1) motivated offenders, (2) suitable targets, and (3) the absence of a capable protector against a violation (Cohen and Felson, 1979; p. 589).

Suitable targets for a crime might include things such as a wallet, a purse, a car, as well as a human target in the case of personal attack. Four main elements influence a target's risk of criminal attack, as summed up by the acronym VIVA (Clarke and Felson, 1998; p. 13). These criteria are: Value, Inertia, Visibility and Access. As was stated originally by Cohen and Felson (1979) "*Target suitability is likely to reflect such things as value (i.e., the material or symbolic desirability of a personal or property target for offenders), physical visibility, access, and the inertia of a target against illegal treatment by offenders (including the weight,*

*size, and attached or locked features of property inhibiting its illegal removal and the physical capacity of personal victims to resist attackers with or without weapons” (Cohen and Felson, 1979; p. 591).*

All four of these are considered from an offender’s viewpoint. Offenders will only be interested in targets that they *value*, for whatever reason. Thus the latest popular CD hit will be stolen more from record stores than a Beethoven CD of roughly equal monetary value, since most offenders would like to have the former but not the latter. *Inertia* is simply the weight of the item. Usually, the offender would be encouraged if a target were high in inertia, such as a piece of jewellery or a weak person. In fact, both targets mentioned above are easier to take than a heavy object that is too difficult to carry out of a home, and a large or muscular person, who is difficult to overwhelm. *Visibility* refers to the exposure of theft targets to offenders, such as when someone flashes money in public or puts valuable goods by the window. *Access* refers to street patterns, placement of goods near the door, or other features of everyday life making it easy for offenders to get to targets. Moreover, an offender is attracted to a target which is more visible to him. And, lastly, the offender’s access to a street or building renders its contents and people more subject to his or her illegal action

The Routine Activities theory is quite different from most other crime theories. As stated above, while most theories focus on the factors that motivate the offenders to become involved in crime, the Routine Activities approach takes the supply of motivated offenders as a given and focuses on the opportunities for crime. The theory was originally applied to contrast predatory offences (see Cohen and Felson; 1979), but has been extended to apply to a range of crimes.

Cohen and Felson’s theory contributes to recent efforts to control crime by altering the situation in ways which make crime less attractive, reducing the opportunity for offenders and so avoiding the realization of the offence. However, when this opportunity can not be avoided, it will be useful to contrast criminality with the reduction of the availability of attractive targets and increasing protection, and other policies similar to those suggested by Rational Choice theorists.

### ***2.1.5 Deterrence Theory***

Deterrence theory became popular in the 1970s, inspired in part by the work of certain economists, including Gary Becker (1968). This theory most fully reflects the ideas of Beccaria and other Classical theorists. Indeed, the main hypothesis of Deterrence theory is that people are rational and pursue their own interests, attempting to maximize their pleasures and to minimize their pains. As a consequence, they choose to engage in crime when they believe that it is to their advantage. It is thought that the best way to prevent crime is through the imposition of a well designed punishment, with a high deterrent effect. In accordance with the Classical school, Deterrence theory suggests that administering to the offenders punishments that are swift, certain and appropriately severe is useful in the reduction of crime. Deterrence theorists, like Classical theorists, focus primarily on the impact of official punishment on crime.

Deterrence theory is composed of two factors: **Specific deterrence** - punishment is dispensed to the offenders to prevent them from recommitting the crime-; and **General deterrence** - a presumed effect that the threat of punishment will prevent others from committing similar crimes.

**Specific deterrence** refers to the idea that punishment should reduce the crime rate of these individuals who are punished. So, through the punishment, the rate of recidivism should be reduced. However, a number of studies have tried to determine if there is any evidence supporting specific deterrence; these studies were focused on the *severity*, *swiftness* and *certainty* of punishment, to discover if by increasing these, such punishments reduce criminality. Most data suggests that more severe punishments are no more effective at reducing crime than less severe punishments. Indeed, some studies suggest that more severe punishment may increase the likelihood of subsequent crime. Thus punishing people more severely does not appear to reduce their subsequent criminal acts.

Other studies have tried to determine whether the swiftness of punishment affects crime. Even though these studies were few, not enough empirical evidence emerged from them to demonstrate that swift punishment is more effective at suppressing criminal behaviour than delayed punishment.

Lastly, some other studies have been carried out to determine if *certainty* of punishment dissuades people from offending; these studies have tried to discover if there is any evidence that people punished by the justice system are less likely to engage in crime than compared with people who have not been punished. These studies typically compare two comparable groups: one is composed by convicted or arrested people while the other one is formed by who have not been arrested or convicted. The two groups are usually comparable in terms of the kind of offence they have committed, and such socio-demographic characteristics as age, sex, race and socio-economic status. However there may have been other differences that were not considered. The results of these studies are mixed, but they tend to suggest that the arrested or convicted people do not have lower rates of subsequent criminal activities (Matthews and Agnew, 2008; p.92; Cullen and Agnew, 2003; p.264). But the most surprising aspect is that some of these studies found that the arrested people have a higher rate of subsequent criminal activities than those who remained unpunished.

There are several factors that could explain these results. The most simplistic is the assumption that many offenders may not be that rational. In fact, as it was believed first, by Lombroso and other Positivists theorists and most recently by criminologists in a psycho-biological perspective, there may be biological influences which contribute to crime<sup>7</sup>; furthermore offenders are often impulsive and suffer from low self-esteem. Another reason is that many offenders are pressured into crime by situations beyond their control, perhaps by the strain they are put under or their association with delinquent peers. As a consequence, many offenders may not be deterred by further punishment.

Punishment can lead to great pressure from equally punished peers (e.g in prison) can reduce the positive influences of the good society and from which the criminal has been isolated and can encourage further crime as criminal mixes with equally or even more delinquent prisoners. In fact is likely that individuals possessing a criminal record will have more trouble finding legitimate work, thus

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<sup>7</sup> For an overview of the most recent theories on crime focusing on individual traits and biological influences conducive to crime, see *Individual Traits and Crime*, contained in: Cullen and Agnew, (2003).

increasing their stress and reducing society's control. Finally, it may be that the justice system does not punish in an effective way; in particular, when the likelihood of punishment is low the deterrent effect of punishment may be reduced. In studying the deterrent effect of punishment, it is also important to consider the nature of who is punished as well as that of the punishment. In fact, as stated before, there are several reasons for which punishment seems not to have a significant deterrent effect on criminals. Although the global rate of recidivism may not be reduced, it may be that some punished offenders reduce their criminal activities and other punished offenders increase their criminal activities. Several studies provide some support for this argument. Some criminologists believe that the threat of sanctions is most likely to deter those with a strong disposition for conformity; that is, those who are high in self-control, condemn crime, and/or have a high attachment to conformity. Such individuals are said to be more responsive to sanctions. They give more thought to the consequences of their behaviour and care more about these consequences because they have a lot to lose if sanctioned. By contrast, individuals with a strong disposition for crime tend to act without thinking about the consequences of their behaviour, care little about these consequences, and/or are strongly pressured or induced to engage in crime. Others criminologists make the opposite argument arguing that the threat of sanctions should be most likely to deter crime among those with a strong disposition for crime. Individuals with little disposition for crime should refrain from offending regardless of the threat of legal sanctions, for example someone from the legal profession may be deterred by fear of losing his job (Matthews and Agnew, 2008; p.94). And some other criminologists also argue that a punishment is followed by an effort to reintegrate offenders into conventional society may reduce crime, whereas, a punishment isolates or alienates offenders from conventional society may cause an increase in crime (Cullen and Agnew, 2003; p.265).

To conclude, punishments may have a very different effect among each punished offender, due to individual differences and the different circumstances in which crimes can occur. So, even empirical investigations tell us that punishing offenders more severely does not reduce their subsequent crime, perhaps it may cause on the one hand an increase of criminal behaviour in some individuals, and

on the other hand a reduction of recidivism on others. It will be useful that future research in this field will try to identify those factors that influence the effect of punishment. Such research is very important since it may help us create punishments that are effective in reducing crime.

**General deterrence** is the effect that punishments have on the overall population. Studies were carried out focusing on whether punishment deters crime among individuals in the general population. In particular, it has been argued that punishment may deter crime among those who have not been punished. For example, suppose several pickpockets are caught and are punished. Their punishment may deter others from stealing things, even though these other pickpockets were not caught and thus remained unpunished. These others may come to realize that they might be the next to be punished.

Numerous studies have tried to verify whether increasing the certainty and severity of punishment reduces the rate of criminality in a population and if the threat of legal sanctions may deter people from offending. Some studies compare geographical areas that differ in terms of the certainty or severity of punishment. **Certainty** of punishment is usually measured in terms of the number of offences known to the police that result in arrest. **Severity** is often measured in terms of the average length of a prison sentence served for various crimes. The aim of these studies is to determine whether areas with a higher certainty and severity of punishment have lower crime rates. But those studies which examined changes in the penal system during the time periods or compared the crime rate in countries differing in the certainty and the severity of punishment have been criticized. In fact contrary to what was supposed by criminologists supporting Deterrence Theory, the data suggests that the assumption that people are aware of the degree of certainty and severity of punishment is often wrong.

Furthermore a range of studies have attempted to determine whether the certainty and severity of punishment are related to criminal behaviour in the general population. The results of these studies are numerous and often contradictory. Generally it is assumed that **certainty of punishment** is the most important factor in reducing crime, even if only by a moderate amount and only in some circumstances, these circumstances being the time and place in which the

punishment was administered. In fact it seems that people have little perception of the certainty of a punishment if this punishment was administered outside of the community or many years ago. Personal experience of crime such as knowing someone like a family member, friends, neighbours and co-workers who have been punished for a crime can also greatly affect one's perception of the certainty of punishment. On the contrary, the **severity of punishment** may be less important than the certainty of punishment, with most studies suggesting that changes in the severity of punishment have little or no effect on crime (Cullen and Agnew, 2003; p.266). As stated above, research on deterrence theory focuses on the factors that condition the effect of formal sanctions on offending. A most recent contribution to this study is given by Matthews and Agnew (2008) who focused their research on an important but neglected conditioning variable: association with delinquent peers. These authors had examined whether the effect of perceived certainty of punishment on offending is conditioned by the individual's social environment, specifically the individual's level of association with delinquent peers. This conditioning effect of delinquent peer association was examined by Matthews and Agnew with data from the "Youths and Deterrence Survey", using longitudinal data from a sample of high school students. The authors found that perceived certainty only predicts offending among youth with none or few delinquent peers (see Matthews and Agnew, 2008; p.92).

The focus on delinquent peers is due to the fact that, other than prior offending, it seems to be the major predictor of offending. Furthermore association with delinquent peers reduces the deterrent effect of sanctions in several ways. Individuals with a high number of delinquent peers are more likely to be rewarded for engaging in crime and be sanctioned for not engaging in crime by a member of the group, will view the consequences of detection as less threatening. The perceived certainty of detection would be temporarily reduced and they will give less thought to the likelihood of detection (Matthews and Agnew, 2008; p.97). As a consequence, individuals with delinquent peers may engage in crime even though they generally believe that the certainty of detection is high. However, as the authors stated in their paper published in 2008 *Extending Deterrence Theory: Do Delinquent Peers Condition the Relationship between Perceptions of Getting*

*Caught and Offending?* the results of which indicated that in most cases, the perceived certainty of punishment deters subsequent offending only among those without significant delinquent peers are not extensible on other kind of population because the sample was composed only of high school students. It may also be that the conditioning relationship Matthews and Agnew found only holds for high school students because of the importance of peers during this time.

Thus, it is lastly important to study the factors affecting perception of the certainty of punishment. As stated by Stafford and Warr (cited in Cullen and Agnew, 2003; p.266) the studies on deterrence must also examine: 1) the individual's direct and indirect experiences with punishment, that is they themselves have been punished or they are aware of others who have been punished; 2) the individual's direct and indirect experiences with punishment avoidance, that is they have avoided punishment or they are aware of others who have avoided punishment for crimes they have committed. Such research will not only advance the understanding of the causes of crime, but may also help policy makers respond to crime more effectively.

## **2.2 The Positive School of Criminology**

The theory presented in this chapter is quite different from the Classical ones, because it comes from a different School of thought. This is the Positive School of criminology, the second approach in the study of crime. Its scholars focus on the study of the criminal and not the punishment. This school emerged in the late Nineteenth century in opposition to the harshness of the Classical school, as well as in response to the lack of concern for the causes of criminal behaviour. We will start this chapter by discussing the reason for the decline of the Classical thought and the subsequent rise of the Positive School (sect. 2.2.1). Further, the first theory of this new approach elaborated by Lombroso and other scholars is presented (sect. 2.2.2).

### **2.2.1 Lombroso and the Italian Positive School**

Although the Classical theory of Beccaria was the dominant theory on crime for close to a century, it came under heavy attack in the late 1800s, while the bio anthropological approach to the study of crime had a growing success. One of the reasons why the Classical theory lost consensus was increasing criminality in spite of changes in the legal system inspired by the Classical principles of crime. There was also some evidence that previously punished offenders were more likely to continue offending, and high recidivism among inmates produced some doubts about the presumed effectiveness of the legal system recommended by the Classical school. Further, studies in the discipline of biological sciences, suggested an image of criminals contrary to that theorized by scholars of the Classical school. Lombroso's work in particular, drawing on Darwin's evolutionary theory, challenged the classical idea of the offender as a rational, self-interested person who chooses freely to engage in crime.

Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909) together with Enrico Ferri (1856-1928) and Raffaele Garofalo (1852-1934) is considered a leader and founder of the Italian Positive School. This school of thought came into being in Italy during the end of nineteenth century, with the publication of *The criminal man* (1876) by Lombroso, considered the most emblematic work of this approach. The Italian Positive School found itself in the cultural movement of philosophical positivism and therefore

aimed to apply the methods of science to explain crime. Even if it is a rather widely held opinion that the Italian positivists had introduced the scientific method on the study of criminality, as Lombroso is usually considered the pioneer in the empirical research in this field, they had been preceded by Adolphe Quetelet (1796-1874) and André-Michel Guerry (1802-1866), the so-called moral statisticians, who were the first to employ quantitative techniques on the study of the phenomenon of crime fifty years before him<sup>8</sup>. But surely, the distinct feature of the Positive school is the defence of revolutionary idea that crime is biologically determined, and that consequently, its study has to focus on the criminal's innate personality. A criminal is a disturbed person, and the criminologist has to be creative in locating and reading the symptoms. For the Positive school of criminology, criminality would be reduced through the rehabilitation of offenders, and punishment should go toward this purpose, that is, fitting the criminal and not the crime.

### ***2.2.2 The Born Criminal and Lombroso's Theory of Atavism***

The best representative of this school is Cesare Lombroso, who helped lay down the foundation of positive approach to the study of crime. Lombroso was a physician and psychiatrist, best known for his theory of the "born criminal", a dangerous individual marked by what he called "anomalies", both physical and psychological. For Lombroso, these anomalies resembled the traits of primitive peoples, and this was considered evidence that the most dangerous criminals were atavistic throwbacks on the evolutionary scale.

Lombroso first presented his theory on crime in 1876 with *The criminal man*, and in its initial edition he argued that criminals were biologically different from other individuals. They were people who have not followed the normal development of mankind, and so have not completely evolved from their prehistoric origins. Thus, in his opinion, it is their primitive or savage state that compels them to engage in crime. Lombroso based his theory on extensive examinations of criminals and non-criminals carried out while he was working as a doctor both in the military and in an asylum. As a result of these examinations, he developed a list of traits that could be used to determine whether a person is a "born criminal". In

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<sup>8</sup> For an exam of the largely unacknowledged contribution of Adolphe Quetelet (1796-1874) to the origins of positivist criminology, see Beirne, P.(1987).

fact, through his study, Lombroso found anomalies characterizing the person who had committed an offence, which distinguished him from another individual who had committed no crime. These anomalies drew Lombroso's attention to the possibility that criminal tendencies are of atavistic origin, because these characteristics that he had frequently seen in criminals, are common to apes. Some of these characteristics indicated by the Italian doctor are large jaws, strong canine teeth, prominent cheekbones, strongly developed orbital arches, swollen or protruding lips, an arm span greater than the individual's height excessive wrinkling, and a prehensile foot (Cullen and Agnew, 2003; p.18). Lombroso's initial ideas and research were heavily criticised in his own lifetime. His colleagues Ferri and Garofalo, stressed the idea that crime has many causes, and that it is important to look at psychological and social causes as well as biological ones (Clive and Clive, 2001; p. 21). Thus, even if Lombroso's approach towards the study of crime remained with a prevalent bio-anthropological root, he increasingly came to recognize that environmental factors also play an important role in the causes of crime, and in his later work, argued that there were several different types of criminals, with the "born criminal"- someone pre-destined for criminal behaviour due to his physical configuration- making up only about one third of all criminals. But though inferior in numbers, he states the "born criminals" constitute the most important part of the whole criminal population because the sort of crimes committed by them are of a peculiarly harmful nature, while the other two thirds are composed of minor offenders, occasional and habitual criminals, who do not show such a marked degree of difference from the general population. To this extent Lombroso found that "born criminals" only made up a small percentage of offenders and he was forced to complete his theory with an appeal to other factors, such as environmental factors, which have an influence on crime. Even if in one of the last editions of Lombroso's work he mentioned some other factors that could persuade people to offend, it was Ferri that elaborated on this to create a multi-factorial theory of crime. Ferri's starting point was that in every criminal there exists a biologically abnormal person. Nevertheless, while the biological abnormality of the "born criminal" is a major aspect in understanding his criminal behaviour, in other criminals, this biological abnormality is just a predisposition

that will only be realized in disadvantageous environmental factors. These environmental factors such as poverty and low education levels are critical in the cases in which the criminal is not a “born criminal”. In other words, if a person has not a biological abnormality, he would offend in disadvantageous environmental factors; otherwise, he may not offend at all. But in the case of the “born criminal”, even without disadvantageous environmental factors, he will offend. Ferri formulated this theory through the use of official data on criminality from the criminal statistics. However this theory was never evaluated because he did not explain what these biological factors were that make an individual more likely to commit a crime. Moreover, Ferri’s Multi-factorial theory can not be considered a deterministic theory of crime because it does not indicate what the sufficient environmental conditions are that lead people to commit crime (Cid Moliné and Larrauri Pijoan, 2007; p. 66).

Neither Lombroso’s nor Ferri’s theories of crime have scientific value today because empirical evidences were not found with the application of the current standards by recent scholars.

Lombroso’s theories, as well as other early biological theories was rather simplistic: they pointed to gross biological features that were said to distinguish criminals from non-criminals, and they argued that biological factors often lead directly to crime. But these statements never had scientific support because Lombroso did not systematically employ a control group of non-criminals in order to compare it with the criminals. These theories were rigorously evaluated during the early to mid 1900s, with researchers comparing the traits of criminals to those of carefully matched samples of non-criminals (similar in age, class, race, and so on to the criminals being studied). Such comparisons provided little support for the early biological theories. In any case, the Positive school had great influences in many penal systems. Some changes were introduced based on the idea that offenders were unable to choose right from wrong due to their biological abnormalities. In fact, the Positive School did not hold the individual responsible for crime, since they argued criminals are compelled by forces beyond their control. The shift from individual to social responsibility for crime has also resulted in the rise of Juvenile Courts, indeterminate sentences, probation, parole, education and

recreation in prisons, and wider attempts at the social control of crime. In the past, the Lombrosian theory on crime was also used by the Nazis and the Fascists to justify racist policies, and this, along with a concern for the implication of such policies as selective breeding and sterilization, led to the decline of biological theories on crime. There has, however, been a recent resurgence of interest in such theories. These new biological theories<sup>9</sup>, due to advanced techniques and recent discoveries are much more sophisticated than Lombroso's theory. They consider a range of biological factors, argue that these factors increase the likelihood that individuals will develop trait conducive to crime, and recognize that the impact of biological factors on crime is influenced by the social environment of the offenders. Nevertheless not one of these new biological theories states that biological factors lead directly to crime.

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<sup>9</sup> For an overview on the recent biological theory of crime, see the *Individual Traits and Crime*, Part II of: Cullen, Francis T. and Agnew R. (2003).

## **2.3 Social Structure Theories of Crime Causation**

In the following section we will give an overview of the dominant approach in the United States from the early twentieth century for about half a century. Until then, the criminological field was dominated by sociologists and sociological thought, which had challenged the hypotheses formulated by the scholars of both the Classical and Positive schools. The sociological approach emphasized environment and social interaction as causal factors in the study of crime and delinquency, rather than individual characteristics such as rationality or biological factors.

Initially, section 2.3.1, will discuss the Chicago School and the first Ecological Study carried out by Park and Burgess.

Further, the most important criminological analysis of Park and Burgess's ideas are discussed. In particular, section 2.3.2 expands on the Social Disorganization theory developed first by Shaw and McKay, while in section 2.3.3 an overview is given of the most recent revitalizations of the Social Disorganization Theory.

### ***2.3.1 The Chicago School and the Ecological Theory of Crime***

The Ecological approach on the study of crime came into being in America in the early 1900s, thanks to the Department of Sociology's scholars at the University of Chicago. This new approach identified the relationship between criminality and the geographical and social factors.

The Chicago School of Sociology studies the individual as a social being whose behaviour is conditioned by the kind of social and urban environment surrounding him. This new idea challenged the Classical theory with its belief in a rational and self interested criminal as well as theories with a bio-anthropological root, such as the Lombroso assumption of the "born criminal" and Hooton's<sup>10</sup> most recent studies. Conversely to what was supposed by the Classical school, the Ecological theories assume that the individual is a social being, and not just a rational one;

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<sup>10</sup>Ernest A. Hooton is an anthropologist of Harvard. In the 1939 he not only claimed that "criminals are organically inferior", but also proposed that the physical, mental and moral characteristics considered the causes of criminal behaviour must be "extirpate". Yet in the 1932 Hooton anticipated his belief on the criminality with bio-anthropological root. For a deepen study we refer to: Hooton, Ernest. A. (1932).

moreover the criminal does not differ from those who have not offended, contrary to what Lombroso and other such authors believed.

In the early twentieth century it was a widespread belief that an individual was endowed with deviant characteristics that determined their criminal behaviour. However the emerging studies of the Chicago School have influenced the study of crime right up to the present day. The main assumption of this new approach is that individuals are not simply born “good” or “bad” but that they are influenced by the people, social situations and other external forces that surround them.

The authors of the Chicago School of sociology criticized the criminal anthropologists like Lombroso and Hooton for ignoring the large changes that were occurring in society. Indeed from the Ecological theorists’ viewpoint the causes of crime find their root in the way the physical environment in which individuals live and interact on a social level creates the conditions for criminal and non-criminal behaviour. The Ecological theories maintain that the human being has to be studied in his environment, in particular in the city environment, and his behaviour can be explained only in the context of the urban area in which he lives.

The first Ecological studies were carried out in Chicago. Chicago was the most representative of the American cities which were rapidly developing: moreover, it symbolized the transformation occurring in the “new continent”. In fact, the United States was rapidly moving into the 1900s, transforming itself from a country characterized by small and stable farming communities into a land dominated by crowded cities which were centred on rapidly expanding industries and whose residents were constantly in a state of flux. Chicago was one of these cities, in which the social change happened so rapidly that it provoked a tumultuous situation, characterized by poverty and disorganization. Waves of destitute immigrants arrived in the city from the south and from Europe. These newcomers would typically settle near to the factories in which they had secured a job and where letting a house was not too expensive. Life was hard due to long hours spent at work in tiresome factory conditions. Furthermore, they lived in overcrowded tenements dirtied by industrial pollution, and this situation was such as to provoke both a physical and mental dissatisfaction.

Given these circumstances, it is not surprising that the scholars of the Chicago School believed that the key to understanding crime lay not in studying the traits of individuals, but in the social environment in which the individuals live. In their opinion the vast changes which occurred in the city were closely related to the causes of crime. A comprehension of the origins of criminal conduct and how to prevent this depended on a careful study of the traits in the neighbourhoods as well as the forces outside of an individual such as the environment that prompted him to break the law.

The most important works of the Chicago School were produced between the First and Second World Wars (Cid Moliné and Larrauri Pijoan, 2007; p79). Robert Park (1864-1944) and Ernest Burgess (1886-1966) were the most prominent authors. The studies carried out by Park and Burgess and other scholars of this school investigated the social consequences which derive from the rapid urban growth produced in Chicago and in the other big cities of North America as a result of industrialization. The rapid change from a rural life to an urban one was considered the main cause of the increase in criminality. Robert Park developed this viewpoint stating that whilst in a rural context there is great social control – an individual acts in a situation in which everyone is able to see him and thus can approve of or disapprove of his conduct- in an urban context the community is not able to exert such social control on its members. In a big city there is only a more abstract and impersonal control based on the law, so moral life is more likely to disintegrate, and higher rates of divorce, truancy or crime are a confirmation of this (Park, 1915; p. 595). However, the moral disintegration Park referred to, is not consistent across different areas of the city. There are zones in which the breakdown of moral values is greater or perhaps more evident, and particularly in the area that Burgess called the “zone in transition”.

Burgess is the author of the Chicago School who analyzed the way in which the city grew. To explain how cities such as Chicago developed, Ernest Burgess theorized that urban areas grow through a process of continuous expansion from their inner core toward outer areas. Industry is based at the centre of the city. Just outside of this area is the “zone in transition”, populated by newcomers - immigrants who are attracted by working in factories and inexpensive housing.

Such an area is not attractive for individuals who have enough resources to live somewhere else, because factories make it polluted, dirty and noisy. In a series of concentric circles, three more zones exist outside the inner city. Burgess called these the “zone of workingmen’s homes”, the “residential zone” and the “commuters’ zone”. These areas are settled in by people who have accumulated the resources to leave the “zone in transition”. In particular, the “zone of workingmen’s homes” is inhabited by workers in industries which have escaped from the area of deterioration, the “zone in transition<sup>11</sup>” (Burgess, 1925; pp. 50-51). Park and Burgess’s hypothesis is that in the areas of the city characterized by physical deterioration, poverty in the general population, a high transition of individuals (as the “zone in transition”), cultural heterogeneity and high criminality among adults there is less of a possibility for controlling urban society (Cid Moliné and Larrauri Pijoan, 2007; p79). But this remained just a hypothesis until 1942 when Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay published their work which verified the hypothesis that in the inner-city there is more social disorganization. These two scholars investigated the hypothesis that in more socially disorganized areas there is a higher rate of criminality. Shaw and McKay through this investigation demonstrated how crime was a normal response to the social, structural and cultural characteristics of a community.

### ***2.3.2 The Social Disorganization Theory***

Even if the Ecological perspective was set up by Park and Burgess, the most important criminological analysis of this school was realized by Shaw and McKay, in their book *Juvenile delinquency and urban areas* (1942). In this work they presented the results of the investigation they had carried out on juvenile delinquency in Chicago and in other North American cities, trying to verify the hypothesis that the most disorganized areas of the city produced a higher criminal rate. The object of their work consisted in determining if the areas of Chicago had differential rates of juvenile delinquency. If Burgess was correct, than rates of delinquency should be higher in the inner-city areas due to the coincidence of disadvantageous conditions that cause social disorganization. In fact the inner-city

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<sup>11</sup> See Burgess, Ernest W. (1925).

of Chicago was characterized by persistent poverty, rapid population growth, the culture's heterogeneity, and the mobility of individuals combined with the disruption of core social institutions such as the family. Thus, Shaw and McKay hypothesized that delinquency would be higher in these communities and lower in neighbourhoods which were richer and more stable. To verify their hypothesis they analysed how crime levels were distributed in various zones of the city. They measured crime through the number of youths referred to the juvenile court, and measuring the level of truancy and recidivism. They mapped by hand the address of each delinquent, which they then compiled to compute rates of delinquency first by census track and then by city zone (Cullen and Agnew, 2003; p.96). The results of the investigation were various. Shaw and McKay learned, as Park and Burgess had predicted, that crime rates were pronounced in the zone of transition and became progressively lower as one moved away from the inner city toward the suburbs. Another finding was that the criminal rates of the inner area did not depend on the ethnic characteristics of the residents. This was particularly remarkable because many of those neighbourhoods had undergone a great ethnic change during the time period under analysis, but their criminal rates remained almost the same. It was this last finding in particular which led Shaw and McKay to believe that it was the characteristics of the area, and not the individuals living in the area, which regulated the levels of delinquency. In addition, Shaw and McKay introduced the idea of cultural transmission. Their argument was that values are transmitted from generation to generation, and it is through this process that particular areas became established as delinquent areas despite the turnover of individuals in the area (Newburn, 2007; p. 193).

The results of Shaw and McKay's investigation suggest that social disorganization was a major cause of delinquency. They suggested that social disorganization was related to the breakdown of the social institutions in a community, such as family, schools, and so on. In fact in a socially disorganized area families are in turmoil due to separation of the parents, schools in disorder, few adult-run activities for youths, poorly attended church services and ineffectual political groups. When such a pervasive breakdown occurred, adults were unable to control youths or to stop competing forms of criminal organization from emerging

(Cullen and Agnew, 2003; p. 97). The Chicago School and in particular Shaw and McKay gave an explanation as to why juvenile crime is higher in the place in which these conditions exist. There is an “ecological” explanation and a “non-ecological” one. The non-ecological explanation is that poor individuals find it more difficult to satisfy their needs through legal means. However the Chicago School did not say that poverty is directly related to delinquency. The individual’s poverty is only correlated to criminality when it occurs in a place where ecological factors make it harder for the community to carry out its general conventional values. In such ecological conditions as wildly spread poverty among the population<sup>12</sup>, physical degradation, a transition of individuals, ethnic heterogeneity and adult delinquency, the community would be prevented from adhering to common values for three main reasons. First, there is minor social cohesion due to the incessant mobility of the individuals. The associations (e.g. cultural, sportive, and so on) realized in the different zone of the city are important because one of their functions consists in directing youths through conventional motivation. On the other hand, the associations would take place when the individuals who live in the area are not prepared to escape as soon as they get enough money to live somewhere else. A second reason is that there is a minor capacity to control deviant activities, because poverty often compels both parents to work, and thus youths are subject to minor parental supervision. Moreover they are also free from adult control due to a sense of anonymity created by constant emigration and immigration in the area. Finally, youths are more exposed to values which do not conform to social rules. In particular this may occur because adult delinquency would give a bad example to youths. So, youths who grow up surrounded by adults with non-conventional values, would learn such values instead of more conventional ones.

Summing up, the Social Disorganization Theory first developed by Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay in their book *Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas* (1942) provides an explanation to the gap in the crime rates among different areas of the same city. It assumes that the basis of criminal behaviour lies largely within

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<sup>12</sup> General poverty among the population on the contrary to individual poverty is an ecological factor because it is not the same living in an area characterized by the poverty of its citizens to living in another one in which there is a mixed economical situation. See Cid Moliné, J., Larrauri Pijoan, E. (2007).

the structural and cultural conditions of the neighbourhood. There are some ecological factors such as the general poverty of the residents, the mobility of the individuals, cultural heterogeneity, and a high rate of adult criminality which all make the occurrence of a crime more likely because they create conditions of social disorganization. Socially disorganized communities are defined as being those which do not have the capacity to regulate and to direct the behaviour and activities of their members towards more conventional values. This capacity to regulate and to control behaviour is referred to as the level of social control. When the breakdown of community control occurs, a social disorganization emerges, and so the occurrence of criminality amongst the population is more probable.

### ***2.3.3 The revival of the Social Disorganization Theory***

Although the scientific value of Shaw and McKay's work was recognized, as it was largely read by subsequent generations of criminologists, by the 1960s their theory of Social Disorganization had lost its appeal and ability to direct research. Instead, other theories, advocating a new way of thinking and identifying new questions to be answered, came to light and captured scholars' attention. More generally, ecological studies were almost abandoned for about twenty years, during which period the study of crime focused once again on the individual's delinquency instead of the general rate of criminality.

From the 1980s Shaw and McKay's disorganization perspective earned a renewed interest which continues right to the present day. In part some criminologists are reconsidering the value of the Disorganization theory because of a more general interest in the approach to the "ecology" of crime. This approach, often seen as being on the macro-level<sup>13</sup>, studies how crime rates vary by ecological units, such as neighbourhoods, cities, countries, states or nations rather than by the individual and their traits (Cullen and Agnew, 2003; p.98).

So, many years after Shaw and McKay there were other intellectuals interested in studying the characteristics of the different areas of the same city, sharing with them the belief that the neighbourhood has a great effect on human behaviour.

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<sup>13</sup> On the contrary, in the micro-level theories the concern is with identifying how characteristics of individuals (e.g. personality, how much "strain" a person feels) are related to their involvement in criminal behaviour.

However more recently sociologists interested in the study of crime have paid attention to structural factors which were ignored by the Chicago School.

In the 1980s Judith and Peter Blau<sup>14</sup> with *The cost of inequality* (1982), drew attention to the responsibility of socio-economic inequality in causing criminality. They hypothesised that violent crimes occurring in American cities were provoked by social and economic gaps between Caucasian and African-American populations. The Blaus had analyzed the data of the 125 largest American metropolitan areas, and they saw that high rates of criminal violence are found in urban areas marked by socio-economic inequality, especially racial inequality (Blau and Blau, 1982; p. 126). Moreover the Blaus found that the wide gap in wealth between African-American and Caucasian has a direct influence on violent crime. This work showed the important insights that a macro-level study could uncover in the aim of fighting criminality, and underlined the importance of public policies. Bad politics that increase racial and economic inequality could result in dramatic consequences, as with the increase of violent crimes.

On the other side of the coin, is the effect of “social homogeneity” on criminality. Initially, the scholars of the Chicago school did not investigate this factor, but in 1987 William J. Wilson in *The Truly Disadvantaged*, and later, in an important essay published in 1995, *Toward a Theory of Race, Crime and Urban Inequality*, co-authored with Robert Sampson, explained that one of the reasons for the increase in criminality in the African-American ghettos during the 1960s and 1970s was the isolation of the most disadvantaged individuals. However Wilson and Sampson (1995) do not view this social isolation as a deliberate bad choice made by the inner-city residents but rather as a result of persisting racial inequality (Cullen and Agnew, 2003; p.112). Racial inequality is the product both of conscious political decisions and of broad macro-sociological changes. We can take the permitted racial discrimination in the purchasing of a house and the relegation of minorities in public housing erected in geographically isolated areas as the political decision concerning racial inequality. Macro-sociological changes are

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<sup>14</sup> In their study, the Blaus investigated the social conditions that make violent crimes more likely to be committed them. “[...] to ask why rates of criminal violence differ from place to place or from time to time requires ascertaining which variations in social conditions are associated with the differences in crime rates”. See Blau, Judith R., Blau, Peter M. (1982).

related to the deindustrialization of urban central cities. The massive movement of jobs out of the inner city led to the mass exodus of the working and middle class from the inner city, and the increase of the underclass population -a class composed of socially marginalised individuals, especially poor, female-headed families with children- in this area. Wilson and Sampson thought that the homogenization of the poverty of the habitants is caused by an increase in social disorganization, and the breakdown of conventional values. There are many reasons for this. First of all, there would be a loss of a conventional pattern of life represented by the working individuals and the middle class in this area. A further reason is that the general unemployment and lack of the middle class in the areas of the American city would provoke a decrease in clubs and associations (e.g., cultural and sportive associations), being financed by residents' money. Thus, due to the conventional associations' great effect on the formal social control this situation would lead to a deterioration of the inner city.

Beyond a general interest in ecological research, Robert Sampson also showed the relevance of using Shaw and McKay's theory to study crime in contemporary society. In particular, in the investigation<sup>15</sup> that Sampson carried out in 1989 with W. Byron Groves, he supported Shaw and McKay's Social Disorganization theory (Cullen and Agnew, 2003; p.98). More generally, through the statistical analysis of the data of the British Crime Survey, Sampson and Groves provided persuasive evidence that the Social Disorganization perspective had a measure of validity. That is, a community marked by general poverty, the cultural heterogeneity of the population, mobility of the individuals and family disruption are socially disorganized.

While the original Social Disorganization theory had emphasised the role of formal social control, more recently criminologists have focused on the effect of informal social control on criminality. Sampson discussed such informal control widely in his works. In 1987 with *Urban Black violence: the effect of black male joblessness on crime* Sampson examined the relationships between unemployment, crime and family disruption in the African-American "underclass". The results of Sampson's investigation show that the scarcity of employed African-American men

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<sup>15</sup> For a deeper study, we refer to Sampson, Robert J., Groves, Byron W. (1989).

increases the prevalence of families headed by females in African-American neighbourhoods. In turn, family disruption seems to substantially increase the prevalence of crimes such as robbery and murder, especially by juveniles. It is taken for granted that the family plays a central and prominent role on the formal and informal social control of criminality. Sampson explained why unemployment amongst men has a great effect on the divorce rate and break down of the family, regardless of race. Sampson's study focused on African-Americans because in this period of time, the individuals more affected by criminality<sup>16</sup> were African-Americans (Sampson, 1987; p. 349). However, he strongly underlined that there is nothing inherent in the African-American culture that is conducive to crime. Rather, Sampson attributed the cause of their high crime rate to the structural link between unemployment, economic deprivation and family disruption in the urban African-American community. And the areas of the cities with higher criminality were the central urban areas, not due to the composition of the population (a higher number of African-American individuals were living there<sup>17</sup>) but because of the loss of the neighbourhood's social control. Sampson maintained that the residents had lost their ability to exercise informal social control<sup>18</sup> on the activities and behaviour of the individuals, thus in these areas crime was a more likely activity. In Sampson's opinion, the large presence of broken families, especially the prevalence of families headed by women not only affects the community's level of formal social control, but also informal social control on its members. The great amount of broken families seems to have greater effects on criminality among youths because the resources that the community needs to supervise them and involve them in wholesome activities are depleted. Thus, along with Shaw and McKay, Sampson's theory on crime is that the neighbourhood would have a higher criminal rate when it lost the capacity to regulate the conduct and suppress the criminal behaviour of its

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<sup>16</sup>The American data of the crimes used by Sampson shows that the African-American are disproportionately represented as offenders as well as victims. See Sampson, Robert J. (1987).

<sup>17</sup> Wilson had extensively explained the reasons making the African-American individuals more likely to live in the inner city and to be affected by the criminality. See Wilson, William J. (1987).

<sup>18</sup> On the relevance of the informal social control on the criminality, see also Sampson, Robert J. (1986), *Crime in the Cities: The Effects of Formal and Informal Social Control*". In Albert J. Reiss, Jr. and Michael Tonry (eds.), *Communities and Crime*, pp. 271-311. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

members. And the increased presence of single parent families makes it more likely to occur.

Another important ecological factor in the causes of criminality ignored by the original Social Disorganization theory is the area's density. Rodney Stark in the 1987 underlined its importance arguing that the large density of the neighbourhood has various consequences on the social organization of the residents. On the one hand it makes the deviated acts of an individual more visible to others, and can create the belief that such criminal behaviour is normal. Furthermore, in an over-populated zone it is easier to make contacts and to have a friendship with an offender (Cid Moliné and Larrauri Pijoan, 2007; p. 93).

Sampson and his colleagues' recent writings offer important ideas and promise to generate new lines of empirical research. Their thinking and findings reinforce the essential truth of Shaw and McKay's theory: that is, that strong communities can act against criminal behaviour while communities weakened by structural problems such as widely spread poverty, racial heterogeneity, a high rate of adult offenders and residential mobility will be fertile soil for crime to grow in.

Individuals are not isolated from external influences, but rather are enmeshed in a web of social relations that increase or decrease one's power to influence what happens in one's neighbourhood. Those who reside in isolated, impoverished and disorganized communities are likely to be exposed to conditions that might permit their criminal involvement and being less able to oppose crime when it occurs around them. Thus, they are at risk of being drawn into a criminal lifestyle on the one hand and on the other of being unable to prevent the disorder and victimization they are witnessing, if not personally experiencing.

## **2.4 Anomie/Strain Theories**

This Chapter will provide an overview of the theories on crime that attempt to explain criminality as a normal reaction in those societies –like the American one– which are anomic or disorganized. Anomie is considered as being a social situation characterized by the disruption of social cohesion or integration, with a breakdown in social control or maladjustment among the social element. Anomie theory, also referred as Strain theory, provides an explanation of the high criminal rate in American society; however it is also able to explain the root of crime in other modern industrialized societies and why these types of societies have higher crime rates than others. The chapter opens with a discussion of the Anomie theory (sect. 2.4.1) elaborated by Merton in 1938. According to Merton’s Anomie theory the lack of social regulation in such societies as the American one, leads to an increase in criminal behaviour among the population.

Furthermore, other sections will discuss the subsequent elaborations and integrations of the Anomie theory by other authors such as Cohen (sect. 2.4.2) Cloward and Ohlin (sect. 2.4.3), Agnew (sect. 2.4.4) and Messner and Rosenfeld (sect. 2.4.5).

### **2.4.1 Merton’s Anomie Theory**

The Anomie theory was developed by Robert Merton (1910-2003) in *Social Structure and Anomie*, a paper published in 1938, considered as the most referred to paper in the history of criminology (Cid Moliné and Larrauri Pijoan, 2007; p.125). He was inspired by the work of Emile Durkheim, one of the founders of sociology. Durkheim used the term Anomie in his study of suicide, particularly referring to Anomie as the state of a lack of social regulation in modern society. This situation of anomie in society is considered by Durkheim as one condition that promotes higher rates of suicide (Akers, 1999; p.119). From Merton’s point of view Anomie is the form that societal incoherence takes when there is no equilibrium between valued cultural goals and legitimate societal means to attain those goals.

Merton suggested that there are certain elements of social and cultural structures that generate the circumstances in which the violation of social codes constitutes a cultural oriented, even if not approved, response. Among these elements, two have

a greater effect on the individual's decision to engage in criminal activities. The first element consists of culturally defined goals, purposes and interests. It includes a frame of reference for universal aspiration, and through the attainment of such goals the individual gains prestige. The second part of the social and cultural structure concerns the institutionally accepted modes of achieving these goals (Merton, 1938; p. 672). This phase defines, regulates and controls the acceptable modes of achieving socially desirable ends.

For Merton crime will rise when there is a lack of balance between “culturally approved goals” and “institutionally approved means of achieving these goals”. An equal emphasis on both parts of the social structure permits the stability of a society. On the contrary, whenever the emphasis becomes unbalanced with more attention on the goals and less on the means, society becomes unsettled with the individual pressured by the necessity to achieve these ends, regardless of the lack of legal means available.

In Merton's opinion, the higher crime rate in American society is explained by the relative emphasis that this society puts on goals, such as monetary success, and the low relative emphasis that is put on the norms or rules for the legitimate means for attaining these goals, such as education and hard work. That is, the means for attaining socially accepted and valued goals are subject to less regulation, and this lack is likely to lead the individual to substitute legitimate channels for illegitimate ones when the former is not available to him. Culturally defined goals such as wealth and success have a high importance for individuals because everyone is socially motivated towards this achievement. Competitiveness and success are glorified by almost all institutions in society: they are encouraged by public authorities, taught in schools and glamorized by the media (Akers, 1999, p.120). In contemporary society an individual's worth is often judged by material and monetary success. But are legitimate channels as valued as culturally accepted goals? In Merton's opinion American society values the right and proper way of achieving goals less than the goals themselves. And this is the reason, for Merton, that in such societies the more likely response for the individual is to try to gain American values (e.g. acquiring success, getting ahead and getting money) at any cost, including engaging in criminal activities. While, as pointed out above, all

Americans, whatever the social and economical status, are put under pressure to realise ambitions like power, wealth and so on, a large part of the population is prevented from reaching them. Those who came from a lower class, those who were born in minority groups or a disadvantaged neighbourhood, in reality do not have an equal access to the legitimate opportunity that the American Dream proposes.

In modern and industrialized societies, thus, the individual is subject to strain. In this theory, strain is the situation in which individuals are pressured twofold: pressure towards culturally accepted ends and pressure that pushes them away from legal channels to attain these goals.

Merton identified five “modes of adaptation” to the strain experienced by the individuals:

1. *Conformity*: The acceptance of both socially fixed ends and legal institutionalized means. One would try to gain the goods and goals within the conventional means available to him. This is the most common response.
2. *Innovation*: This is the most common deviant response, and concerns the acceptance of goals and the use of illegal means. The individual maintains a high commitment to the ends but takes advantage of illegitimate channels.
3. *Ritualism*: Is a deviate reaction but not a criminal one. The individual is not interested in obtaining the goals that the society appreciates and values but he conforms and respects the legal means.
4. *Retreatism*: This response to strain is typical of alcoholics, drug addicts, vagrants and the severely ill. These individuals give up their dreams and aspirations. This represents a deviate response because the individuals will not try anymore to achieve the culturally defined goals through legal or illegal means.
5. *Rebellion*: This is, as with the former, a deviate reaction. Both social goals and institutionalized means are refused because the individuals do not approve of the collective social values. This kind of reaction is likely to lead directly to a rejection of the system altogether, both the means and the ends, and replacement with a new one. This case can lead to a violent overthrow of the system (See Akers, 1999, p.121).

Generally, criminal behaviour is concentrated in the innovatory reaction. And innovation is the non-conformist response more likely to be taken up by members of the lower class due to the higher level of strain experienced by these individuals. Merton maintains that this strain is the product of the American society and of the illusion of equality and wealth for all and its cruel reality, which is the existing inequality of opportunities to realize that dream.

Anomie/Strain theory, as developed by Merton in 1938, and later enriched by Cohen (1955) and Cloward and Ohlin (1960) came under heavy attack during the late 1960s and 1970s and experienced a decline due to the fact that the empirical studies failed to provide support for the theory (see Cullen and Agnew, 2003 and Cid Moliné and Larrauri Pijoan, 2007). Believing that the individual who wants to attain such goals as monetary success or middle-class status, but with little possibility of this through legitimate channels (e.g. higher education, a well paid job and so on) and so is likely to engage in criminal acts, the research was focused on examining the disjunction between aspirations and expectations. The most delinquent were those who had lower aspirations – who had no goals to aspire to – as well as lower expectations – they expected to get little in their life. Further contrary evidence to the Anomie theory emerged from the self-report studies during the 1960s and the 1970s. These enquiries concerning crime were revealed by the individuals, unless they were never discovered and punished, show that delinquency in the middle class was quite common, and perhaps as diffused as lower-class delinquency. Cullen and Agnew (2003) suggested that probably there are better ways to test the Anomie theory, and that unfortunately before new empirical evidence it is necessary to conclude that the Anomie theory is not an effective theory to explain the root of criminal behaviour (See Agnew, 1985; Cullen and Agnew, 2003).

#### **2.4.2 Cohen: Status Deprivation and Delinquent Subculture**

Albert K. Cohen developed the Anomie theory in *Delinquent boys. The culture of the gang* (1955) where he focused on juvenile delinquency, providing his own explanation as to the origins of the violent subculture by drawing on Merton. Cohen

argued that delinquency is ultimately caused by obstacles that prevent the attainment of goals, experienced largely by individuals from disadvantaged classes.

In his studies Cohen found that among lower-class boys there was a delinquent subculture, a way of life characterised by violence and aggressive behaviour and his studies were concerned with explaining why a delinquent subculture exists in the first place.

Cohen's theory is considered a version of the Anomie theory because it perceives the blocked goal as producing deviant behaviour through induced frustration. However, rather than the inability to achieve monetary success, in Cohen's point of view, it is the inability to gain middle-class status and the acceptance of conventional society that produced "strain"- a sort of negative emotional state due to the obstacles put in their way.

Cohen argues that lower class adolescents, males in particular, experience a "status frustration" because society asks them a series of attitudes and skills typical of the middle class. On the other hand, they are unable to satisfy this request in the same way as young people with middle-class parents, because they have not been taught good and appropriate manners, non-aggressive attitudes and behaviour, attention to their grades, studying, active participation in school activities and other attitudes through which the young gain status and approval in school and among their peers (Akers, 1999, p.122). Education taught the young to strive for social status through academic achievement but, when most of the working class failed, this promoted "status frustration" or reaction formation, inverting middle-class values to strike back at the system that had let them down.

Thus, according to Cohen, the delinquent subculture is a response to this frustration, and it represents a solution to the "problem of adjustment". As stated above, Cohen differs from Merton by arguing that the major problem of adjustment faced by lower-class boys is not the inability to achieve the "culturally defined goals", but their inability to achieve middle-class status. When there are more individuals lacking the criteria of this status -the standards or the norms applied by society to evaluate people- they can respond by associating with one another and establishing other values and norms, contrary the unreachable ones. The criteria for acceptability found in this subculture can be met by lower-class boys in order to

gain approval and respect in delinquent gangs by engaging in deviant and criminal activities and by adhering to particular values, in opposition to conventional standards. However, Cohen, along with other “Anomie/Strain” theorists, is careful to emphasise that only the lower class strained individuals will engage in criminal activities. In particular, Cohen hypothesises that the deviate and criminal response is likely to take place when the lower-class youngsters in a school tend to compare themselves with other adolescents of a middle-higher class. In fact, it is argued that when the individual strives for a better social status but the outcome is hopeless, he may respond by refusing this social status and its values, and finding protection in the gangs. On the contrary, if a young boy from a disadvantaged class identifies himself with other youngsters of the same cultural origins, he would not experience the misalignment between his aspirations and his opportunities (Cid Moliné and Larrauri Pijoan, 2007; p.133).

### ***2.4.3 The Cloward and Ohlin Contribution to the Merton’s Theory***

Like Cohen, Richard Cloward and Lloid Ohlin attempted to explain the origin and content of delinquent subcultures common among lower-class males in urban areas. They presented shortly after Cohen their Differential Opportunity theory in the *Delinquency and opportunity. A theory of delinquent gangs* (1960). However, Cloward and Ohlin differ from Cohen for several reasons, first on the supposed source of “strain”; moreover they divided and differentiated the delinquent subculture into three categories.

In agreement with Merton, Cloward and Ohlin believed that such subcultures were a response of the lower class to the problem of the adjustment concerned with achieving material success. They also differ from Cohen in their argument that there are three distinct types of delinquent subcultures:

- a. criminal** subcultures around theft;
- b. conflict** subculture oriented around fighting;
- c. retreatist** subculture oriented around drug use<sup>19</sup> (Cullen and Agnew, 2003; p.191).

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<sup>19</sup> The retreatist subculture is typically shared among individuals who want an escape from a society that prohibited them from realising their desires. These individuals thus decide to distort the reality through the use of drugs, and in these they find a momentary relief.

Cloward and Ohlin provide a description of the conditions that lead the “strained” individuals to form delinquent subculture. From their viewpoint, individuals that face greater obstacles in attaining socially approved goals through legal channels (e.g. a well paid job) are likely to assume criminal behaviour if they first form or join a delinquent subculture whose values are conducive to crime. In fact, in order to engage in criminal activities the individuals need to have direct access and learn the techniques of crime<sup>20</sup> (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960, cited in Cullen and Agnew, 2003; p.196). Moreover, the individuals must be faced with a problem of adjustment that threatens activities and investments which are significant in their psychological and social economy and that have great significance for them. Further, the problem of adjustment is supposed to be more crucial if it is relatively permanent rather than transitory, and if it is perceived as by the individual.

#### ***2.4.4 Agnew’s General Strain Theory***

Due to the decline of the Anomie theory which occurred during the end of the 1970s and 1980s, Robert Agnew sought to elaborate new ideas able to revitalise the Mertonian theory. Drawing essentially on this theory, but with a particular effort to avoid the mistakes which occurred in Merton’s work as well as other subsequent scholars of the Anomie theory, Agnew developed a more general theory focusing upon adolescent delinquency and drug use. On the one hand, Agnew agrees with the part of the original Anomie theory that explains the deviant and delinquent behaviours as likely responses to a situation of frustration generated from the disequilibrium of inspirations and expectations; on the other hand, the author of the General strain theory sees the Anomie theory as incomplete because, with the exception of the lack of monetary success and the failure of other “American Dreams”, it does not contemplate other sources of frustration. Conversely, Agnew’s extension and elaboration of the Strain theory involves the identification of two types of “strain”, pressures or obstacle, over and above the central problem of

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<sup>20</sup> In arguing that the criminal behaviour depends on the possibility of access to an environment characterized by the existence of a criminal subculture for the availability of people willing to transmit their knowledge on the techniques of crime, Cloward and Ohlin take for granted the Sutherland’s Differential Association theory, by which they were inspired. See Cid Moliné, J., Larrauri Pijoan, E. (2007), p.134.

failing to achieve one's personal objectives. The first is supposed to arise from the individual's loss of positively valued stimuli, such as privileges, opportunities and relationships. To this extent, Agnew's idea is quite similar to Merton's original Anomie. However Agnew added the hypothesis that a second source of frustration derives from the existing or anticipated presentation of negative or noxious stimuli, such as abusive relationships at home or at work (Newburn, 2007; p. 181). Deviant behaviour, such as delinquency and drug use, in Agnew's opinion, is an adaptive response to the pressures that negatively affect the individual's emotional state. However this is not a deterministic vision of crime, because it is also argued that the likelihood of deviant adaptation may be offset by the existence of support from other sources, the availability of alternative goals, and personal characteristics such as high levels of self-control and the threat of undesirable consequences.

Alongside this, Agnew's General strain theory identifies a number of circumstances and factors that increase the likelihood that obstacles or negative experiences lead an individual to commit a crime. In fact, when the strain is perceived as unjust or is high in magnitude, the likelihood of the individual offending increases. We can take being made redundant as an example: the employee object to a redundancy not determined by bad behaviour may be angrier than a person who had been made redundant because he did not accomplish his duties as a good employee through his own fault. However both hypothetical employees would be more likely to respond with deviant behaviour when their state of unemployment continues for a long time due to a high rate of unemployment among the general population (this last hypothesis represents an example of the magnitude of strain). Agnew highlighted other situations which are more likely to lead to a deviant response. These are cases of strain caused or associated with low levels of social control, and where the strain creates pressure to engage in criminal behaviour – in such cases the victim of a criminal act, such as bank fraud, is pressured to desire revenge, like killing those guilty of personal economic damage. As with the other circumstances and even more problematically, is the situation in which the individual experiences chronic or repeated stress, such as systematic unequal treatment due to racial discrimination. In fact, Agnew states that this situation, which leads to the development of negative emotional traits such as

anger, depression, fear and frustration, may be considered as conducive to crime. So, according to Agnew, delinquency or deviation is a likely response in the strained individual because it is seen as a possible solution to a hopeless situation or personal emotive state. However Agnew does not affirm that all the individuals in the situations mentioned above would engage in a deviant or delinquent act. In fact, there are other legal ways to manage the factors leading to strain, such as reduction of aspirations, minimizing the value of the ends, learning to tolerate and to accept frustration. Yet, when the individual sees the deviation as reinforced by his social environment, the deviant or delinquent response to the strains is the more likely response that the individual will adopt to cope with the strain (Cid Moliné and Larrauri Pijoan, 2007; p.145).

#### ***2.4.5 Institutional-Anomie Theory***

Messner and Rosenfeld's theory (1994) is yet another attempt to extend the Anomie theory: in developing their Institutional-Anomie theory of crime they drew heavily on Merton's theory. Like Merton, these authors argue that the higher crime rate in the United States stems from the uneven emphasis that society puts on achieving goals such as monetary success and the emphasis on the means of achieving these goals. However Messner and Rosenfeld go on to argue that the American Dream<sup>21</sup> is only a part of the explanation for the higher crime rate in American society. Apart from the cultural emphasis on goals like wealth, there is another characteristic of the American society: the dominant role of the economy on the institutional structure. Non-economic goals and roles are devalued, perhaps due to the fact that such economic rules have penetrated other institutions such as schools, the family and the political system, thus conforming to these norms. As a result, these non-economic institutions are less able to effectively socialize or train individuals and to effectively sanction deviant behaviours.

Research testing the institutional-anomie theory aims to verify if in societies in which the non-economical institutions are stronger than the economical ones there is a lower criminal rate than in a society in which the economical institutions dominate the family, schools and the political system. The data suggest that the

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<sup>21</sup> With the term of *American Dream* they referred to the uncontrolled pursuit of monetary success.

ideas of the institutional-anomie theory are right, the criminal rate being lower in these societies not being dominated by the economy, but characterized instead by the strong role of the family, education and political system.

Further, the data suggest that in these societies and states the effect of economic stressors on crime is lower. In particular poverty and higher rates of income inequality have a lower effect on crime rates in an area where welfare spending is higher and non-economic institutions such as the family and religion are stronger. However, there remain other aspects of the Institutional-Anomie theory that need to be examined, i.e. the emphasis on the idea that a society with a higher criminal rate is supposed to put more emphasis on the unrestrained pursuit of money. However Messner and Rosenfeld do provide support for the central prediction of their theory (Cullen and Agnew, 2003; p.172).

## 2.5 Learning theories of Crime

In this chapter we will give an overview of the major Learning theories developed in sociology. The Learning theories are concerned on the belief that criminal behaviour is learned through social interaction. Sutherland's Differential Association theory, considered the most influential theory in this field, is discussed in section 2.5.1. We will conclude this chapter with a reformulation and an extension of Sutherland's theory, the Akers' Social Learning theory (sect. 2.5.2).

### 2.5.1 *Differential Association Theory*

The Differential Association Theory is considered the first and most prominent of the micro-level learning theories -the sort of theories that attempt to explain how individuals learn to engage in a criminal activity. Edwin Sutherland (1883-1950) proposed the Differential Association theory in the first editions of his criminology textbook *Principles of Criminology* (1934, 1939), publishing the final version in the 1947 edition. Before Sutherland developed the Differential Association theory, crime was usually explained in terms of multiple factors, such as mental disorder, social class, a broken family, age, race and urban or rural location. The effort to explain how these factors influence the behaviour of the individual, led Sutherland to elaborate on the theory of Differential Association. Sutherland's theory is presented in the form of nine prepositions that can be summarised as:

1. Criminal behavior is learned.
2. Criminal behavior is learned in interaction with other persons in a process of communication.
3. The principal part of the learning of criminal behaviour occurs within intimate personal groups.
4. When criminal behaviour is learned, the learning includes (a) techniques of committing the crime, which are sometimes very complicated, sometimes very simple; (b) the specific direction of motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes.
5. The specific direction of motives and drives is learned from definitions of the legal codes as favorable or unfavorable.
6. A person becomes delinquent because of an excess of definitions favorable to violation of law over definitions unfavorable to violation of the law. This is the principle of differential association.

7. Differential associations may vary in frequency, duration, priority, and intensity.
8. The process of learning criminal behavior by association with criminal and anti-criminal patterns involves all of the mechanisms that are involved in any other learning.
9. While criminal behavior is an expression of general needs and values, it is not explained by those needs and values, since non-criminal behavior is an expression of the same needs and values. Thieves generally steal in order to secure money, but likewise honest laborers work in order to secure money, and so on (Newburn, 2007; p. 194).

The central idea of the Differential Association theory is that criminal behaviour is learned through interaction with others, and that the greatest influence on behaviour comes from individuals closest to us, such as friends and family. Through interacting with others, the individual learns the techniques necessary for committing crime and the favourable and unfavourable definitions - the motives, drives, rationalizations and the attitudes towards the violation of the law. Sutherland maintains that if the favourable definitions to the violation of the law are in excess of the unfavourable definitions, then the individual would become a criminal. According to Sutherland, factors such as social class, a broken family, age and race influence crime because they affect the likelihood that the individuals will associate with others who present conditions favourable to committing the crime. In fact, although one can learn favourable definition to crime from both criminal and law-abiding individuals, the studies on the causes of crime show that one is most likely to learn such definitions from delinquent friends or criminal family members.

The theory of Differential Association was also used by Sutherland to explain “white-collar crime”, a term coined by him to indicate the violation of the law by persons of respectability and high social status in their occupation (Sutherland, cited in Newburn, 2007; p. 374). According to Sutherland, white-collar crimes are committed because they correspond to a socially accepted form to make business: the traditional businessman’s code of conduct, often does not correspond to the code of the law, thus it represents favourable conditions for violating the law. In fact, this idea is coherent with the Differential Association theory: interacting with others and in a process of communications, street criminals as well as the white-collar criminals learn the attitudes and the rationalizations that favour and support the misconduct. In the case of white-collar criminals the misconduct is related to

theft at work, fraud, corruption, and so on. The white-collar criminal, according to Sutherland, has been subject to a greater number of normative influences that support offending rather than those that reject or resist it (Newburn, 2007; p. 385). On the other hand, the few definitions favourable to conforming to the law would be cancelled out by the techniques of neutralization -widely described by Sykes and Matza (1957) - that provide a justification and the reduction of the bad feeling associated with criminal behaviour (e.g., by saying “everybody does it”, “too much law making stifles business” and so on). This neutralization of criminal behaviour carried out by the offender, in addition to little attention given to this by the legal code, the politicians and the media, makes a better field to the diffusion of criminal behaviour in business and administration, because it provides a situation in which the favourable conditions for conforming to the law are rare.

However, Sutherland was criticized for several reasons, first of all for not providing a good description of the favourable and unfavourable definitions to crime (Cullen and Agnew, 2003; p.125). Several theorists have tried to define these more precisely, with some arguing that individuals hold values that approve of crime; in other cases, it has been claimed that individuals hold values that do not directly approve of crime, but are conducive to crime, such as the seeking of excitement or thrills and the desire for quick and easy success<sup>22</sup>. More commonly, however, it is argued that individuals hold beliefs that approve of or justify criminal behaviours in certain situations while they reject and disapprove of them in others. Sykes and Matza (1957) have discussed the motivations that stand behind the individual’s decision to violate the law. These authors refute the hypothesis that delinquents unconditionally approve of crime and presented the “techniques of neutralization” that are supposed to be used by the offenders to justify their criminal behaviour after as well as before the crime occurs. In Sykes and Matza’s opinion the criminal learns the socially dominant values but cancels them out through the techniques of neutralization, fundamentally consisting of five mayor

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<sup>22</sup> In the study of the motivation that lead to a higher rate of violent crime typically amongst a certain group, such as young working class men, it emerged that these groups hold certain value conducive to crime, or that approve or justify crime in certain circumstances. The “subculture of violence” thesis developed by Anderson and Wolfgang argues that in certain groups, violence is an appropriate, even expected response, for a wide range of insults or provocations. The theories of Cohen (1955) and Cloward and Ohlin (1960) described in Section 2.4.3 also argue that certain segments of the lower class have values conducive to crime.

types: 1) the denial of responsibility (e.g. “It wasn’t my fault”, “I wasn’t to blame”); 2) the denial of injury (e.g. “No one will miss it”); 3) the denial of the victim (e.g. “They deserved it”); 4) the condemnation of the condemners (e.g. “Everyone’s at it”); 5) the appeal to higher loyalties (e.g. “I was protecting the gang’s reputation”; “My family needs this money to eat”) (see Sykes, Matza; 1957; pp. 667-669).

A second criticism of the Differential Association theory is that it fails to fully describe the process by which the crime is learned. Indeed Sutherland only says that it is learned through interaction with others. Criminologists such as Akers and others have sought to extend Sutherland’s idea, using the social learning theory in psychology, in order to explore how criminal learning is undertaken (Newburn, 2007; p. 197).

### ***2.5.2 Akers’s Social Learning Theory***

Ronald Akers tried to describe the criminal learning process in a joint work with Burgess in 1966 as in other later works drawing on several theories of learning, particularly behavioural theory and the social learning theory in psychology (Cid Moliné, Larrauri Pijoan, 2007). Akers’ theory is a reformulation and an extension of Sutherland’s theory, because it provides the specifications of the mechanisms by which the criminal behaviour is learned. Instead, as stated above, in his theory Sutherland said that criminal behaviours are learned in interaction with others, and that in this interaction the techniques as well as the conditions favourable to crime are learned, but neglected to clarify through which process the knowledge is attainment and what these definitions are. In the Social Learning theory Akers attempts to explain the process of the learning of crime. It is argued that the individual learns how to violate the law through three processes. First, individuals learn the beliefs that define crime as desirable or justified in certain situations. Second, individuals engage in crime because they are differentially reinforced for criminal behaviour. That is, they may commit crime if the reinforcement is positive, such as when one receives social approval of friends or money from a robbery. The reinforcement may also be negative, such as when the committing of a crime allows one to avoid or escape from unpleasant stimuli (e.g., friends stop labelling you as a coward until you use illegal drugs). On the contrary, individuals will cease to

offend if the reaction to the initial participation in a criminal act is negative. Third, an individual engages in crime because he is imitating the criminal behaviour of others, especially if he perceives the others' criminal behaviour as successful, or otherwise reinforced from the social approval toward them.

Social Learning theory relates to the anticipated consequences of particular actions (i.e., whether a criminal act is likely to be punished), and in his theory Akers maintains that the individual tends to do things that will not result in punishment, but in carrying out his actions he is influenced by what others do, in a process which Akers referred to as the imitation process (Newburn, 2007; p. 198).

Both the Differential Association theory and the Social Learning theory take for granted that delinquent friends cause delinquency by presenting favourable conditions for crime, by giving reinforcement to the individual's delinquent behaviour and modelling delinquency, and thus it is assumed that delinquent friends are the principal source of the learning of criminal behaviour. These theories are usually tested by examining the relationships between the delinquency and association with delinquent peers. Most studies seem to confirm the idea that the delinquent peers are the major predictor of crime: in fact, association with delinquent friends emerges as the strongest correlating factor with delinquency (Cullen and Agnew, 2003; p.126).

## **2.6 Control Theories**

In the previous part of this work we have illustrated some of the theories on crime interested in finding the root of mankind's criminal behaviour, and so explaining it. Now we will consider a rather different point of view, that of the Control theory, an approach to the study of the crime that takes for granted the existing propensity of criminal behaviour. Instead of asking why people deviate from their social roles, the Control theorists are interested in explaining why the individual conforms, given that criminal behaviour is more rational because it permits a fairly rapid gratification of desires.

Control theory became popular within criminology in the late 1950s and 1960s. The earliest known control theories were presented by Reiss in 1951, who argued that delinquency was the result of a failure of personal and social control, and by Toby in 1957, who introduced the concept of a "stake in conformity"- the individuals who do not engage in criminal activities are those who have more to lose by breaking the law. However, in this chapter we will give an overview only of the most popular authors of this innovative approach: Reckless, who elaborated on the Containment Theory, (sect. 2.6.1) and Hirschi, who initially elaborated on the Social bond theory and later his General theory of crime, also known as the *Self-control theory* (sect. 2.6.2) jointly with Gottfredson.

### ***2.6.1 Containment Theory***

Walter Reckless in 1961 argued that the increase in the complex form of social organization causes the joint problems of containment of the human will and society's need to control this. In his studies he sought to understand why, given the opportunities and pressures towards deviating, the primary response of many individuals remained in conformity. Reckless states that there are two types of forces that influence people, with one pushing them towards crime, and the other protecting against involvement in criminal activities. This second type of force is divided into two categories: the "inner containment"- the individual's internal factors - and the "outer containment"- meaningful roles and activities and other variables such as reinforcement provided by social groups and the existence of supportive relationships. The focus of this analysis is on the inner containments. In

fact it is argued that the factors inside the individuals such as self concept, goal orientation, frustration tolerance and norm-retention, are able to prevent them from engaging in criminal activity regardless of what occurs around them, and thus regardless of outer containment (Newburn, 2007; p. 230).

The Containment theory has been much criticised. Among other criticisms, it was said that this theory is quite vague, and thus difficult to examine empirically.

### ***2.6.2 Social Bond and Self-Control Theories***

Travis Hirschi, initially via the Social bond theory - edited in 1969- and later with the Self-control theory, elaborated in 1990 with Gottfredson, is the most well known exponent of control theory. He postulated that delinquency is intrinsic to human nature. And since individuals, due to their nature, are more inclined to deviate, the behaviour that needs to be explained is conformity to social rules. So, Hirschi's studies attempt to understand why the most widespread behaviour among individuals is conformity. In Hirschi's opinion, the individual respects the law because he feels a tie to society, thus delinquency would emerge as a possibility when this bond between the individual and the society is weakened. This bond comprises four major elements: attachment, commitment, involvement and belief (Newburn, 2007; p. 232). The core of the Social Bond theory is that the stronger each element of the social bond is, so delinquent behaviour is less likely.

1. *Attachment* corresponds to the effective ties which the youth forms to significant others, such as family, friends and school. The family environment is a source of attachment because parents act as role models and teach their children socially acceptable behaviour.
2. *Commitment* is related to aspirations of going to college and attaining a high- status job. In contrast to youths with well-defined goals, adolescents engaged in behaviour not oriented towards future goals are much more likely to be involved in delinquent behaviour;
3. *Involvement* refers to the investment of time and energy in participation in conventional activities which lead towards socially valued success and status objectives. The quality of a youth's activities and their relationship to future goals and objectives are important in preventing delinquency. Time

spent on homework, for example, is viewed as antecedent to success in attaining the educational goals which are prerequisites to high-status occupations.

4. *Belief* is the acceptance of the moral validity of the central social-value system (Hirschi, 1969:203 cited in Wiatrowski *et al*, 1981). This variation in the acceptance of social rules is central to social control theory, because it is supposed that the less the individuals feel rule-bound, the more likely they are to break the rules.

As said above, it is not Hirschi's intention to provide a solution to the question *why does the individual offend?* However he argues that a lack of internal or external control is enough to make the individual offend. By enquiring using a self-filled survey among 3,600 students, Hirschi attempted to show that his hypotheses were correct. In particular he found that the youngster who claimed to be attached to his parents had a lower probability of engaging in crime. The author also tried to verify whether an attachment to school was negatively related to crime. He found that youngsters with a better performance in school were less likely to be involved in criminal activities. As for friendship groups, Hirschi believed that having delinquent friends does not make the individual offend. Rather, he thought that it is improbable that individuals with a high *stake in conformity*- with a lot to lose by committing a crime- would have delinquent friends, and such a relationship does not guarantee an involvement in criminal activities. Despite that which was stated by the Anomie theorists, a commitment to social aspirations in Hirschi's viewpoint is not a motivation for committing a crime, but a motivation for avoiding any kind of risky activity. Indeed he found that aspirations conformed to expectations, and that youngsters with higher aspirations were less likely to offend. The third major element of the social bond- the involvement in conventional activities- was not shown in Hirschi's investigation to be able to pressure individuals away from crime. It emerged that social activities do not have an effect on crime, with individuals more involved in leisure activities just as likely to offend as those who claimed to spend a lot of time watching television. On the contrary, time spent on homework is less strongly related to involvement in deviant activities. However this evidence seems to be more closely related to the second element of the social bond-

the commitment towards social ends- than with an involvement in conventional activities. Lastly, Hirschi argues that the individual's belief in respecting the law is a factor in persuading him from engaging in crime, while the reverse is not true. That is, offenders do not have different values from law-abiding individuals, neither are they using neutralization techniques, as suggested by Sykes and Matza (sect. 6.1). Hirschi argues that there is one dominant set of values and even delinquents may recognize the validity of those values. But they may not feel bound by these values because of weakened ties to the dominant social order (see Wiatrowski *et al*, 1981 and Cid Moliné, Larrauri Pijoan, 2007).

Most recently, Gottfredson and Hirschi with their book *A General Theory of Crime* (1990) have offered a new theory drawing on Hirschi's Social Bond theory. This new theory is known as the General theory of crime because the authors maintain that its focus on the individual's self-control can explain almost all forms of criminality, and violent crime as well as fraud carried out for one's own self-interest. They link an individual's low self-control to people's vulnerability to temptations. In fact, in Gottfredson and Hirschi's opinion, internal self-control is the major element in allowing the individuals to resist all kinds of temptation, and thus also the opportunity offered by engaging in criminal activities (Gottfredson, Hirschi, 1990; p. 87). However, self-control needs to be instilled early in the course of life, otherwise it would not be able to govern personal behaviour, and remain stable in the whole individual existence. On the other hand, the authors are careful to affirm that low self-control is a sufficient factor to inhibit an individual from committing a crime, due to the fact that without the opportunity - such as the absence of vigilantes, and availability of the target, as previously stated by Cohen and Felson (sect. 2.4) - the crime can not take place. In addition, the General theory of crime made an effort to explain what the causes of low self-control are and why some people display low self-control compared to others. The answer Gottfredson and Hirschi give is that of ineffective childrearing. More particularly, those with low self-control have parents who generally fail to monitor their behaviour, are unable to recognise inappropriate behaviour and are not effective in punishing such behaviour.

To conclude, Gottfredson and Hirschi through their General Theory of crime said that the difference between the criminal and the non-criminal is the level of the individual's self-control (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990; p. 87). The ability of the individuals to resist temptations, and thus also criminal excitements, is developed in the early years of life in the family, and remains stable during life.

However they do not give an accurate explanation of this self-control, so it remains a concept which is hard to verify. That is, the idea of self-control is difficult to research, because it is unclear how the individual level of self-control should be measured. Some other critics are concerned by the General theory's assumption that low self-control remains stable across the life course and enquiry why, if this is the case, crime declines as age increases<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> For a review of the other critics on the Control theories, and among these the General theory of crime, we refer to Newburn, T. (2007).

### **3. Education and ‘Criminogenic’ Factors**

The theories on crime had a development marked by the alternation of disciplines and schools of thought characterized by different language and methodological approaches. In the first part of this work we provided a review of the most influential theories and authors in the criminological field, and through this, we have provided the principal notions concerning the study of crime. We consider now the possibility of preceding reasoning on the effect of education on criminality, and to propose a link between the ideas on criminal behaviour – these provided by the disciplines and scholars previously mentioned- and education. Indeed, nowadays more than in the past, school is responsible for the individual’s outcome due to the increased quantity of time that it takes in everyone’s life. It is in school that society’s values are taught, knowledge, skills and abilities are transmitted to individuals as well as the perception of one’s own responsibility towards social rules and institutions, with the purpose of making students better citizens. School is also the place in which the formation of interpersonal relationships is created, where strong and durable friendships are born, which may influence the individual’s behaviour and many of the important choices individual will make. School also has social functions, being one of the most important institutions in the community. Extracurricular activities, often encouraging input from the pupils’ parents, represent a meeting opportunity for families from different cultural backgrounds, facilitating social control and some form of cohesion. The current part is structured as follows.

Chapter 3.1, “Education’s Effects on the Causes of Crime” proposes a general link between education and the causes of crime advocated by criminological theories.

Chapter 3.2, “School and Youth Socialization” discusses the role of education in socialising youngsters and transmitting to them society’s values.

### **3.3 Education's Effect on the Causes of Crime**

This section discusses a number of factors that may contribute to the correlation between education and crime.

Previously, in the Part I, we have seen how various theories on crime were elaborated upon during the last three centuries sometimes exciting interest whilst at other times giving rise to controversy which precedes or favours the rise of new ideas and thoughts. The question which the investigators had sought to give a valuable and almost universally acceptable solution to is “what can we do to reduce crime?”. However, in order to answer this question, scholars have tried to understand the root and cause of crime, who are criminals and what factors favour the birth of criminal behaviour. So, the focus of the study on crime was moved from crime, then offenders and lastly, more recently, on social environment.

We have seen that the approaches that were used cover almost all fields of knowledge, ranging from economics to sociology. The theories elaborated on are many.

Beccaria and other Classical School scholars believed that offenders are rational beings that choose to commit an offence to obtain benefits, and thus it was thought that to discourage criminal behaviour it was necessary to increase the cost of offences. This involves not just the improvement of the punishment system but also the individual's information on it. However, these ideas on the criminal contrast with the thoughts of disciplines such as biology and psychology in which offenders differ from non-offenders, due to their disturbed personality or biological anomalies. On the other hand there are the theories elaborated on from the sociological perspective. These theories provide a different explanation of the problems which give rise to criminality. The individual is first of all a social being and his actions, personality and preferences are conditioned by environmental factors and the people that surround him. It was argued that socially disadvantaged areas are more likely to produce criminality due to various factors. The Chicago School came to argue that poverty, social disorganization, a lack of social control, the breakdown of conventional values and a high unemployment rate play a great role in the

causes of crime. It was also argued that crime is a result of social and economic inequality, of unemployment and economic deprivation, of inequality in the opportunity to realize the “American Dream” or of the ineffective socialization of individual, involving a lack of development of conventional values, of attachment to society and of commitment towards conventional ends. Alongside this, scholars of the Anomie-Strain theories hypothesised that crime arose when society’s institutions were unable to maintain a balance between culturally approved goals and the institutionally approved means of achieving these goals. It was said that criminality rose as a response to a hopeless situation where this is unbalanced with more attention on goals and less on the way of attaining these goals. Lastly, from the Control theory viewpoint, although it takes for granted the propensity of any individual towards crime, it is suggested that an involvement in criminal activities may be reduced by promoting the individual’s bond with society and his ability to exercise self control, an ability that enables him to resist the temptations coming from crime.

Some of these theories and ideas found strong empirical evidences, others did not or had less evidence. However, each one of these theories suggests us that education may represent an effective framework in fighting criminality due to its effects on:

1. the individual’s opportunity cost and material needs (budget constraint);
2. the individual’s preferences (utility);
3. the individual’s self-control and other personal traits (ability to maximise utility);
4. the individual’s knowledge on which he bases his behaviour (information set);
5. the individual’s bond to society and his commitment towards conventional values;
6. Social control of youngsters and, indirectly, on their family;
7. Social cohesion and the community’s overall well-being.

A large body of economic research shows that education has both significant individual and social returns, even if the individual ones are more

acknowledged than the social ones. Yet the benefits the individual gets from his education are not completely recognised either among ordinary individuals, or in the scientific community. Although most studies of the benefits of education focus on market outcomes such as labour market returns, the rewards of education go over the achievement of economic success that finding a good job involves, including non-market benefits. These last factors ones are not taken into account by individuals in their educational choice but are of great importance and of social interest because they are advantageous to the whole community (Lochner and Moretti, 2004).

There is a relative wealth of literature on the benefits of education for the individual, mainly studies linking **education** to **wage** and **unemployment rates**, but investigations there were also made into the non-market effect of education, in particular the effect of education on **health**, **civic participation** and **criminal activity** (see Riddell, 2005, and Wolfe and Haveman, 2002).

As many studies have documented, education is one of the best predictors of success in the labour market due to the fact that more educated workers earn higher wages, have greater earning growth over their lifetimes, experience less unemployment<sup>24</sup> and work longer. Education, favouring the attainment of higher wages and of a better job, affects crime by raising the opportunity costs of crime committing and tends to reduce post-school criminal activities. The opportunity costs are increased by higher wages in two ways. First, since crime is an activity that often requires time with regards to its planning and realization, that time can not be dedicated to other productive purposes such as legal work. Second, each crime committed entails an expected period of incarceration, which is more costly for individuals with better labour market opportunities and wages (Lochner, 2007). Alongside this, an individual's monetary success is likely to reduce most of the constraints the individual faces, and thus affects one of the causes that Strain theorists suppose to provoke individual motivation towards crime. However, education may also affect the rewards from certain types of crime, particularly for white collar crimes like fraud, forgery and embezzlement. Indeed, it is more likely to occur if education

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<sup>24</sup> We want to point out that aggregate unemployment appears to be another factor positively correlated with crime. For a deeper study, we refer to: Raphael, S., Winter-Ebmer, R. (2001).

increases the rewards for crime more than it increases a legitimate wage. On the other hand, education may also “socialize” individuals to become better citizens and change their preferences so that they choose to follow a law-abiding life regardless of the benefits that offending may involve (Usher, 1997). Moreover, individuals from disadvantaged family background in educational institutions are more likely to be influenced by better peers or social networks, which may reduce any tendencies to engage in crime.

Evidence was also found that one’s own schooling positively affects one’s **physical** and **psychical health** status, increasing life expectancy, lowering the prevalence of several mental illnesses including depression and improving the ability to deal with stressful events and anger (Wolfe and Haveman, 2002; p. 105). Higher parental education is associated with improved **health in children** and a **lower probability of parental abuse and neglect** - which is correlated with criminal behaviour (Riddell, 2005). The Positive effects of education on individual well-being may be originated from school’s activities and control on students and their family. Namely, schools promote preventative campaign such as campaigns against sexual diseases, smoking and drugs. Schools also exercise **social control** through the constant interaction between school personnel and students. Teachers, in addition to their educational functions of transmitting knowledge, skills and ability, may also detect the symptoms of violence and abuse of pupils by family members, and so rapidly acting by informing social institutions so that they can intervene in these situations (e.g. the police will punish aggressors, a psychologist will help and rehabilitate victims of abuse).

Furthermore, it also appears that the community profits from the education of its residents. Indeed there is evidence that the amount of time and money devoted to **charity work** is positively associated with the amount of schooling a volunteer has had, after allowing for income, the other primary determinant of donation. Similarly, increased education may lead to **social cohesion** because citizens with more schooling may participate more fully in their communities. Moreover, investigations were carried out which appear to show that schooling is positively related to being more **trusting** of others, and an increased participation in community organizations (Wolfe and Haveman, 2002; p. 113).

In particular, Helliwell and Putnam (1999) found that education is correlated with trust and social participation such as club membership, community work and hosting dinner parties. Recently, Milligan, Moretti and Oreopoulos (2004) found that educational attainment is related to **political interest** and **involvement** in both the United States and the United Kingdom. Their findings result from the careful investigation of relationships between education and the probability of attending political or community meetings, working on community issues and being politically active.

To sum up, as we have seen, education has a prominent role in determining both individual and social outcomes. Education, as most studies show, impacts greatly on an individual's life trajectory and contributes to the development of a community. Its positive impacts – both directly and indirectly- on many of the ‘Criminogenic’ factors such as poverty, social disorganization and so on, suggest that education may be an effective instrument for fighting criminality.

### **3.4 School and Youth Socialization**

The global approach which we have proposed until now, devoid of preconceptions with regards to the causes of crime, is necessary to fully understand and analyze this serious and damaging social problem, criminality.

A careful analysis of the criminal phenomenon has to take into consideration the examination not just of the factors based on the criminal personality –such as biological factors, opportunities costs and preferences -, but must consider also the environment in which it is developed.

The socio-cultural environment in which the maturation of the individual takes place greatly affects the structure of his personality, as well as the formation of a possible anti-social behaviour. Indeed it is easy to see that, where the social-cultural environment is characterized by a low education level, a disadvantaged economic situation, widespread criminality and a presence of strong and stable criminal organizations, the development of an individual’s personality towards an anti-social and criminal individual’s orientation is much more swift and sure.

Family, being the first social unit that the individual is in contact with, constitutes the environment in which the individual’s character and personality start

to build, and as a consequence, the individual's behaviour reflects the characteristics of the family. However, nowadays the family and individual are more subject to the external influences of society, which intervene and meddle in the process of person's formation, of his behaviour and his choices, mainly through school and mass media, in particular television.

It is a widespread opinion that schools, more than other social institutions, are able to influence youngsters, due to the fact that they take considerable time from other sources of influence, especially the family and television. School, day after day, fills an important portion of an individual's life not just due to the changes occurred in compulsory attendance laws in most parts of the world towards an increase in the years spent at school, but also as a consequence of the higher level of female participation in the labour market. In fact, in modern countries, individuals not only stay for longer in the educational system, but also enter in educational institutions earlier through nursery. Moreover, school also influences the individual's free-time (i.e. hours youngsters spend doing their homework).

The educational environment constitutes the first official system of society, in which the first extra-familial relationships and more general socialization processes are established.

In fact, as youngsters increasingly spend time in educational institutions rather than with their family, the role of parents in the socialization of their children decreases while that of the schools became stronger. The formation of an identity for children and adolescents is created in interactions with the school authority, peers and other schoolmates, sometimes struggling to define themselves as individuals with distinct identities and personalities. Furthermore, youngsters struggle to cement their definitions of right and wrong, as well as their own place in society.

The socialization process promoted by schools involves learning respect for society's rules, roles and authorities, learning process that sometimes takes advantage from use of discipline, the main instrument used by the school to make the student conform. Moreover, the socialization promoted by education concerns also the conformation of the individual's goals and his means for achieving these to institutionally accepted ones. For instance, students must perform sufficiently well

but acceptable marks must be achieved through hard work and constant commitment towards school activities, while cheating is not allowed and instead is punished. The conformation requires that the school set limits and define the goals of the student's activity, but at the same time it conditions and affects the individual's own values. However, teachers' attitudes are not always effective in socializing students, especially when they behave in a manner that to them appears to be arbitrary, unenforceable or unjust. In that case, youngsters who believe they are being treated unequally or unfairly, may reject moral rules and teaching from the school altogether, and experience a lessening of attachment towards the school and their education. Alongside this, as the adolescent does not feel attached to the conventional society represented by the school, he may seek to find alternative ties in other social organizations, such as gangs, due to his need to join a group and a weak will that characterizes this stage in life, adolescence. It is for this reason that school and the school's personnel have such great importance and delicate role; in particular they have to promote the internalization of normative rules that will constitute a point of reference for the youngster's future actions.

Émile Durkheim<sup>25</sup> devoted a large portion of his studies on schools' contribution to the socialization process of youngsters and argued that the role of school discipline has a great function in determining the individual's behaviour and that schools provide a social setting whereby individuals are able to develop attachments to and integration with a larger societal moral order.

Travis Hirschi, following Durkheim's insights, effectively introduced into contemporary criminological research the concepts of attachment and integration with conventional authority as determinant factors in the individual's conforming behaviour (see subsection 2.6.2). In *A General Theory of Crime* (1990), a co-authored work with Gottfredson, Hirschi also argued that schools were in many respects better situated than families to control and properly socialize youngster. School personnel, particularly teachers, it was argued, had greater ability than family members to monitor, assess and sanction misbehaviour, not just due to the larger time children spend in school, but because a teacher feels more of a need to maintain order in a class composed of numerous pupils. Moreover, school provides

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<sup>25</sup> For a deeper study we refer to: Durkheim, É. (1973).

youths with forms of attachment to conventional activities and values, with the possibility of develop self-control to resist the temptations of criminal behaviour.

However, when the school and its personnel have to work in a social context characterised by the presence of different and opposing sets of values to the social ones, or when there is an anomic society, it is likely to be less able to offer certain, stable values or focus to the development of the individual's ability to resist the temptation of criminality. In fact, the situation of social disorganization obstructs, neutralizes and often may destroy the effort of teachers to make youths aware of their responsibility concerning the respect of rules, other people, of their obligation towards society as a whole, to make their students aware of social problems caused by criminality, and thus to become better citizens.

## **4. The Effect of Education on Crime. Evidences from Italian Regions**

Previously, we explored various explanations for the root of crime and dedicated ourselves to a discussion on the public as well as private role of education as we consider that it is an important instrument for fighting criminality.

In this chapter we will carry out our analysis of the relationship between education and crime in Italy.

This chapter will be open with a brief discussion on the economic approach to the study of crime (section 4.1). Further, the most important investigations made in this field (subsection 4.1.1) and of the recent works on education and crime relationships (subsection 4.1.2) are discussed. Most of these studies come from the United States, where there are many sources of data both on the educational achievement of the population and its engagement in crime. As a result, these studies on crime and education are more reliable than in our country in which the only important source of information on national trends is the ISTAT. Moreover, accurate and more detailed data about the population's education levels are available only for the years of the census –every ten years and only at a provincial level. So, for obvious reasons of costs- both of time and money- studies on the impact of education on crime are limited by the usage of regional data provided by ISTAT, which does not concern all the population, but only a sample.

Later on, our empirical investigation will be presented (section 4.2), with particular attention on the data (subsection 4.2.1) and the procedure (subsection 4.2.2). Then, results will be shown and discussed (section 4.3).

#### **4.1 Economic Approach on the study of Crime**

Economic contribution to the study of crime is relatively recent, with Fleisher and Gary Becker during the Sixties the first to study the relationship between economic factors and the individual's criminal choice. The Economic approach to the study of crime is based on the Classical idea of the offender, that is, on the belief that offenders do not differ from law-abiding citizens in their decision-making process. Offenders are rational individuals who act and behave on the basis of: their knowledge; the information in their hand; and the resources- both the monetary, social, and cultural ones- in the pursuit of their own interests. Most of the contributions on the effects of education on crime stress how education raises individuals' skills and abilities, thereby increasing the likelihood of a return to legitimate work, thus raising the opportunity costs of illegal behaviour.

The Economic model of crime is a formal pattern that tries to explain the individual's criminal choice, and to characterize the corresponding function of the supply of offences. However, the economic pattern for the study of crime is just a method of analysis that takes for granted that the individual acts "rationally", rather than hypothesising specific motivations (Marselli and Vannini, 1999; p. 40). From the economist's point of view, the individual choice to engage in an illegal act has a total cost mainly formed by three fundamental items:

1. direct expenses for the material needed to carry out the offence (i.e. arms);
2. opportunity costs concerning the alternative possibilities for using one's own time (i.e. income deriving from legal activities which the offender gives up in favour of illegal ones);
3. expected costs from punishment (i.e. time that the individual would probably spend in prison rather than legally working; amount of penalty associated with offence).

Thus, economists believe that the rise of such costs may reduce the net benefit of illegal activities, and, under certain conditions, discourages the rise of criminality.

In developing their empirical analysis, scholars make prevalent use of aggregate data in measuring of criminality (i.e. youth crime rate, property crime rate, violent crime rate and so on) and variable of deterrence (i.e. unknown offenders, length of sentences) and socio-economic indicators (i.e. unemployment rates, distribution of

wealth among population, inequality wage etc.). However, there are some economists that use measures of schooling as a variable in explaining crime; that is, in the “equation of criminality”, they use measures of schooling (such as average years of schooling of the population, the percentage of the population with a university degree and so on) as an independent variable, while the dependant variable is taken from some measures of criminality. The main hypothesis behind this concept is that education may have on the one hand, a ‘civilization’ effect, changing the preferences of the individual towards a legal life-style, and, on the other hand may raise his opportunity cost of crime. Simpson and Van Arsdol, in 1967, and later Ehrlich (1975), are considered the first economists to study the correlation between schooling and crime. Recently, in the United States there was a revival of economic studies in this field by two scholars, Lance Lochner and Enrico Moretti. Following them, Paolo Buonanno and Leone Leonida attempted to study whether in Italy there is evidence of a negative or positive correlation between crime and education. Before these studies, the interests of Italian scholars<sup>26</sup> for the economic analysis of criminality lay in understanding which conditions allow and favour the birth of criminal organizations.

In the following subsections an overview is given of the most influential economic studies on crime (subsection 4.1.1) and of the recent works on education and crime relationships (subsection 4.1.2).

#### ***4.1.1 An Overview of the Economic Literature on Crime***

The economic literature on the issue of crime can be traced back to Fleisher’s work of 1963, *The Effect of Unemployment on Juvenile Delinquency*, a work that analyses the relationship between unemployment and youth crime. Fleisher comes to the conclusion that the effect of unemployment on juvenile delinquency is positive and significant, and that low incomes increase the likelihood of committing crime, since the opportunity cost of time that the individual dedicates to illegal

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<sup>26</sup> Marselli and Vannini affirm that the panorama of this kind of research may be well represented by three important collections of essays. These are: Camera dei Deputati (1993), *Economia e Criminalità*. Roma: Camera dei Deputati; Zamagni, S. (edit by) (1993), *Mercati Illegali e Mafia. L’Economia del Crimine organizzato*. Bologna: Il Mulino; and Fiorentini, G., Peltzman, S. (edit by) (1995), *The Economics of Organised Crime*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Cited by Marselli, R., Vannini, M. (1999), p. 181.

activities is also low. Fleisher's work represents a first attempt to analyze from an economic point of view the relationship between crime and both economic and social variables. However, it was Becker's work *Crime and Punishment: An Economic Approach*, published in 1968, that represents the starting point for studying society's choice of crime control policies in the context of an economic model (Buonanno, 2003). Becker was interested in understanding the motivation lying behind the individual's choice to engage in criminal activities rather than legal ones, and his work gave inspiration to other economists to study criminal behaviour and violence, which focused on the determinants of crime and their relationship with economic variables, such as wage, unemployment and income inequality due to the fact that these variables seem to have primary a effect on the benefits and costs associated with the undertaking of criminal activities (Villoro and Turuel, 2004).

In 1967, Simpson and Van Arsdol, studying juvenile referrals to the Los Angeles County probation department, found strong empirical support for the hypothesis that school enrolment and participation in criminal activity were negatively correlated (Ehrlich, 1975; p. 326). Indeed, the level of education in the population was another important factor related to the effect of economic conditions on crime. Education can determine the expected rewards from both legal and criminal activities, tending to reduce the incidence of criminal activity. However, Ehrlich (1975, p. 333) found a positive and strong relationship between the average number of school years completed by the adult population and specifically property crimes committed across the U.S. in 1960. But how was it possible that schooling increases the likelihood of individual's engagement in criminal activities? The Author provided some possible explanations for this empirical finding. First, it is possible that education may raise the marginal product of labour in the crime industry to a greater extent than for legitimate economic pursuits. Second, higher average levels of education may be associated with less under-reporting of crimes, particularly high for crimes against property. Another possible explanation is that, given that income inequality is associated with higher crime rates, it is likely that certain crime rates are directly related to inequalities in schooling and on-the-job training (Ehrlich, 1975, p. 333).

Among other scholars, Mocan and Rees (1999) were studying the relationship between local poverty and unemployment and the local crime rate, finding a positive correlation between the two. That is, an increase of both unemployment and poverty in a specific area increases the likelihood of youngsters committing crime. In addition, the authors found that the parent's education affects juvenile criminal activities, particularly amongst women.

Witte and Tauchen (1994) studying a cohort sample of young men in a large U.S urban area, came to argue that schooling and work significantly decrease the likelihood of juvenile criminal behaviour<sup>27</sup>. Grogger (1998) finds that youngsters are particularly responsive to price incentives, and thus a reduction in wages –or the lessening of its buying power- are an important explanation for the observed increase in offences committed by young individuals, who generally have lower wages than adults<sup>28</sup>. These results concord with the assumption that schooling may have some effect in reducing crime, as a higher level of education is associated with higher wage rates.

Lochner, first in 1999 and later in a co-authored work with Moretti (2004), and Buonanno and Leonida (2006, 2008) studied the relationship between education and crime. They found that schooling affects the individual's criminal choice, given that higher levels of education are associated with higher wage rates, which increase the opportunity costs of offences.

Freeman (1994, 1996) suggests that an increase in income inequality and a decrease in the real earnings of less educated individuals in particular can lead to an increase in the propensity to commit crime.

Fajnzylber, Lederman and Loayza, analysing the determinants of international homicide rates, found that they are negatively correlated to the growth rate of GDP. They also find that there is, no matter how weak, a positive association between an

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<sup>27</sup> Witte and Tauchen in their work studied criminal, work and educational activities of a representative group of youngsters from ages 19 to 25, and controlling for deterrent effect, measuring issues related to the criminal justice system action and general deterrence. See Witte, Ann D., Tauchen, Helen (1994)

<sup>28</sup> Grogger also stated that, similarly, in the United States part of the racial differential in crime rates may be explained by the fact that youths are responsive to monetary incentives. In fact, African-Americans generally receive lesser wages than Caucasians, and thus for them, offences involve less opportunity cost than people who are not discriminated against. See Grogger, J. (1998).

increase in the average school years of the population and a decrease in homicide rates.

Other studies, such as Sampson and Lauritsen's paper of 1994, find that violence is related to accelerated economic growth, stating that poverty and inequality in the distribution of income are often associated with high crime rates under the context of demographic changes, urbanization and industrialization. An investigation was also carried out on the effect of social capital on crime. Lederman, Loayza and Menéndez, in 1999, found that the violent crime rate is lower in the community in which members trust each other than in a community with weak social relations and cohesion between residents. However, other measures of social capital have no significance when explaining the differences in crime rates (Villoro and Turuel, 2004; p. 4).

#### ***4.1.2 Economic literature on Education and Crime***

As mentioned before, some scholars were interested in verifying whether there is a correlation, as simple statistics suggest, between education attainment and crime rates.

Evidence of a negative correlation between most crimes and high school attainment were found by Lochner (1999), Lochner and Moretti (2004), Buonanno and Leonida (2006, 2008), Webbink, Koning, Vujić, and Martin (2008) and Merlo and Wolpin (2009).

Lance **Lochner** in his work published in 1999, *Education, Work, and Crime: Theory and Evidence* develops a dynamic two-period model<sup>29</sup> of individual behaviour in which adolescents and adults decide how to allocate their time between school, work and crime. Lochner's purpose with this work is to explain why older, more intelligent and more educated workers tend to commit less property crimes than others. Through the analysis of the impact of education, training, and work subsidies on criminal behaviour he found that unobserved age differences in on-the-job skill investment explains why wages and crime are more negatively correlated at older ages. Adult individuals have higher wages because they tend to have higher levels of skill than the young. Higher income representing

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<sup>29</sup> Lochner in his study used American data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, Current Population Survey and Uniform Crime Reports. See Lochner, L. (1999).

a higher opportunity cost of crime, this tends to discourage older individuals from engaging in certain types of crime, such as property crime. In fact, the Author focuses on statistical evidence, from which emerges the answer that young individuals rather than adult ones tend to commit more property crimes. Moreover, as Lochner points out, adult crime rates may rise or fall since the most capable are likely to reduce their criminal activity when older while the least capable increase theirs. Finally, the model suggests that law enforcement policies increase education, training, and labour supply, while reducing criminal activity.

Lochner initiated the argument by discussing the gap existing between federal spending on the justice and educational systems, arguing that well-targeted educational and training programs may be more cost-effective criminal deterrents than raising incarceration rates. He starts from two basic assumptions: first, crime is primarily a problem among young uneducated men; second, schooling, by increasing job opportunities, serves as a criminal deterrent (Lochner, 1999; p.1). Individuals with low skill levels receive less profit if engaged in legal activities rather than in criminal ones. On the contrary, “both high school graduation and ability directly lower criminal propensities” (p. 34). In his analysis, Lochner aims to show how high school graduation substantially lowers the criminal participation rate even after allowing for heterogeneity in ability. Thus, this could have important policy implications, such as an increase in the monetary expenses in educational institutions with the purpose of raising the skills and abilities of youngsters, as well as encouraging them to acquire at least a secondary-school diploma.

In an advanced study of 2003, Lochner used the human capital approach<sup>30</sup> to study crime. As he predicted, human capital is negatively correlated to unskilled crime, such as theft, burglary and assault, while there is a positive correlation to white-collar crimes (i.e. forgery, fraud and embezzlement). In particular Lochner estimated a strong negative effect of education on both property and violent crime. Furthermore, a strong negative correlation was discovered between cognitive ability and unskilled crime. In contrast, the empirical relationship between education and

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<sup>30</sup> The Human Capital approach, in its simplest form, is the approach that stresses the role of wages and opportunity costs in determining criminal activity, assuming that older, more intelligent and more educated individuals commit fewer offences because they have more human capital and thus, have more probability to earn higher wages. See Lochner, L. (2004), p. 3.

white-collar crime is positive. Namely, Lochner's analysis from the Uniform Crime Reports data suggests that rates of arrest for white-collar crimes are increasing in average educational attainment (Lochner, 2003; p. 31).

In subsequent research, **Lochner and Moretti** (2004) used a variety of data set examining the educational effect on engagement in criminal activities and understanding whether increasing education levels causes a reduction in crime among adult males in the U.S. The two scholars first analyzed the effect of schooling on incarceration and changes of Compulsory Attendance laws<sup>31</sup>. They employed three sources of information: individual-level data on incarceration, state-level data on arrests and self-report data on crime and incarceration from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth. All of these three data sources showed that schooling significantly reduces criminal activities, Lochner and Moretti found that higher education levels, particularly graduating from high school, consistently lowers the probability of incarceration, of criminal arrests, and of self-reports of undertaking criminal activity. In U.S. Census data the probability of incarceration is negatively correlated with education levels, and is much higher for African-Americans than Caucasians. Namely, the Authors demonstrated that an additional year of schooling reduces the likelihood of incarceration by 0.1 percentage points for Caucasians and by 3.7 percentage points for African-Americans (Lochner and Moretti, 2004; p. 8).

This correlation may not be causal, however, if there are unobserved individual characteristics which both raise education and lower criminal activity. But, even when rich measures of individual ability and family background are controlled in the analysis of the NLSY data, the estimated impacts of schooling on incarceration and self-report are unchanged.

Lochner and Moretti (2004) also analysed the social economic benefits of education. They found that there are important social externalities in reduced crime, and in particular that a one per cent increase in the high school completion rate of all men aged 20-60 would save the United States as much as \$1.4 billion per year,

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<sup>31</sup> Lochner and Moretti used changes in state-specific compulsory laws over time as an instrumental variable for completed schooling to estimate the effects of education on arrest rates and the probability of incarceration among adult men. This allows them to identify the causal effect of schooling on crime as long as the changes in compulsory schooling laws are not related to changes in the underlying propensity to commit crime. See Lochner, L. (2008).

or about \$2,100 per additional male high school graduate, in reduced costs from crime incurred by victims and society at large.

Paolo **Buonanno** and Leone **Leonida** in 2006 and 2008 analysed the impact of education on criminal activity in Italy. They tested a number of hypotheses regarding the effects of education and past incidence of crime on criminal activity, using annual data for all the Italian regions over the period 1980 to 1995. In particular they considered three different crime rates normalized by the resident population in each region. The types of offences studied were: property crime rate, theft rate and total crime rate. They used two different types of data source: CRENoS- Centre for North South Economic Research- and ISTAT (Italian Statistics Bureau). Buonanno and Leonida used four explanatory variables: education -defined as average years of schooling of the population-, average regional wage, percentage of crimes that remained unpunished due to offenders<sup>32</sup> remaining unknown and, lastly, GDP per capita. The main result of Buonanno and Leonida's study is that education has a negative and significant effect on crime rates.

Using the same panel dataset, in 2008 Buonanno and Leonida attempted to study the non-market effects of education on crime. As in their previous work, they used property crime, theft and total crime rate as measures of criminality. On the contrary, for the measures of education, the scholars added to average years of schooling of the population other two variables: the percentage of the population with a high school diploma and those with a university degree. Moreover Buonanno and Leonida enlarged the measures of deterrence of punishment. To the percentage of crimes committed by unknown offenders, they added measures of the speed in concluding of judicial process<sup>33</sup> and the extent of police forces, normalized by the population for each region. Their findings suggest that education reduces crime over and above its effect through labour market opportunities such as the employment rate and wage rate, due to the fact that education is negatively and

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<sup>32</sup> Unknown offender's rate is used by Buonanno and Leonida as a measure of the probability of apprehension, calculated as the ratio of crimes committed by unknown offenders to all recorded crime in each category. A higher level of unknown offenders will provoke a decrease of the deterrent effect of punishment. See Buonanno P., Leonida L. (2006).

<sup>33</sup> The measures are: speed of conclusion of *Istruttoria* and *Primo Grado*, and speed of conclusion of *Appello* and *Cassazione*, representing respectively representing the firsts and the final stage of the entire judicial proceeding. See Buonanno P., Leonida L. (2008).

significantly correlated to crime rates even after allowing for labour market opportunities. In particular, high school graduation and the average years of schooling result negatively and significantly correlated to crime rates, while the college graduation rate does not seem to have a significant effect on crime.

**Webbink, Koning, Vujić, and Martin** (2008) investigated whether crime reduces investment in human capital or, on the contrary, education reduces criminal activity. The investigation was carried out using data from twins, thus many unobserved characteristics affecting both criminal behaviour and the schooling decision were controlled for. Criminal behaviour was measured over different periods of time, prior to and after high school completion, so the scholars were able to address the causality between crime and education as well.

On the effects of early criminal behaviour on educational attainment Webbink, Koning, Vujić, and Martin found a negative effect: early arrests (before the age of 18) reduce educational attainment from 0.7 to 0.9 years and lower the individual's likelihood of completing high school from 20 to 23 percentage points.

Furthermore, the scholars focused on the effect of human capital on crime allowing for the individual's early arrest, because it was believed that individual's early criminal activity may bias the analysis, being correlated with the probability to achieve further education. They found that human capital has a negative effect on crime, as the individual's probability of incarceration was reduced by his own achievement at high school. Webbink, Koning, Vujić, and Martin calculated that the achievement of a secondary-school diploma affects the individual's risk of incarceration by about 3 percentage points.

Thus, according to their results, investment in human capital such as in educational achievement seems to be an effective instrument against criminality.

Merlo and Wolpin (2009) studied the relationship between schooling, youth employment and youth crime using data from African-American male youths. The scholars had estimated five variables (school attendance, employment, criminal activity, arrest and incarceration) as representing inter-related youth decision and individual outcomes. In estimating the effects of stochastically-generated path dependencies, Merlo and Wolpin accounted for permanent unobserved heterogeneity in the youths' characteristics and environment and for measurement

of error in the data. They found that there were three distinct types in the sample of black male youths<sup>34</sup>. The first two types have a lower graduation rate - about 20 and 40 percent- than the third –around 85 percent. The individuals in the two lower graduation groups engage in crime and are arrested more often when young adults. Among those two types, the people in the lowest graduation type were incarcerated with double probability. Individuals who had not attended high school were four times more likely to be incarcerated at ages 19 to 22. With respect to background characteristics, a youngster whose mother is a high school dropout is estimated to be 88 percent more likely to be incarcerated at ages 19 to 22. For a youngster born to a teenage mother, this increases by 78 percent, and for a youngster who has always lived with his biological parents, this decreases by 34 percent. Attending school at the age of 16 is not only associated with lower incarceration rates, but the 16 year olds that attended school also had a lower crime rate at age 19 to 22, by 12.2 percentage points, a lower rate of arrest, by 15.5 percentage points, and a high school graduation rate that is about 12 times greater. Another important variable is having committed a crime at age 14: youngster that engaged in criminal activities at that age were twice as likely to commit a crime at ages 19 to 22 as those who did not, were 10.3 percentage points more likely to be arrested and are 19 times less likely to graduate from high school.

We can conclude that there is enough empirical evidence to state that schooling may help individuals to escape crime, and that, as society would benefit from a reduction of criminality, investment in educational policies. Government should invest in education, because, being effective in increasing labour market opportunities as well as human capital achievement, may results an highly beneficial way to fight criminality rather than building prisons, which are often overcrowded with less disadvantaged individuals, without a real probability of rehabilitation, and thus their transformation of criminals into law-abiding citizens.

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<sup>34</sup> Merlo and Wolpin used data from NLSY97 (National Longitudinal Youth Survey of 97). Merlo, A., Wolpin, Kenneth I. (2009).

## 4.2 Empirical Strategy and Data Description

Italy represents a peculiar case in an international context, and the empirical evidences of studies on crime made in other countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada may not be found in Italy. We think that criminality can not be studied without taking into account the particularities that characterise our country. As Marselli and Vannini (1997) report, the most important features of Italy in respect to the most studied countries seem to be:

1. a large variability in crime rates across time and place;
2. a pervasive presence of organized crime with strong regional roots;
3. a higher frequency of offences involving material gains relative to those related to passion or ethnic/racial conflicts;
4. a criminal justice system based on a codified criminal law, where the judge is not a lawmaker –as is the case in many common law countries– and in which the sentencing process is strictly predetermined by the penal code (Marselli and Vannini, 1997).

Using regional data over the period 1995-2004, we study the impact of education on different measures of crime, particularly on the total number of crimes, property crimes and white-collar crimes. To mitigate omitted-variables bias we allow for socioeconomic factors and deterrence variables. Moreover other important variables are added: the **recorded number of Mafioso associations** and the **recorded rate of extortion**. We believe that the regional presence of Mafioso organizations has several influences, on both education and the criminal choice. Moreover, such organizations, as is a well established fact, strongly affect the likelihood that a crime is reported by victims. In the above context, and as pointed out by Vannini and Marselli (2007), "interesting though it may be, the estimation of crime rate determinants with Italian data is by no means straightforward, because the main categories of reported offences reflect the operation of both individual and organized crime". With an absence of official data on the number of people involved in criminal organizations, we can only speculate on the impact and the influence on criminal activities and educational achievement of such organizations from the recorded offences related with 'Mafioso association' (*Associazione di tipo Mafioso*) and number of recorded extortions from Istat.

#### 4.2.1 Data

In our investigation, we selected three categories of crime: **property crime**, **white-collar crime** and **total crime**. We estimated the correlation of each of these three categories with two education variables- **Diploma** and **Degree**.

**Property crime** is the number of reported crimes against property as recorded by Istat, excepted from the number of extortions. **Total crime** is the amount of offences yearly recorded in Italian regions. Both Property and total crimes are taken from Istat, and normalized by regions' resident habitants. **White-collar crime** is a variable which we have constructed, and is obtained by taking the offences recorded under the *Offences against public economy and faith and Embezzlement*, and *omission of official acts (Contro l'economia e la fede pubblica category<sup>35</sup> and Peculato, malversazione and omissione atti d'ufficio)*, because these crimes respond to the definition of white-collar crime given by Sutherland -the sort of crimes committed by a respectable person with a high social status in the course of his occupation (Sutherland, 1948).

Diploma and Degree, two variables of schooling, are used with the purpose of gauging the effect of the education system potentially affecting the regional level of crime because, as previously discussed, education may convey numerous social and individual benefits (Chap. 3). We use the percentage of the population with a high school diploma<sup>36</sup> (Diploma) and the percentage of the population with a university degree (Degree) as measures of the education level in the population. **Diploma** and **Degree** are taken from the annuals *Media Forze di Lavoro* published by ISTAT – the National Bureau of Statistics. Each measure of education is tested separately with total crime, property crime and white-collar crime, allowing for other variables

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<sup>35</sup> In the category of Offences against public economy and faith are these offences disciplined by Title VII, articles 453-498 c.p. – Offences against public faith- and Title VIII, articles 499-518 c.p. – offences against public economy, industry and business- of penal code. Included in the offences against public faith are: Forged in currency (Falsità in monete), Forged in seals (Falsità in sigilli) and False actions and identities (Falsità in atti e persone). Included in the offences against public economy, industry and business are: fraud in trade (frode nell'esercizio del commercio), sale of unwholesome food (Vendita sostanze alimentari non genuine); arbitrary encroachment of businesses (Arbitraria invasione aziende), etc.; Bankruptcy (Bancarotta); emission of dishonoured cheque (Emissione di assegni a vuoto).

<sup>36</sup> However, we are not completely sure that this data also comprises those people with both a high school diploma and a university certificate. Nevertheless the results do not change, even when we test the correlation between education and criminality by adding to Istat's original number of *Diplomati* the number of graduated individuals.

that may have an effect on both education level of each region's population size and regional rates of criminality.

In studying the correlation between education and crime, we allow for observable socioeconomic and deterrence variables. As for the socioeconomic factors affecting crime, we consider both regional GDP pro capita -**GDP**- and the regional rate of **unemployment**. **GDP** pro capita is included because it may better reflect the individual levels of wealth whereas **unemployment** indicates both the market opportunities in the region and the individual opportunity cost of crime. As for the deterrence variable we use the percentage of crimes committed by **unknown offenders** (Unknown). As there is great difference in the percentage of unknown white-collar criminals and those in other categories, we allow separately for: the percentage of unknown property, white-collar and total criminals.

Lastly, measures of the presence of Mafia criminal associations in each region are allowed for. We believe that the strong regional presence of Mafioso criminal associations affects both the supply of criminals and individual's educational achievement. In fact, it is known that the Mafia has a depressing effect on the legal economy, while, on the other hand, illegal labour opportunities increase. However, it is appropriate to underline that the measure of criminality that we are using refers not to the actual number of committed offences, but to the reported ones. So, even if in a determinate area governed by Mafioso criminal associations the number of offences is high, the code of silence, threats and violence may make people more reluctant to report an offence that they have witnessed. The Mafioso system, which is able to strongly affect the likelihood of crime being reported, may bias criminal statistics. That is, the number of reported offences may be greatly under estimated.

Furthermore, due to the depressed economy and the scarce labour market opportunities, individuals are not encouraged to achieve a higher level of education or enrich their skills, because there will not be a legal opportunity in which to use such skills. Moreover monetary success and social prestige are more likely to be acquired through an association with Mafioso organizations.

However, it is a hard task to find effective measures of the regional presence of Mafioso criminal associations (Marselli and Vannini, 1997). Being conscious of this, we try to use data from ISTAT concerning reported **Mafioso associations**

(Mafia) and the number of **extortions** (Extortions), normalized by region population.

The Italian Penal code defines the offence of Mafioso Association in the article 641 *bis*<sup>37</sup>, stating that an association may be described as 'Mafioso' when those who partake in it do so through intimidation and associated constraints, conditions of subjugation, conspiracies of silence, all of which are used in order to aid criminal activities, in order to obtain whether directly or indirectly the management or control, in whatever form, of economic activities, grants, official authorisation, outsourced contracts and public services, or to achieve profits or unfair advantages for themselves or others.

The Mafia is able to control a territory and its business activities, both legal and illegal, through the use of intimidation and violence. We also use the recorded number of extortions as a measure of Mafioso regional presence because we are aware of the fact that it is not sufficient only to use the recorded number of Mafioso criminal associations from Istat to understand how strong the presence of the Mafia is from region to region. However, with regards to the rate of Mafioso extortions, there are serious doubts as to whether the recorded numbers have any relation to reality. On the contrary, the number will be underestimated because victims are reluctant to report this kind of crime, due to the high risk related with the violation of the 'code of silence'. Consequently, as Scaglione (2008) points out, judiciary statistics give inadequate results in measuring the diffusion of extortion among the various regions (Scaglione, 2008, p. 148). From the widespread literature on the Mafia, and in accordance with inquiries and parliamentary discourse on the phenomenon of the Mafia, it emerges that such kinds of criminal organizations are able to enter civil society on a very deep level, and through violence and intimidation create situations of hegemony, and an effective monopoly of criminal activities. Fear of retaliation, made a real danger by the menace represented by the Mafia's gangsters, makes it less likely that a crime will be reported to the police.

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<sup>37</sup> "L'associazione è di tipo mafioso quando coloro che ne fanno parte si avvalgono della forza di intimidazione del vincolo associativo e della condizione di assoggettamento e di omertà che ne deriva per commettere delitti, per acquisire in modo diretto o indiretto la gestione o comunque il controllo di attività economiche, di concessioni, di autorizzazioni, appalti e servizi pubblici o per realizzare profitti o vantaggi ingiusti per sé o per altri" (Art. 461 bis, c.p.)

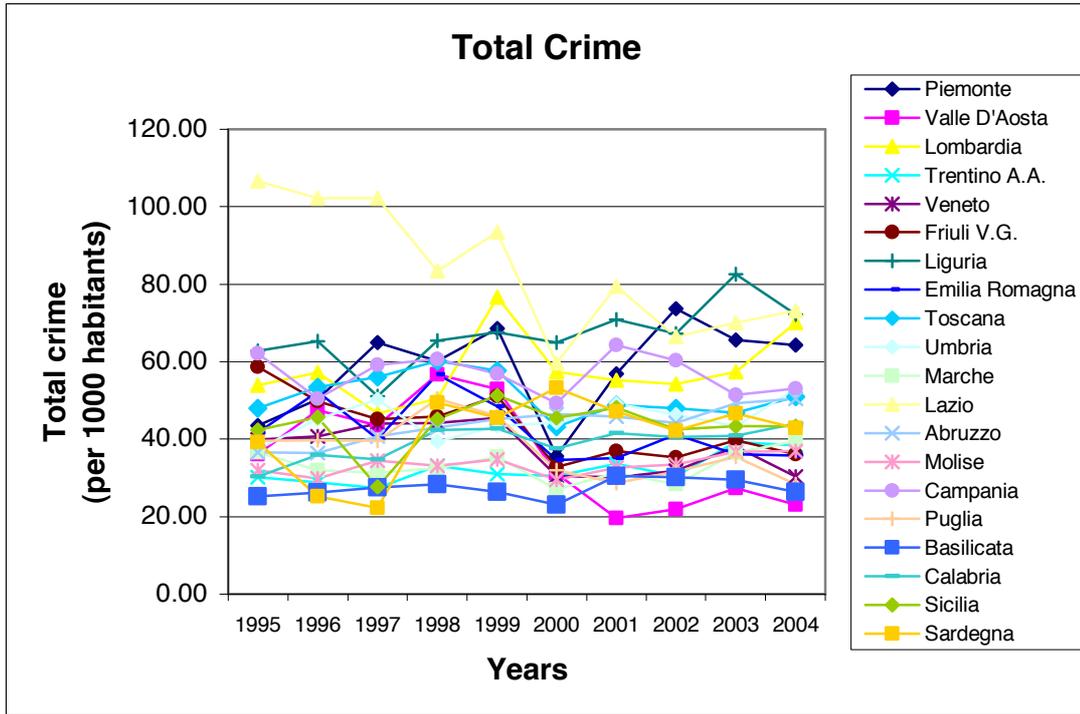
However, in our opinion, the regional rate of Mafioso Associations and extortions may be valid instruments in the absence of better ones because they represent an indication of the relevance of the presence of Mafioso criminal associations in the regions.

**Table 1. Variables description**

| Variable           | Description  | Source  |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Property Crime     | Percentage of property crimes- total number of reported property crimes without the number of Extortions, per 1000 habitants   | ISTAT - <i>Statistiche Giudiziarie Penali</i> |
| White-collar Crime | Percentage white-collar crimes- total number of recorded crimes against public economy and faith, embezzlement, malversation, omitted office acts per 1000 habitants | ISTAT - <i>Statistiche Giudiziarie Penali</i> |
| Total Crimes       | Crime rate –total number of recorded crimes per 1000 habitants   | ISTAT - <i>Statistiche Giudiziarie Penali</i> |
| Diploma            | Percentage of population with High School diploma  | ISTAT- <i>Media Forze Lavoro</i>              |
| Degree             | Percentage of population with University degree  | ISTAT- <i>Media Forze Lavoro</i>              |
| Unknown            | Percentage of reported crimes committed by unknown offender  | ISTAT - <i>Statistiche Giudiziarie Penali</i> |
| Mafia              | Total number of recorded Mafioso associations, normalized by population  | ISTAT - <i>Statistiche Giudiziarie Penali</i> |
| Extortion          | Total number of recorded extortions, , normalized by population  | ISTAT - <i>Statistiche Giudiziarie Penali</i> |
| Unemployment       | The number of unemployed as a percentage of the labour forces  | ISTAT- <i>Media Forze Lavoro</i>              |
| GDP                | GDP per capita at 2000 constant price  | ISTAT- <i>Conti Economici Regionali</i>       |

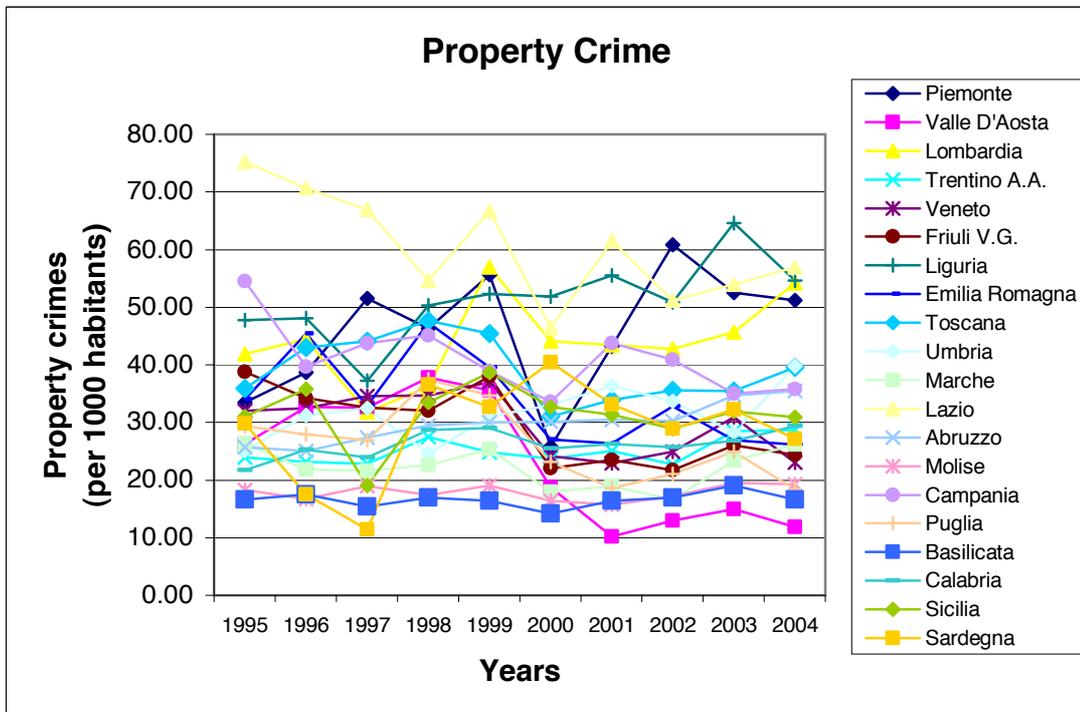
Source: Author's elaboration

Figure 1. Quotient of total crime, Italian regions, years 1995-2004



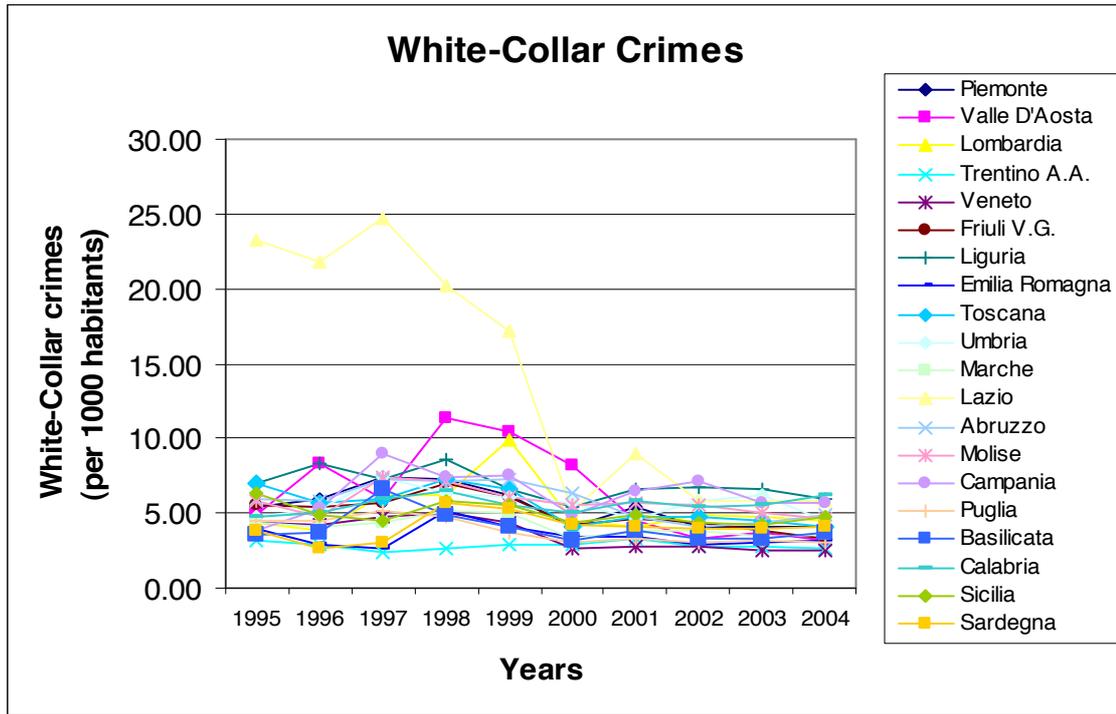
Source: Istat, *Statistiche Giudiziarie Penali*.

Figure 2. Quotient of regional property crimes, Italian regions, years 1995-2004



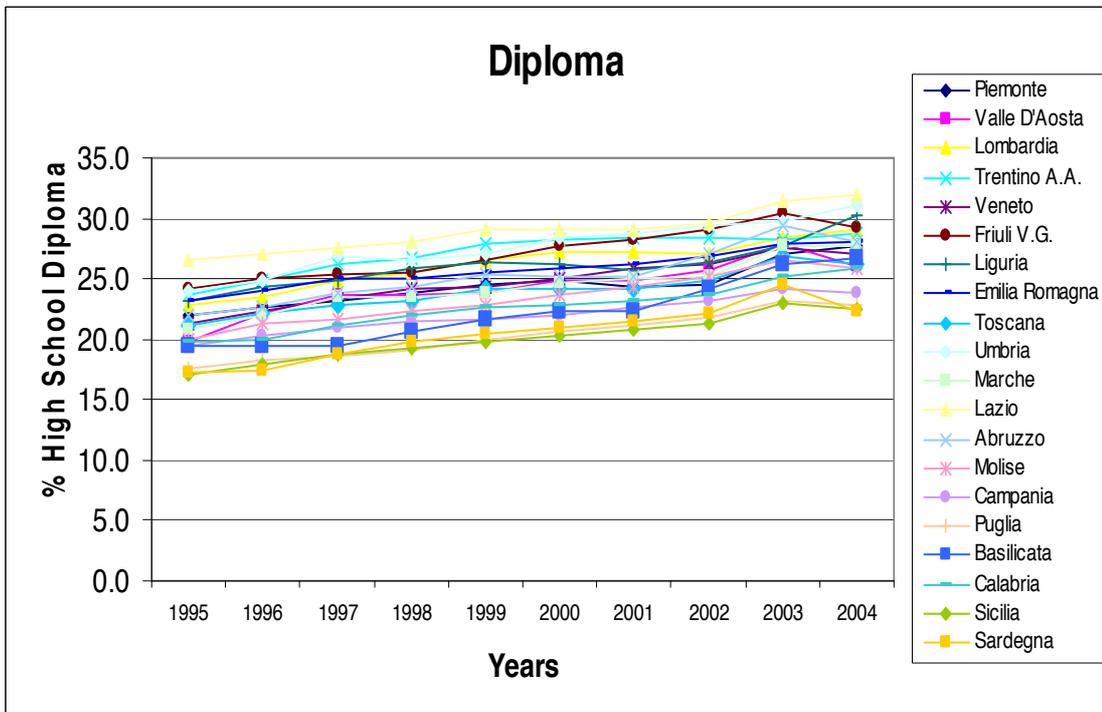
Source: Istat, *Statistiche Giudiziarie Penali*.

Figure 3. Quotient of regional *white-collar* crime, Italian regions, years 1995-2004



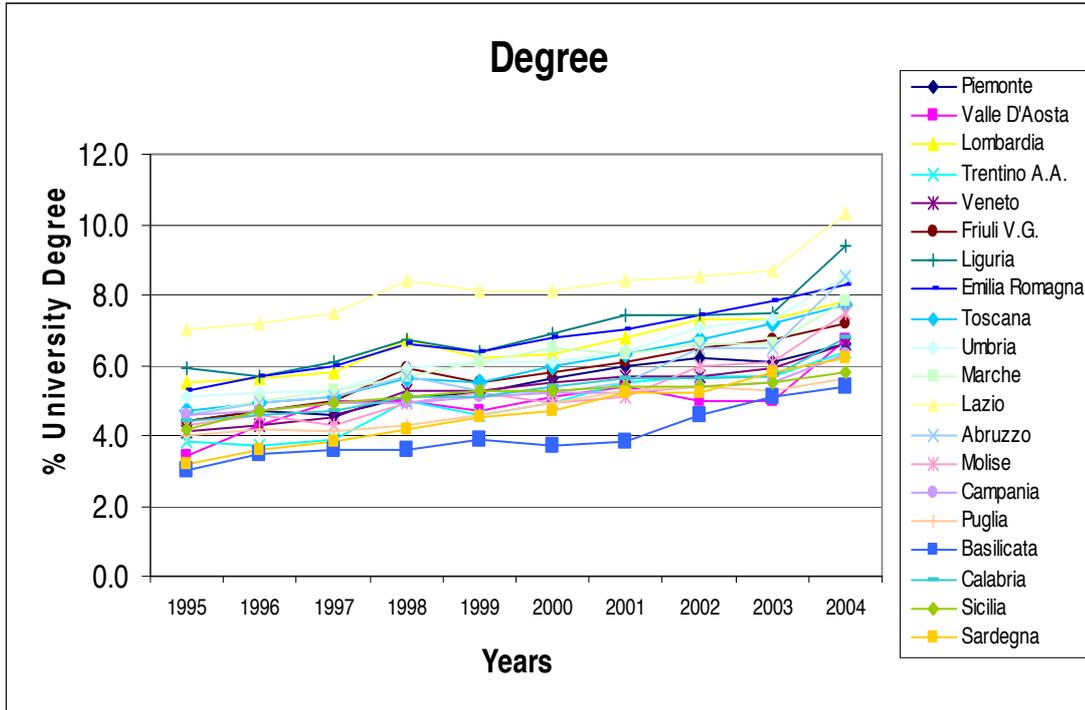
Source: Istat, *Statistiche Giudiziarie Penali*.

Figure 4. Percentage citizens with High School diploma, Italian Regions, years 1995-2004



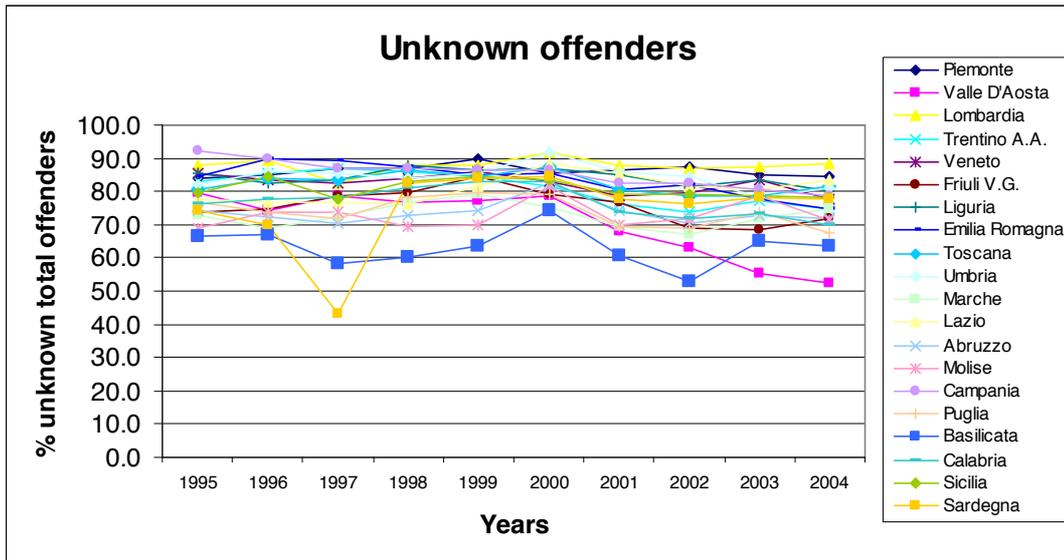
Source: Istat, *Media Forze di Lavoro*

Figure 5. Percentage of citizens with University Degree, Italian Regions, years 1995-2004



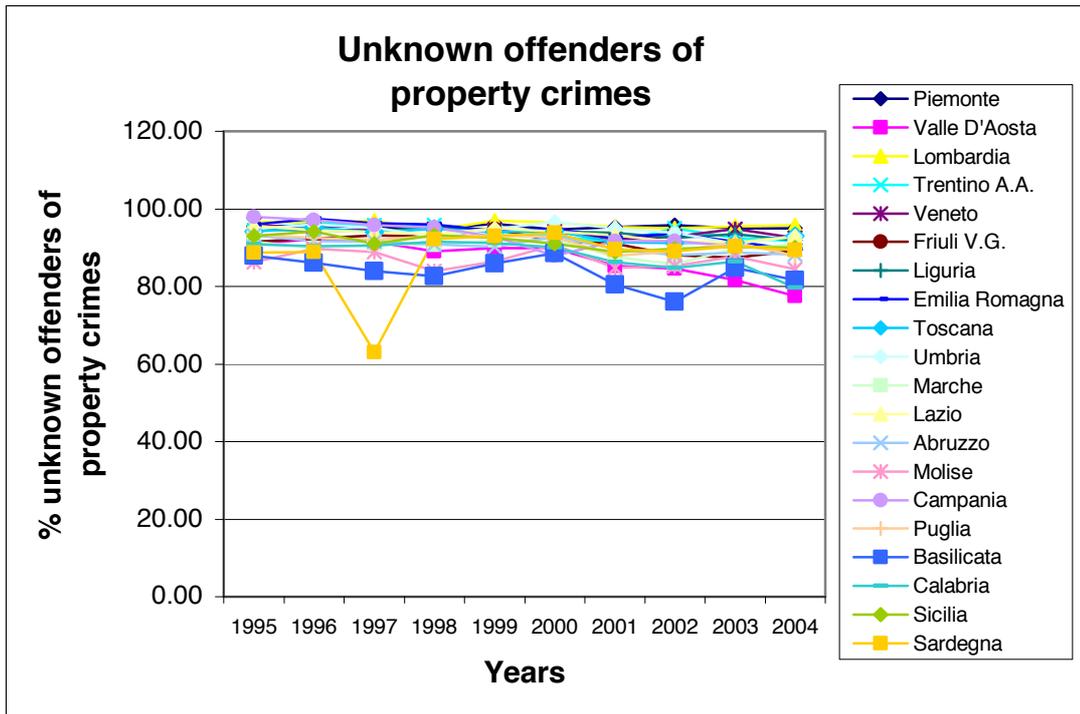
Source: Istat, *Media Forze di Lavoro*

Figure 6. Rate of unknown offenders, Italian regions, years 1995-2004



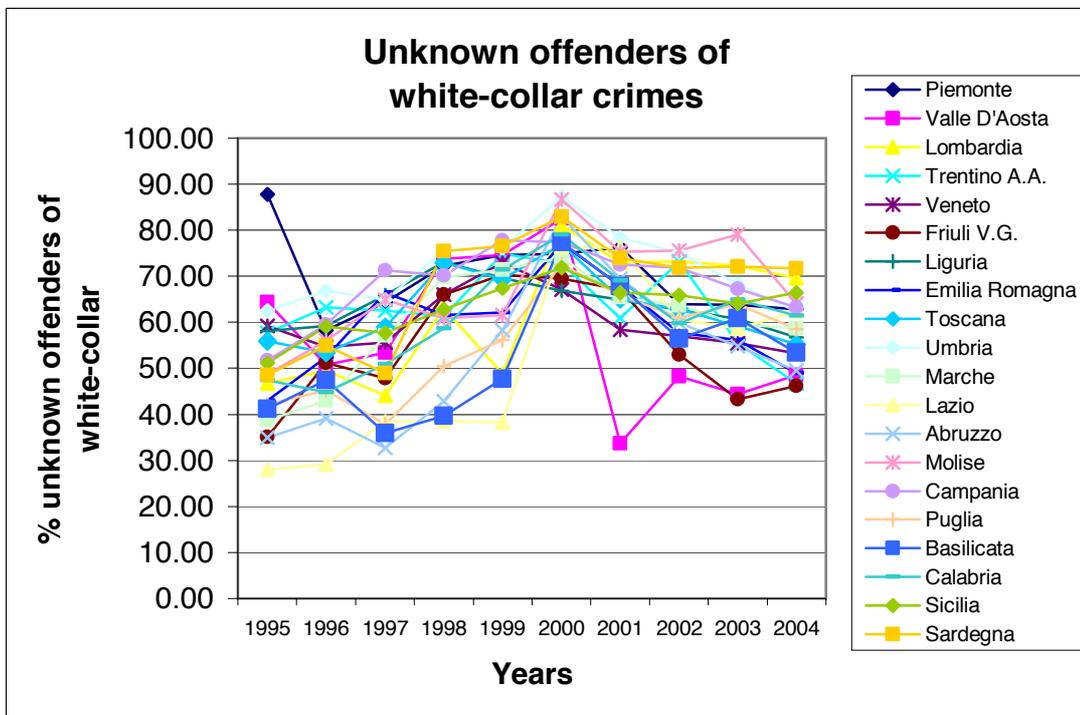
Source: Istat, *Statistiche Giudiziarie Penali*.

Figure 7. Rate of unknown offenders of property crimes, Italian regions, years 1995-2004



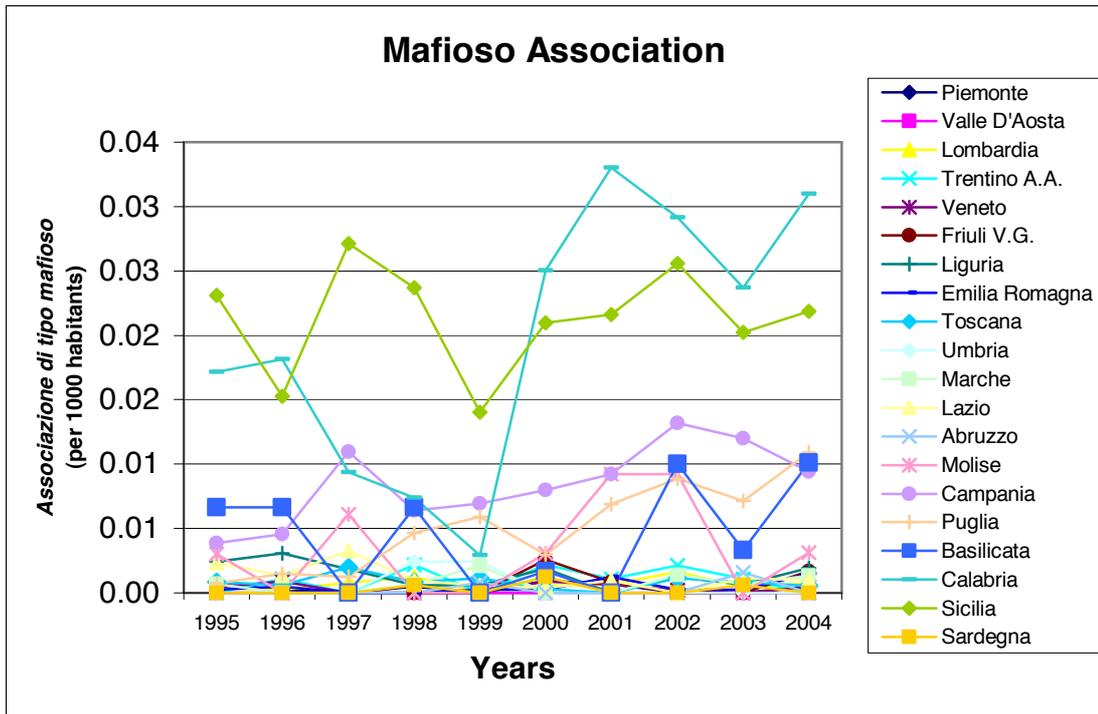
Source: Istat, *Statistiche Giudiziarie Penali*.

Figure 8. Rate of unknown offenders of white-collar crimes, Italian regions, years 1995-2004



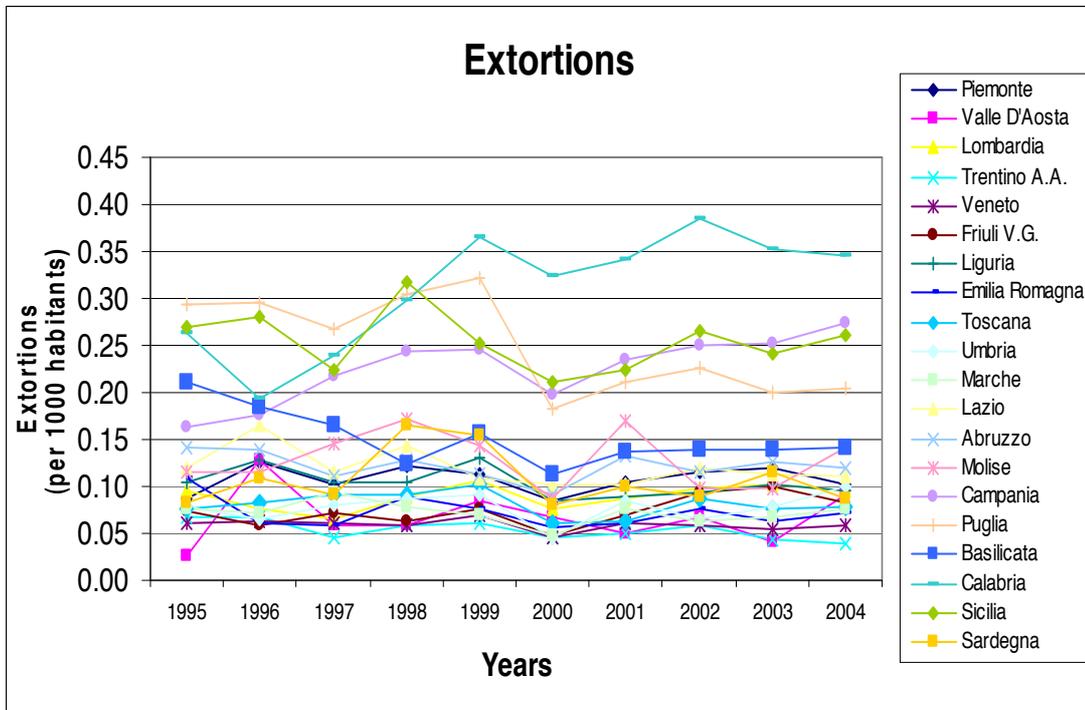
Source: Istat, *Statistiche Giudiziarie Penali*.

Figure 9. Quotient of Mafioso association, Italian Regions, years 1995-2004



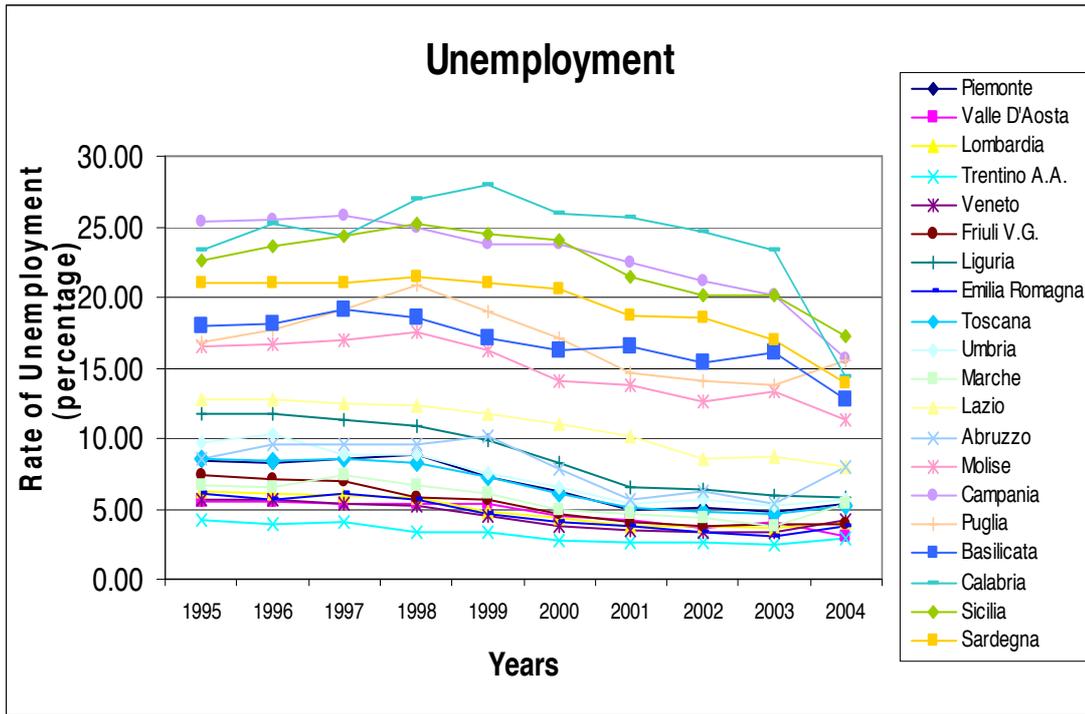
Source: Istat, *Statistiche Giudiziarie Penali*.

Figure 10. Quotient of Extortions, Italian Regions, years 1995-2004



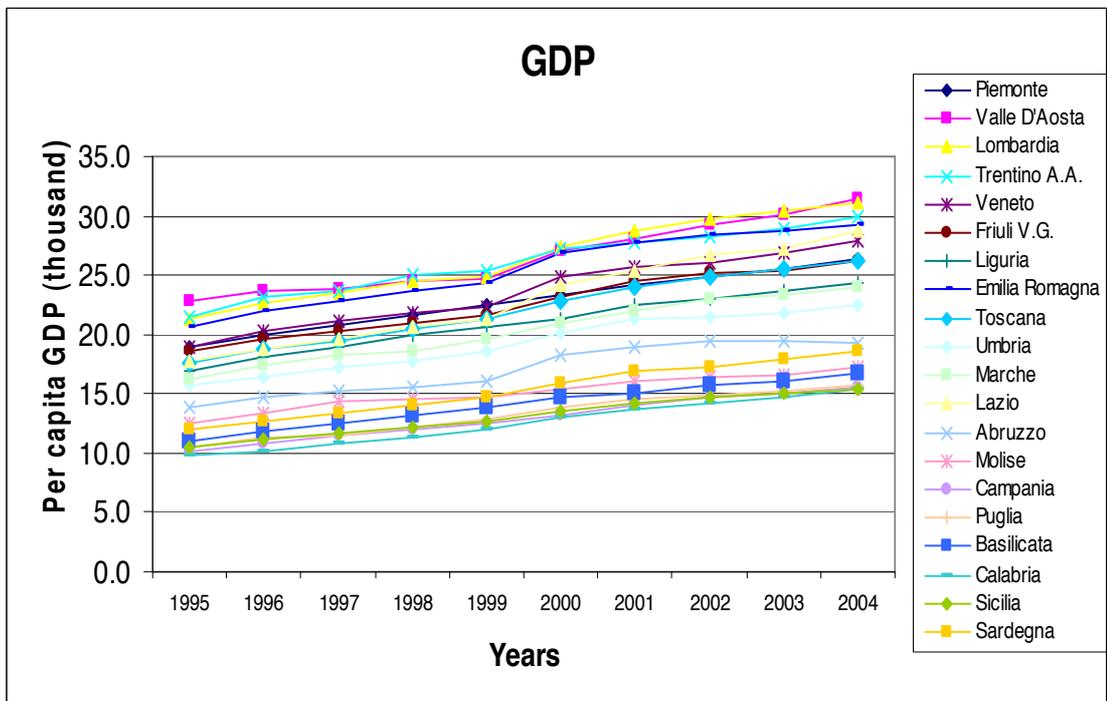
Source: Istat, *Statistiche Giudiziarie Penali*.

Figure 11. Unemployment rate, Italian regions, years 1995-2004



Source: Istat, *Media Forze di Lavoro*

Figure 12. Per Capita GDP (thousand), Italian Regions, years 1995-2004



Source: Istat, *Conti Economici Regionali*.

**Table 2. Summary statistics**

| <b>Variable</b>                       | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Median</b> | <b>Minimum</b> | <b>Maximum</b> | <b>Std. Dev.</b> |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| <i>Diploma</i>                        | 24.363      | 24.400        | 17.000         | 32.037         | 3.1281           |
| <i>Degree</i>                         | 5.6640      | 5.5000        | 3.0000         | 10.300         | 1.2466           |
| <i>Total Crime</i>                    | 45.498      | 43.327        | 19.554         | 106.61         | 15.298           |
| <i>Property Crime</i>                 | 32.706      | 31.041        | 10.214         | 75.239         | 12.563           |
| <i>White-Collar Crime</i>             | 5.4169      | 4.8336        | 2.3267         | 24.744         | 3.0514           |
| <i>Mafia</i>                          | 0.0035431   | 0.00070342    | 0.000000       | 0.032998       | 0.0067024        |
| <i>Extortion</i>                      | 0.12636     | 0.10048       | 0.025641       | 0.38423        | 0.077179         |
| <i>Unknown</i>                        | 78.643      | 79.569        | 43.424         | 92.161         | 7.8900           |
| <i>Unknown of property crimes</i>     | 91.504      | 92.329        | 63.025         | 97.863         | 4.3436           |
| <i>Unknown of white-collar crimes</i> | 61.194      | 62.451        | 28.052         | 87.773         | 12.270           |
| <i>GDP</i>                            | 19.624      | 19.520        | 9.7300         | 31.380         | 5.4946           |
| <i>Unemployment</i>                   | 10.924      | 8.2667        | 2.4000         | 28.000         | 7.1421           |

Source: Author's elaboration

### 4.2.2 *The Empirical procedure*

The main difficulty in estimating the effect of education on criminal activity is the presence of unobserved characteristics –both individual and of socio-economic context- affecting a schooling decision that are likely to be correlated with unobservable factors influencing the decision to engage in crime. For this reason we need to be careful, because if we do not take into account the presence of these unobserved characteristics, we may overestimate the effect of education on criminality.

To address unobserved heterogeneity problems, the best option would be to use a credible instrumental variable for education. Namely, change in compulsory schooling laws over time is an effective instrument for education, and using this variable, as Lochner and Moretti (2004) did, could be a good strategy. However, in the Italian case we do not have such a credible instrumental variable (Buonanno and Leonida, 2008), consequently we have to take other precautions in order to mitigate for the omitted-variable bias. For this purpose, as previously discussed, we allow for socioeconomic and deterrence variables. Moreover, we also control for measures of the presence and diffusion of the Mafioso criminal organizations – rate of recorded Mafioso Association and extortion. Then we exploit the panel<sup>38</sup> structure of our dataset to net out variation in crime rates due to unobserved factors.

Thus, following Buonanno and Leonida (2008), in our equation of criminality we also include regionally-fixed effects to control for variation in crime rates determined by characteristics that vary across regions but are constant over time. Moreover we add in time fixed effects in order to adjust for the effect of factors that cause yearly changes in crime rates that are common to all regions.

As a result, our econometric specification is:

$$[1] \quad \text{Crime}_{i,t} = \alpha_i + \beta_1 \text{Education}_{i,t} + \beta_2 X_{i,t} + \tau_t + \varepsilon_{i,t}$$

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<sup>38</sup> Panel structure of the observations –the existence in the sample of both temporal and longitudinal dimension-, results particularly effective in cases, like this one, in which, it is theoretically legitimate to hypothesize that there are different characteristics from region to region, but relatively continuous in time, and for which are not available satisfactory empirical counterparts. Panel estimating allows these components to be modelled from a statistical point of view or as fixed effects, that is, adding to the model's common constant a constant different from region to region. See Marselli, R., Vannini, M. (1999).

where the subscripts **i** and **t** represent region and time period, respectively;  $\alpha_i$  is a region fixed effect,  $\tau_t$  is a time fixed effect, **Crime**<sub>*i,t*</sub> is the number of crimes per region residents (Property crime, White-Collar crime and Total Crime), **Education**<sub>*i,t*</sub> is the level of education (Diploma and Degree), **X**<sub>*i,t*</sub> is the set of explanatory variables defined in the previous section (Unemployment, GDP, Mafia, Extortion and Unknown) and  $\varepsilon_{i,t}$  is the error term.

The error term represents the deviation of our sample from the (unobservable) actual function of crime. For the estimation of our model we use the Weighted Least Squares estimator, a statistic method allowing correction for heteroskedasticity. The premise is that the error term of our observations does not have a constant variance, as we use a time series of ten years, and a set of regions characterized by enormous socio-economical differences. In this situation it is admissible to hypothesise that error terms are likely to vary greatly from observation to observation.

The results of crime equation are presented in table 2, whilst in tables 4, 5 and 6 these results are compared with those obtained from the other two equations:

$$[2] \quad \text{Crime}_{i,t} = \alpha_i + \beta_1 \text{Education}_{i,t} + \beta_2 \mathbf{X}_{i,t} + \varepsilon_{i,t}$$

$$[3] \quad \text{Crime}_{i,t} = \alpha_i + \beta_1 \text{Education}_{i,t} + \beta_2 \mathbf{X}_{i,t} + \delta_i \text{time}_t + \varepsilon_{i,t}$$

Equation 2 includes, in addition to independent variables, only the variables of regional fixed effects –  $\alpha_i$  - but not that of time fixed effect, while equation 3 adds to the set of explanatory and to the region fixed effects variables, the region-specific time trend -  $\delta_i \text{time}_t$ .

### 4.3 Empirical Results

Analyzing the results of equation 3 that allows only for regional fixed effects – results shown in columns *a* in tables 4, 5 and 6 - one may become worried. In fact, the data is alarming, as it suggests that education is positively and significantly correlated with crimes. However, this is an effect of the growing trend of education, as is shown in graphs 4 and 5. Indeed, when  $\tau_t$  and  $\delta_i \text{time}_t$  are added instead, after allowing for time fixed effect or region-specific time trend, *Diploma* and *Degree* are no longer correlated to crime.

As it is possible to see from Table 3, where the analysis of our dataset is summarised, the estimation of the ‘criminal equation’ [1] proposed above (sect. 4.2.2), has unexpected and surprising results.

Our finding suggested that education does not affect criminality, independently its effects concerning labour markets returns measured as GDP per capita and unemployment rate.

With regards to the other variables -the ‘regressors’ of our equation-, deterrence variable, **Unknown** offenders, shows significant coefficients of correlation with expected signs for *Property* and *Total Crimes* but not for *White-collar crime*. This indicates that with an increase of the number of unpunished criminals, laws have less deterrent effect, and thus crime is likely to rise. However, this is less true for white-collar criminals, whose behaviour does not seem to be influenced by this kind of deterrent variable.

The labour market variable, or **Unemployment** rate, does not show significant coefficients for any of the three categories of crime. This result is surprising, as many theories, supported by numerous studies, indicate the situation of being unemployed as the cause for many individual and social problems, and among these, an increase in criminality. However, we must consider the peculiarity of Italy's economic context, characterised by frequent cases of *lavoro nero*, that is, undeclared job, and thus of numerous employees that have an irregular work. So, even if the percentage of unemployment rate seems high, the actual situation may be less dramatic.

On the contrary, the variable of an individual's wealth, the **GDP** per capita, is negatively and strongly correlated to them. This finding supports the hypothesis

that with the increase of individual wealth, the individual's likelihood of risking engaging in criminal activities decreases, as well as the need to do it.

With regards to the estimation of the correlation of variables of regional Mafioso presence, our findings suggest that the Mafia seems to not affect criminality. On the contrary, coefficients of Extortion – another variable indicating Mafioso presence in the regions- have positive and significant signs for *White-Collar* and *Total* crime but not for *Property* crime. This evidence strongly suggests that with the increase of the number of extortions, white-collar and total crimes increase too. What can we derive from this evidence? We can see in Figures 1, 2 and 3, showing the trend of total, property and white-collar crimes respectively, that in Calabria, Campania, Puglia and Sicily, the problem of crime does not seem to be any more pronounced than in other Italian regions. Nevertheless, such regions were historically characterised by a strong Mafia presence, and during the years 1995-2004 by a higher number of recorded Mafioso associations and extortions (see Figures 9 and 10). It is a well-established fact that Mafioso organizations manage illegal activities, as well as legal ones, used to launder money generated by the former. Alongside this, the Mafia creates a totalitarian system, in which every economic activity, legal as well illegal, is controlled. However, through the use of violence, the Mafia ensures that individuals will respect the code of silence, and so an offence is less likely to be reported. For the reasons above mentioned, we believe that crimes are less likely to be reported in Southern Regions, however the high rate of extortions in such regions clearly indicates a Mafia presence, suggesting that this a major cause of the overall crime recorded.

Turning our attention to **R-squared** and **adjusted R-squared**'s values, we can see that they are almost the same; besides which, they are nearly to 1. To be more precise, the **Adjusted R-squared**'s values indicate that our model is able to explain 85, 86 and 92 per cent of the original variation of Total, White-collar and Property crimes' values respectively, around the regression line.

**Table 3. Coefficient of variations allowing for fixed effects**

|                     | <b>Property crime</b>  | <b>White-collar crime</b> | <b>Total Crime</b>      |
|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Diploma             | 0.8056<br>(0.5716)     | 0.0697<br>(0.1074)        | -0.0919<br>(0.7572)     |
| Degree              | 0.6577<br>(0.9794)     | 0.1719<br>(0.1767)        | -0.1233<br>(1.3452)     |
| Unknown             | 0.7366***<br>(0.1507)  | 0.0094<br>(0.0082)        | 0.6260***<br>(0.0642)   |
| Unemployment        | 0.3827<br>(0.2589)     | -0.0301<br>(0.0429)       | 0.3770<br>(0.2787)      |
| GDP                 | -2.0255***<br>(0.4514) | -0.5327***<br>(0.1208)    | -3.0015***<br>(0.6483)  |
| Mafia               | 91.4991<br>(96.8106)   | 22.2363<br>(13.7137)      | 124.399<br>(91.0692)    |
| Extortion           | 13.448<br>(10.6309)    | 3.1733**<br>(1.4523)      | 34.2126***<br>(12.0787) |
| R <sup>2</sup>      | 0.9317                 | 0.8807                    | 0.8719                  |
| Adj. R <sup>2</sup> | 0.9171                 | 0.8553                    | 0.8445                  |

Source: Author's elaboration.

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses; \*, \*\*, \*\*\* indicate coefficient significant at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels, respectively. All regressions include a full set of region and year fixed effects. Each regression has 200 observations and covers the period 1995-2004.

**Table 4. Coefficient of variations of Property crime's equation**

|                     | Property crime         |                        |                        |
|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
|                     | <b>A</b>               | <b>b</b>               | <b>c</b>               |
| Diploma             | 0.9698**<br>(0.3922)   | 0.8056<br>(0.5716)     | 0.3647<br>(0.5265)     |
| Degree              | 2.1443***<br>(0.7043)  | 0.6577<br>(0.9794)     | 1.7048**<br>(0.7414)   |
| Unknown             | 0.9396***<br>(0.1627)  | 0.7366***<br>(0.1507)  | 0.9695***<br>(0.1525)  |
| Unemployment        | 0.2084<br>(0.2102)     | 0.3827<br>(0.2589)     | 0.3842*<br>(0.2215)    |
| GDP                 | -0.9754***<br>(0.3602) | -2.0255***<br>(0.4514) | -2.0643***<br>(0.4949) |
| Mafia               | -41.4335<br>87.3494    | 91.4991<br>(96.8106)   | -51.7488<br>(98.2559)  |
| Extortion           | 63.7505***<br>(10.318) | 13.448<br>(10.6309)    | 63.475***<br>(10.6426) |
| R <sup>2</sup>      | 0.8756                 | 0.9317                 | 0.9036                 |
| Adj. R <sup>2</sup> | 0.8569                 | 0.9171                 | 0.8885                 |

Source: Author's elaboration.

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses; \*, \*\*, \*\*\* indicate coefficient significant at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels, respectively. All regressions include a full set of region fixed effects -column *a*-, region and year fixed effects -column *b*- and region fixed effects and time trend- column *c*. Each regression has 200 observations and covers the period 1995-2004.

**Table 5. Coefficient of variations of White-collar crime's equation**

|                     | White-collar crime     |                        |                        |
|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
|                     | a                      | b                      | c                      |
| Diploma             | 0.0907<br>(0.0840)     | 0.0697<br>(0.1074)     | 0.0123<br>(0.1061)     |
| Degree              | 0.04169<br>(0.1722)    | 0.1719<br>(0.1767)     | 0.1588<br>(0.1716)     |
| Unknown             | 0.0188***<br>(0.0069)  | 0.0094<br>(0.0082)     | 0.0214***<br>(0.0068)  |
| Unemployment        | 0.0879**<br>(0.0415)   | -0.0301<br>(0.0429)    | 0.0879*<br>(0.0499)    |
| GDP                 | -0.3130***<br>(0.0698) | -0.5327***<br>(0.1208) | -0.5476***<br>(0.1015) |
| Mafia               | 0.7835<br>(20.35)      | 22.2363<br>(13.7137)   | -2.6341<br>(22.4561)   |
| Extortion           | 6.3779***<br>(1.8242)  | 3.1733**<br>(1.4523)   | 8.1696***<br>(2.1566)  |
| R <sup>2</sup>      | 0.8033                 | 0.8807                 | 0.7916                 |
| Adj. R <sup>2</sup> | 0.7738                 | 0.8553                 | 0.7589                 |

Source: Author's elaboration.

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses; \*, \*\*, \*\*\* indicate coefficient significant at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels, respectively. All regressions include a full set of region fixed effects -column *a*-, region and year fixed effects -column *b*- and region fixed effects and time trend- column *c*. Each regression has 200 observations and covers the period 1995-2004

**Table 6. Coefficient of variations of Total crime's equation**

|                     | Total Crime             |                         |                         |
|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
|                     | a                       | b                       | c                       |
| Diploma             | 1.6387***<br>(0.4485)   | -0.0919<br>(0.7572)     | 0.2894<br>(0.6700)      |
| Degree              | 3.1230***<br>(0.8082)   | -0.1233<br>(1.3452)     | 1.7371<br>(1.1493)      |
| Unknown             | 0.4563***<br>(0.0799)   | 0.6260***<br>(0.0642)   | 0.4825***<br>(0.0864)   |
| Unemployment        | 0.0835<br>(0.2015)      | 0.3770<br>(0.2787)      | 0.3997<br>(0.2828)      |
| GDP                 | -2.0492***<br>(0.4121)  | -3.0015***<br>(0.6483)  | -3.1836***<br>(0.6439)  |
| Mafia               | 93.2857<br>(75.5199)    | 124.399<br>(91.0692)    | -3.8788<br>(128.757)    |
| Extortion           | 54.4754***<br>(8.90317) | 34.2126***<br>(12.0787) | 62.0642***<br>(13.5335) |
| R <sup>2</sup>      | 0.8373                  | 0.8719                  | 0.8238                  |
| Adj. R <sup>2</sup> | 0.8129                  | 0.8445                  | 0.7962                  |

Source: Author's elaboration.

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses; \*, \*\*, \*\*\* indicate coefficient significant at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels, respectively. All regressions include a full set of region fixed effects -column *a*-, region and year fixed effects -column *b*- and region fixed effects and time trend- column *c*. Each regression has 200 observations and covers the period 1995-2004

## **5. Education - Easier Said than Done**

During this whole work, we have discussed at great length the potential for schools to improve many individual and social lives. We have seen how this is supported by investigations that showed the important positive result of education on numerous communitarian and individualistic aspects of life, such as general development and individual wealth. Moreover, various investigations, and among these the most important and recent are the studies of Lochner and Moretti in the United States and those of Buonanno and Leonida in Italy, clearly indicate that higher education is directly correlated to a lower rate of crime.

Unfortunately, in the light of the results of our investigation, we must conclude that, at least in the considered period of time, education is not correlated with crime.

In this chapter we will try to advance some hypotheses as to why education did not affect crime, and what kind of factors contribute to neutralizing the education's effect on crime (Section 5.1).

Later, we present a discussion of an emblematic example, -that of Naples-, the case of a difficult environmental situation in which the function of education was required to solve problems of legality (Section 5.2). In subsection 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 we present some projects that were developed in the schools and in the juvenile prison of Nisida, with the purpose of re-educating youth from disadvantaged background and problematic situations.

This chapter will be concluded with our consideration about the future perspective of the education and crime (Section 5.3).

### **5.1 School and Environmental Negative Influences**

As we have said previously, the study of the education and crime relationship can not set aside all the peculiarity of territorial context. Among other abnormalities that distinguish Italy, there is a strong presence of criminal organizations that are able to exert great influence on the culture, way of life and individual decisions and trajectories in a large part of the country. However, while Mafioso organizations do not have such immense authority in every region, they do seem to extensively control the southern territory. Nevertheless, there is a relatively recent tendency of

the Mafia to expand out from their traditional activities and areas, which see them day after day becoming more rooted in the north of Italy, especially in Lombardy. But it is in regions such as Calabria, Campania, Puglia and Sicily in which they are really able to exercise their nearly absolute control. In these regions, the Mafia's enormous conditioning power derives also from government's incapability in generating economic development and thus, the improvement of general wealth. In fact, on the basis of the strong and stable rooting of these illegal Mafioso organizations, there is the widespread belief held amongst many of the population of the most influenced areas that these criminal organizations offer the only way to escape from a miserable life. In the most disadvantaged areas, it is not unusual to believe that local Mafioso organizations can provide the solutions to greater problems, such as unemployment and a lack of security; in this context, Government is seen as distant, and unable or uninterested in supplying an answer to the needs of its citizens. As a consequence, it is commonplace for a Mafioso 'boss' to be wanted by the police, but to be protected by the population; or, after the arrest of a chief and member of a local criminal organization, citizens will worry about their futures in these areas, because while they knew how to cope with the old Mafia regime, they will not know the rules and the customs of the new regime. In fact, it is not unlikely that a new Mafioso criminal organization will take the place of the dismantled one.

This is not the place in which to extend this question which has always remained open and for which, for a very long time scholars have been involved in providing a definitive solution. However it is fundamentally important to know the variety of contexts and situations in which school has to exert its functions, educational as well as civilizing. It is important to consider that the unity of our country, and the birth of the Italian nation, is relatively recent; therefore, this unification was composed of numerous very different little 'states', each with its own language, culture, history and tradition. For many years, even if under the same government, the southern regions had been effectively segregated along with their problems. Broadly speaking, nowadays the variety of contexts and situations are ascribable to the origin of the same nation and, today, school represents the only institution through which government may operate conformation across every region.

Moreover, in the profoundly marginalised areas, school may be the only valid instrument to connect the State with smaller territories; it represents the only experience that is the same for all individuals, from different region but of the same generation. Unfortunately, it seems that in the areas in which the state needs more schools to operate this link and to contrast a culture against its central power and unfavourable to legality, there is a high likelihood that individuals would not attend compulsory school, and to be more influenced by deviant and criminal culture. However, yet the drop-out rate does not directly imply a criminal involvement by those who leave school early. Indeed it is impossible to say if being school drop-out today inevitably leads to criminality tomorrow. Even so, in disorganized areas, such as many districts of Naples, youths are constantly subject to temptation proceeding from illegal opportunities of gains. Alongside this, criminal organizations are in a continuous need for labour, and juvenile employees are highly desirable to them because they are cheap, easy to manage, more effective and less risky. For this reason juveniles need special protection, because they are easily influenced by Mafioso gangsters and easily engaged in criminal activities.

The strong presence of criminal opportunities and the illegal culture associated with low school attainment by individuals may lead to an increase in juvenile delinquency, and later in a higher rate of crime. On the contrary, in other contexts, where adult criminality is not widespread, and in which there are many legal job opportunities, a drop-out is less likely to engage in crime because of the positive influence coming from family and social environment and of the high opportunity cost related to committing crime.

In an investigation for understanding the problem of school dropout in 1999, the delegation of the Parliamentary Committee in charge of addressing the problem, noticed complicated situations and multiple sources of problems, which schools are required to face up to in different cities. However, the most problematic cases are those in which the work of a school's personnel is constantly obstructed by criminal influences and social problems caused by poverty and diffuse illegality. In fact, students of Schools situated in these areas suffer from difficult family situations, often with a parent in jail, or with problems of drug or alcohol addiction. There are many situations in which young students do not have a normal life, because of their

duty to their family, such as caring after younger siblings, or because of domestic violence. So, teachers and educators have to face up to the problems which youths take with them to school, with their hardships, and their disturbed personality. And a lot of a school's staff are not ready to face such difficulties and accept the challenge of educating these pupils. As a consequence, in the schools in disadvantaged areas, there is a high turn-over of teachers and head teachers, putting the stability of the school's activities in danger, and causing a lessening of pupils' attachment to school and of their educational success. Alongside problems with their students and a poor cultural environment around the school itself, teachers have to face up to the scarcity of economical resources, and the reduced social prestige associated with their profession. As a result of all these difficulties, it is not surprising if the effort teachers put into their work is not enough to be able to combat a widespread culture of illegality amongst most of their pupils and to give them another chance to escape from an inevitable destiny.

## 5.2 The Case of Naples

Naples is typical as a city that suffers due to the strong presence of the Mafia, and one in which for far too long, an underdeveloped economy makes a life already marred by poverty, social disorganisation, broken families, and most importantly crime, even harder and more difficult to bear.

In this situation, many juveniles are victims of the fascination associated with the *Camorra*, the name of regional Mafioso organization, referred also to as *U Sistema*, The System, by Campania's population. Camorra is felt by many young individuals as the organization through which one can realize his ambition of power and economic wealth, thanks to which it is possible to escape from a miserable life, defined by deprivation, domestic violence and humiliation. In the absence of strong and stable schooling and other social institutions, the Camorra is the only association able to give an identity to disadvantaged adolescents –often, not adolescents even, but children-, to ensure social integration, integration that a non-deviant society, the so called 'good' society refused to give them.

The Parliamentary report approved by the Parliamentary Anti-mafia Committee in 1993 concerning Camorra's activities and dangerousness, affirms that one of the most important causes of juvenile deviation is the scholastic situation. Indeed, in 1988, Naples was estimated to be lacking 4812 classrooms; by the end of 1993 this deficiency, even if quantitatively reduced, was still too high, calculated as 2214. Behind the insufficiency of places in which to carry out school activities, there were other problems related to the quality and safety of the existing structures. In 1993, the schools' situations were so grave as to cause an emergency, which required a special legislative regulation to allow the opening of the 1993-94 academic year.

As the previously cited Parliamentarian report of 1993 explains through data provided by office of Juvenile Justice of *Ministero di Grazia e Giustizia*, in the last decades the situation of juvenile deviance became worse. Compared to the end of the 1970s, the number of juveniles reported as having committed a crime has doubled; between 1990 and 1992, it passed from 3982 to 5101, with an increase of 28.1 percent. But the most important increase concerned the number reported aged less than 14 years old, which increased of 93.2 percent, passing from 428 to 827.

More specifically, in 1991 the situation of juvenile involvement in criminal activities was impressive. In that year, 1342 adolescents were arrested; the 81.34 percent of the total were youths that did not finish compulsory school, against about the 42 percent of the regions of North Italy; 56.74% of the total arrested adolescents had just achieved primary school certificate, and 4 percent were illiterate (Sommella, 1993, p. 87).

### ***5.2.1 The Educational Projects Against Criminality***

In light of this alarming data, reinforced by the evidently dramatic situation for those youngsters who poured into the poorest areas of Naples as well as other underdeveloped zones of southern Italian regions, intervened the *Ministero di Grazia e Giustizia* with the law 216 of 1991 (L. 216/1991). With this law, it was recognized that the inadequate presence of social associations and programs dedicated to youngsters contributed to make worse their situation worse. In fact, this law provides for intervention in favour of juveniles most at risk of involvement in criminal activities, through projects of institutions for the re-socialization multifunctional laboratory of professional formation, centre for creative activities and academic help.

Some years later, in 1997, another law was approved – the law n. 285- concerning the promotion of rights and opportunities for children and adolescents on a national, regional and local level.

This highlighted for the first time, the lack of involvement of the community, and in particular of the family, in the process of re-education and reintegration of youths into civil society and legal employment. With these laws, the concept of ‘active citizenship’ came to have meaning also in areas, such as Naples, in which there are high levels of social deprivation. Various projects came into being as a result of the laws 216/1991 and 285/1997, the majority of which were directed towards adolescents and pre-adolescents at risk of criminal involvement. Furthermore, nearly every project sought to encourage the involvement of families and local communities and to promote relations based on mutual trust. The idea is that, without the support of all the members of a community, the activities designed to re-educate youngsters would not be effective. In fact, without the participation of

the whole community, after attending school and completing educational activities, pupils will simply return home or to the street where negative influences will destroy any progress made with the youngsters. For this reason, it is important to stimulate a sense of community and to raise awareness of the school's objectives and the importance of collective cooperation during the process of re-educating and reintroducing youths to civil society.

### **5.2.2 'Fratello Maggiore' and 'Chance'**

Two such projects that were born thanks laws 216/91 and 285/97 and to the great effort of volunteers and particularly committed individuals, are the *Fratello Maggiore* and *Chance* projects. These projects were able to draw the attention of the international community, becoming viewed as examples of successful social programmes (see also Verrini, 2000).

**Fratello Maggiore** was born in Naples in 1991 as a project for the prevention of juvenile problems. This project was developed by different subjects, such as Campania's Usr –Regional Scholastic Office-, Asl of Naples –Socio-sanitarian and Drug-addictions departments, Municipality of Naples, and 'Volideali' association. The purpose of *Fratello Maggiore* is to promote education between peers through programmed informal communication among youngsters from different educational backgrounds. The basic idea is that there exists an unexploited capacity of natural transmission of knowledge by adolescents towards younger individuals, and that it is possible to solve the difficulties of formal education by using this conditioning power exerted by peers (Villani, 2002). The involvement and formation of high school students is the first objective. In fact, they are the most important subjects, because adolescents often are not ready to care after problematic youngsters, such as the children who are part of the program. Older students are required to control bad emotional feelings, such as frustration, delusions, prejudices as well as negative situations. The success of the formation of *peer educators* is very important due to the fact that their work and actions would be fundamental to the success of the whole project (Scanu and Villani, 2003). Once they have been formed and properly educated to intervene for guiding younger individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds and from compulsory schools, these adolescents would become their

tutors, a sort of holder brother. Each student associated with a younger adolescent would carry out normal activities such as playing football, going out to the cinema, and many others like these, with the purpose of making sure that disadvantaged children do not remain alone, and to prevent them from dropping out of the educational system. The objective of the *Fratello Maggiore* scheme is twofold. On the one hand, high school students are made aware of social problems, such as illegality and poverty, and of the importance of working with the weaker part of the community, that is with children from most disadvantaged families. On the other hand, children suffering from bad family situations, strong affective and material privations, would be guided towards the right way, the most possible far away from criminality. An attachment to conventional society would be stimulated and, if it is possible, the educational system as well. These children would join a community made by other youngsters who were successfully involved in a forward-looking trajectory of life constituted by attending higher educational levels.

The **Chance** project was founded in Naples in 1998 by two teachers – Marco Rossi Doria and Angela Villani- with extensive experience of working with problematic children. This project is involved in working with dropouts, to reintegrate them to the education system, and, as the name suggests, to give disadvantaged youths who on account of their background have been unable to complete their schooling, another chance to be a valuable part of society. Some time later, under the management of Cesare Moreno, another teacher committed to social reform, the project underwent a change of direction and began to concentrate its efforts on the development of educative programs designed to reach youngsters not in schools, but directly on the street or in deprived areas. A new professional figure –the ‘street teacher’ emerged from *Chance*. These teachers are called in to cope with extreme situations such as the violent rejection of public institutions the refusal to accept their authority and methods of teaching, as well as to help with aggressive youth and their families. The challenge is great; it is not easy to reintegrate these children and to equip them with the basic capabilities needed to participate in a school environment and to complete compulsory studies. The effort and the commitment required from the teachers involved in the project are very high, and the social and economic rewards are minimal. There is however help and

psychological support provided to the teachers by a specific subdivision of the project. Human resources play an important role in ensuring the success of project *Chance*, and for this reason, particular attention is put on the *manutenzione delle risorse* (Moreno, 2001), that is the care of the needs of teachers and staff. In fact, the project can not work if special attention is not put on the needs and the problems of teachers and staff in the exercise of their important work.

### **5.2.3 ‘Nisida Futuro Ragazzi’, ‘Nisida R.F.C.’ and ‘La Palla Storta’**

Alongside the aforementioned project concerning specifically students and pupils, there are other projects directed towards a rehabilitation of youngsters that have judiciary problems, or that are at particular risk of being involved in criminal activities. Among others, there are *Nisida Futuro Ragazzi*, *Nisida R.F.C.* and *La Palla Storta*.

**Nisida Futuro Ragazzi**, was founded in 1994 as collaboration between *Ministero della Giustizia* and municipality of Naples. This project aims to build a village for adolescents on the isle of Nisida, where there is a juvenile jail. It was inspired by Eduardo De Filippo’s *Il Villaggio per i Giovanni* in which, the village is presented as a place to learn crafts and skills. The village therefore would offer the possibility for youngsters to escape troubled family backgrounds, and economic, psychological or social hardship. The courses organized in this ‘village’ are directed at young inmates of the juvenile prison, as well as at other students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Courses and activities offer the chance to learn a wide range of skills, from culinary skills, to pottery. They aim not only to give youths the opportunity to integrate into civil society but also to equip them with the skills and abilities necessary to find employment.

*Nisida R.F.C.* and *La Palla Storta* are two projects developed by Amatori Napoli Rugby – ANR-, a rugby association, which works to promote reintegration and social inclusion of disadvantaged youths in Naples. These programs use the rules of Rugby as a model to encourage youths to respect the rules of the society, and to teach them to be fair with competitors and cooperative with colleagues.

**Nisida R.F.C.** (Nisida Rugby Football Club) is a program designed for the young offenders in Nisida juvenile jail, and began in November 2005. This program

offers to the convicted young offenders of Nisida, an alternative to the street and to urban decay, and an opportunity of integration in the local sports team of Naples and other towns nearby. The project is developed in different stages. The first concerns the presentation of rugby by technical staff of Amatori Napoli Rugby, with the support of the FIR – Italian Federation of Rugby. After this first contact, the more practical part would take place, with the training of convicted juveniles. The training is carried out in the jail over four weeks by volunteers from the ANR. Later, the youths that had demonstrated a keen interest, and who showed promise and enthusiasm, would be involved in a fourth phase. They are involved in training that takes place outside the jail, even if still in the Isle of Nisida, with the senior players of the ANR. Finally, the youth from the juvenile prison of Nisida will join a tournament that will take place outside the island and the jail but in the territory of Naples and province, and with schools associated with the FIR and ANR. The first tournament of social rugby, *7 in Condotta*, took place the 29 of May of the current year. In this competition, the team composed of the youngsters of the juvenile prison, team called *Pirati di Nisida*, challenged the other three teams composed of the under 17s and the under 18s of Amatori Napoli Rugby Club.

**La Palla Storta** was founded in 2007 and is a triennial program, initiated by Amatori Napoli Rugby in association with Laureus Foundation, a prestigious non-profit international association, committed for the social reintegration of juvenile through the sport. It seeks to carry out its objective of reintegration by working with primary and post primary schools (*Scuole Elementare* and *Scuole Medie*) situated in disadvantaged areas such as Bagnoli, Cavalleggeri, Pianura, Soccavo, Rione Traiano and Scampia.

#### **5.2.4 Recent Trend of Juvenile Delinquency**

In recent years, there has been a decreasing trend of juvenile criminality. In particular in Naples, in 2000 reported juvenile delinquents were 3113, of which 412 were not charged due to the fact that they were below the age of 14; in 2007, there was a reduction of both juvenile offenders and offenders under the age of 14, being

2976 and 405 respectively, and thus with a lessening of 4.4 per cent of juvenile reported crime and of 34.78% for the juvenile under 14 years<sup>39</sup>.

Nevertheless, we can not state that this reduction is caused by the effort made by teachers, volunteers and other associations which make it possible for the disadvantaged adolescent to conclude their compulsory schooling and their professional education. It would be interesting in the future to ascertain whether there is also a causal relation, as the empirical evidence tends to suggest, between the success of these social programs and juvenile criminality. For now, we must conclude with a positive note in favour of all the individuals that have accepted the challenge of transmitting a message of hope and confidence for their rehabilitation and social inclusion to all adolescents, children and youths who have constantly suffered in problematic situations.

### **5.3 Future Perspectives**

As we have learned in the previous subsections, the activities of repression of crime are not the only instruments that a society has to fight criminality. On the contrary, these activities must be accompanied by measures to support the school and families that are more at risk of being influenced by organized crime. Therefore we can only continue to finance, and also to control, projects like those mentioned above, because these have a very high social value and provide a valuable opportunity for children and families to escape from the risks of being involved in criminal activities. Moreover, these projects have an invaluable economic value to society that promotes and finances these, because the money that Government pays for them are less than the money that requires detaining individuals to prisons. Moreover, we believe that by acting on juvenile crime, and also helping less motivated children, and those who are less likely to finish school, to acquire skills and dexterity to be used profitably in the labour market, we can obtain a long-term reduction in crime also in general, more specifically the adult criminality. In fact, if it is true that criminals are not born but made, starting out on a criminal career in early life makes it more likely that individuals will have more trouble with the law in adulthood. So, if this is true, how much money would Government save through

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<sup>39</sup> Data sourced from the judiciary statistics provided by Istat in [www.giustiziaincifre.istat.it](http://www.giustiziaincifre.istat.it)

investing in programs which prevent many juveniles from engaging in crime? One only need think of recent estimates on the costs of illegality. For example, Barbarino and Mastrobuoni (2007) estimated that the average cost for incarcerating an inmate is about 70 thousand euro yearly. The authors also point out that “*these costs do not include tax distortions -it costs more than one euro to collect one euro in taxes - , inmates’ wasted human capital, their post-release decline in wages, and the pain and suffering of inmates and of their families -including the one due to overcrowding jails*” (2007: 21).

Nevertheless, we are aware that the commitment of teachers, educators, and school as a whole, should not be left to their own devices in the fight against crime. Indeed, a certificate of education, excellent skills, but also a set of good principles and values are not enough to keep people away from crime, unless the individual is given the possibility properly to use them giving them a legal work.

However, the creation of job opportunities by the State is not the only objective that needs to be acquired. Leaders themselves must give good examples and promote good citizenship. And it is here that another problem comes to light, whose gravity has not yet been fully understood. The recent incidents in the administration of Campania concerning the involvement of numerous officials in charge for the disposal of waste<sup>40</sup>, and those most recent – but unfortunately not new – on a national level, in which our prime minister Silvio Berlusconi is involved, such as the Mills case, awaken unlimited worries with regards to the message sent to the population.

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<sup>40</sup> We refer to the police investigation “Rompiballe”, in which 31 officials of the committee of the disposal of waste have been charged with crimes ranging from illegal traffic in wastes, *falso ideologico*- an offence concerning the violation of public faith of title VII c.p., and fraud against the State. See Ormanni, R. (2008).

## 6. Conclusion

As our purpose was to ascertain whether any relationship exists between high levels of crime and low levels of education, our first task was to define the primary object of our investigation, crime, through a delimitation of the concept –Chapter 1- and by extensively reconsidering the theories of criminal behaviour developed within the field of criminology through the centuries –Chapter 2.

In Section 2.1 we focused on the Classical school of Beccaria and Bentham. We have seen that in Beccaria's opinion people act rationally and pleasure and pain are the principle forces which drive human behaviour. As a consequence, criminality will increase if the law is unknown or ambiguous. More specifically, where punishment is delayed or uncertain, where judges apply the law in an arbitrary or discriminatory manner so that not every offender is punished, criminality is more likely to increase. Accordingly, in Beccaria's opinion punishment should be assigned to each crime in a degree that will result in more pain than pleasure for those who commit the forbidden acts and that condemnation should fit the crime and not the criminal. We had also seen Bentham's theorization of a new type of prison building that would function as an instrument to improve the punishment of convicted criminals. Bentham proposed a model prison, known as the *Panopticon*, which in his opinion would improve discipline and order, as permits guards to supervise each inmate continuously. The Classical school along with its main principles was criticised heavily during the late 1800's and suffered a decline in popularity. However, during the second part of Twentieth century there was a revival of Classical thought thanks to scholars such as Cohen and Felson who in 1979 proposed the Routine Activities theory, and Clarke and Cornish, who in 1985 presented their Rational Choice theory.

Clarke and Cornish's Rational Choice theory, agreeing with Beccaria and Bentham, assumes that people maximize the expected benefits. But rational choice theorists recognize that the benefits can be calculated differently by different but equally rational individuals. Subjective factors such as expected advantages or situational factors such as a lack of security and the effect of drugs of great importance to the individual's decision to offend. Thus, in order to reduce criminality, it is necessary that society as a whole invests in preventing crime not

just through the threat of punishment, but by making crime more difficult and disadvantageous, through the imposition of consequences which consistently outweigh the potential benefits. Lastly, Rational Choice theorists suggest that it would also be useful to prevent situational factors such as a lack of security.

Cohen and Felson's theory also contributes to recent efforts to control crime by altering the situation in ways which make crime less attractive, reducing the opportunity for offenders and so avoiding enactment of the offence. The Routine Activities theory assumes that criminality is a result of the changes that were occurred in United States in 1960. In fact, this theory states that the general wealth of population is the cause of crime, not poor economic conditions or unemployment. Cohen and Felson believe that the more time the individual spends outside the houses increases the opportunity for thief to commit 'predatory' crimes. Therefore, these authors suggest working towards a reduction in favourable circumstance for offenders. However, when this is not possible, it will be useful to contrast criminality with the reduction of the availability of attractive targets and increasing protection, and other policies similar to those suggested by Rational Choice theorists.

Deterrence theory focuses on the problem of punishment as an instrument to deter criminals. A number of studies were carried with the purpose of understanding the power of punishment as a deterrent both in specific cases and generally. On a micro level, it seems that more severe, swift or certain punishment does not deter the punished offender from further crimes. When considering, the deterrent effect of a severe, swift or certain punishment we have seen as the results of various investigations indicate that the certainty of punishment is the most important factor in reducing crime within a population.

By the end of 1800s, in spite of the changes made to the judiciary system determined by the ideas of Beccaria and other scholars of Classical school, another approach had a growing success. Positive school, that has been studied in Section 2.2, of which Lombroso, Ferri and Garofalo are considered the leaders, emerged in the last decades of nineteenth century. The scholars of this new approach believe that criminals are disturbed individuals, and that criminologist's duty is to locate and read the symptoms of their anomalies. For the Positive school of criminology,

criminality would be reduced through the rehabilitation of offenders, and punishment should be directed towards this purpose, that is, fitting the criminal and not the crime. Indeed, Lombroso is considered the first to have created a list of the physical characteristics that in his opinion would make it easy to individuate a 'born criminal' and to intervene and begin his rehabilitation. However, Lombroso's atavistic theory received much disapprobation. Later, his colleagues Ferri and Garofalo tried to improve this theory; they started to stress the idea that crime has many causes, both psychological and social, and not just physical. In particular, Ferri elaborated a Multi-factorial theory of crime, recognizing that biological abnormalities are not the only forces compelling the individual to offend; there are also other causes such as a disadvantaged background, low education and poverty. However, neither Lombroso's nor Ferri's theories of crime have proved to be scientifically valid today because empirical evidence does not comply with the current standards employed by recent scholars. Nevertheless, the Positive school, as the Classical school, had a great influence in many penal systems. Some changes were introduced based on the idea that offenders were unable to distinguish right from wrong due to their biological abnormalities. The shift from individual to social responsibility for crime has also resulted in the rise in the number of Juvenile Courts, indeterminate sentences, probation, parole, education and recreation in prisons, and wider attempts at the social control of crime.

In section 2.3 we gave an overview of the dominant approach in the United States from the early twentieth century, the sociological one. Sociologists and sociological thought challenged the hypotheses formulated by the scholars of both the Classical and Positive schools. In fact, the sociological approach emphasized environmental and social interaction as causal factors in the study of crime and delinquency. The Chicago study and the first Ecological study carried out by Park and Burgess signal the beginning of this new approach that considers the individual as social being and not as independent from his social context, situation and the society that surround him. Park and Burgess, through the observations made in Chicago propose that its high criminal rate was determined by the physical deterioration that characterised some areas of the city - largely surrounding the industrial zone-, the widespread poverty among their residents, their cultural

heterogeneity and the high criminality among adults. Park and Burgess's hypothesis inspired the investigation of Shaw and McKay, from which emerged the Social Disorganization theory. In studying the distribution of delinquency among different areas of Chicago in the early 1900s, Shaw and McKay noted several patterns. Firstly, delinquency rates decreased as one moved from the centre of the city outward. Secondly, the characteristics of the area, not of the individual living in the area, regulated the levels of delinquency. Despite the ethnic changes which occurred during the period of time in which Shaw and McKay conducted their study, the rates of crime remained the same. Furthermore, they found that neighbourhoods with high levels of juvenile delinquency also had high levels of other problems such as adult crime. Although the scientific value of Shaw and McKay's work was recognized, by the 1960s their theory of Social Disorganization had lost its appeal and ability to direct research. However, from the 1980s, other intellectuals were interested in studying the characteristics of different areas of the same city, sharing with Shaw and McKay the belief that the neighbourhood has a great effect on human behaviour even paying attention to structural factors which were ignored by the Chicago School. In particular, in the 1980s Judith and Peter Blau drew attention to the responsibility of socio-economic inequality in causing criminality, and postulated that violent crimes occurring in American cities were provoked by social and economic gaps between Caucasian and African-American populations. Some years later, in 1987, William J. Wilson affirmed that a major cause of crime is the effect of "social homogeneity" on the poverty of the residents within a given area. It was argued that when the poorest people live within a community with widespread problems such as unemployment, family disruption, or a diffuse culture of illegal activity isolating them from the rest of the society, then social disorganization increases and the likelihood of high crime rates is higher. The proposed solution is the elimination of the racial inequality that leads to the isolation of the most disadvantaged individuals in ghettos. This would involve targeting racial discrimination which occurs when individuals attempt to buy property, as well as in a number of other situations. Sampson, at around the same time as Wilson, offered his own enhancement of the original Social Disorganization theory by Shaw and McKay. While the original theory emphasised the role of

formal social control, Sampson focused principally on the effect of informal social control on crime, arguing that crime is caused by the lack of social control within the neighbourhood. He postulates that the neighbourhood would have a higher crime rate when it lost the capacity to regulate the conduct and suppress the criminal behaviour of its members. Furthermore the higher number of single parent families, contributes to this loss of control.

In section 2.4 we have provided an overview of the Anomie/strain theories, which explain criminality as a normal reaction in societies-such as the United States - which are characterised by the disruption of social cohesion or integration, with a breakdown in social control or maladjustment among the social element. This new approach was started by Merton in 1938, who stated that the lack of social regulation in such societies as the U.S leads to an increase in criminal behaviour among the population. In his opinion the high crime rate in American society can be explained by the relative emphasis that the society puts on goals, such as monetary success and the low relative emphasis that is put on the norms or rules for the legitimate means of attaining these goals, such as education and hard work. That is, the means for attaining socially accepted and valued goals are subject to less regulation, and this lack is likely to lead the individual to substitute legitimate channels for illegitimate ones when the former is not available to him. Merton identified five “modes of adaptation” to the strain experienced by the individuals in such a situation: *conformity*, *innovation*, *ritualism*, *retreatism* and *rebellion*. However, Merton believed that *innovation* is the most common deviant response, because it concerns the acceptance of the goals but the use of illegal means for achieving them.

Anomie/Strain theory, as originally developed by Merton, was later enriched by Cohen (1955) and Cloward and Ohlin (1960). In particular, Cohen focused on juvenile delinquency and provided his own explanation as to the origin of violent subcultures. In fact, he hypothesised that delinquency is ultimately caused by obstacles that prevent the attainment of goals, experienced prevalently by individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. Cloward and Ohlin were also interested in explaining delinquent subcultures. In agreement with Merton, they believed that such subcultures were a response of the lower class to the problem of

the adjustment concerned with achieving material success. Moreover, they distinguished three types of subcultures: *criminal*, *conflict* and *retreatist*. In the opinion of these authors, strained individuals will offend only if they join the first of these subcultures, or if they are from a subculture which values are conducive to crime. Nevertheless, both the theories of Merton, Cohen, Cloward and Ohlin, came under heavy attack during the late 1960s and 1970s and experienced a decline due to the fact that the empirical studies failed to provide support for their hypotheses. Most recently, in 1994, Messner and Rosenfeld proposed another theory based on the Mertonian approach, the Institutional-Anomie theory, which argues that, apart from the cultural emphasis on goals like wealth, there is another characteristic of the American society that is conducive to deviant and criminal behaviours of population. This peculiarity is the dominant role of the economy on the institutional structure. In fact, research proved that societies in which the non-economic institutions are stronger than the economic ones, crime rates are lower.

In section 2.5 we reconsidered the major Learning theories developed in sociology. The Learning theories are concerned on the belief that criminal behaviour is learned through social interaction. We studied the Sutherland's Differential Association theory, the most influential theory in this field. This theory, first published in 1938, maintains that individuals learn criminal behaviour through interaction with others, especially with family and friends. For Sutherland the individual learns from those closest to him. He learns not only the techniques necessary to commit an offence, but also a favourable attitude towards to the violating the law. Sutherland also became famous for having coined the term *white-collar crime* and for having explained this kind of offence on the basis of his theory. In particular he argued that *white-collar crimes* are committed because they correspond to a socially accepted form of doing business. Moreover, offenders use strategies to neutralize criminal behaviour; such techniques of neutralization, in addition to fact that the legal system, politicians and the media have neglected this aspect to criminal behaviour, allows for the diffusion of criminal behaviour in business and administration as it provides a situation in which the favourable conditions for conforming to the law are rare. Sutherland, however, was criticized for several reasons, first of all for not providing a good description of the

favourable and unfavourable attitudes towards crime. A second criticism of the Differential Association theory was that it failed to fully describe the process by which criminal behaviour is learned. Therefore, criminologists such as Akers and others have sought to extend Sutherland's theory and explore how criminal learning occurs, using the social learning theory in psychology. In the Social Learning theory Akers attempts to explain the process of the learning criminal behaviour by arguing that the individual learns how to violate the law through three processes. Firstly, individuals learn the beliefs that define crime as desirable or justified in certain situations. Secondly, individuals engage in crime because they are differentially reinforced for criminal behaviour. Thirdly, an individual engages in crime because he is imitating the criminal behaviour of others, especially if he perceives the others' criminal behaviour as successful, or otherwise reinforced from the social approval toward them.

Social Learning theory relates to the anticipated consequences of particular actions (i.e., whether a criminal act is likely to be punished), and in his theory Akers maintains, as the Classical scholars, that the individual tends to do things that will not result in punishment; however, Akers also stated that, in carrying out his actions, individual is influenced by what others do, in a process which the author referred to as the imitation process.

The theories that we had studied in Section 2.6, the Control theories, are quite different from the others. This new approach instead of finding and trying to explain the root of mankind's criminal behaviour as did the others, takes for granted the existing propensity of criminal behaviour and sought to understand why, given the opportunities and the numerous pressures to commit criminal behaviour from various sources, the majority of the population tends to conform. Control theory became popular within criminology in the late 1950s and 1960s. From this approach, we have explored the theory of Reckless, who in 1961 elaborated on the Containment theory according to which there are two types of forces – the *inner* and *outer containments* - that protect individual from the temptation to commit a crime. However, Reckless believed that individuals are more influenced by the *inner containment*, the individual's internal factors such as self concept, goal orientation which are able to neutralize the effects of forces and variables that tend

to compel the individual to engage in criminal activities. The, Containment theory has been the subject of extensive criticism as amongst other problems, it seems to be quite vague and this makes it difficult to examine its findings empirically.

Another famous pioneer of the Control theories is Hirschi, who initially, in 1969, elaborated on the Social bond theory and later, in 1990, his General theory of crime, also known as the Self-control theory jointly with Gottfredson. In Hirschi's opinion, individuals are law-abiding when they feel a tie to society. He proposes that this bond is comprised of four major elements: *attachment*, *commitment*, *involvement* and *belief*. The core of the Social Bond theory is that the stronger each element of the social bond is, the less likely the individual is to engage in delinquent behaviour. On the contrary, delinquency emerges when this bond between the individual and the society is weakened. Nevertheless, Hirschi argued that a lack of internal or external control is enough to make the individual offend. Gottfredson and Hirschi's theory of Self-control, focuses upon the individual's ability to resist his own temptations. From this point of view, internal self-control is the major element in allowing the individuals to resist the fascination of criminal behaviour. They also stated that self-control needs to be instilled early in one's course of life; otherwise it would not be sufficiently influential to counter impulsiveness or personal emotions. Thus, the principal difference between the criminal and the law-abiding citizen is the personal level of self-control.

Among other things, the school has the effect of increasing and improving the individual's self-control. In Chapter 3 we discussed extensively the functions and the aspects of social and individual life school affects. We have ascertained that education has a prominent effect-both directly and indirectly- on many of the 'Criminogenic' factors such as poverty, and social disorganization, suggesting that education may be an effective instrument for fighting criminality. In section 3.1 we saw that many investigations were carried out in countries such as United States and Great Britain, but also in Italy, which showed evidence of the positive effects of education on *criminogenic* factors. Most of the investigations showed the existence of a positive correlation between education and wage as well as unemployment rates. Other studies also proved the positive effect of education on health, both physical and psychological, and its effect in reducing the likelihood of

deviant behaviours such as the abuse or neglect of children by parents. Moreover, schooling seems to increase civic participation and charity, and lowers the likelihood of engaging in criminal activity.

In section 3.2 we discussed the role of the school. School teaches society's values, transmits knowledge, skills and abilities to individuals as well as the perception of one's own responsibility towards social rules and institutions.

As a result of what we have derived from theories and scholars' investigation on school's effect, it is possible to conclude that educational institutions, through their staff, may really make students better citizens, and thus, fight criminality.

Further, in Chapter 4, we discussed how our hypothesis is supported by the findings of different investigations, most of these coming from the United States. We opened the chapter with a brief discussion on the economic approach to the study of crime before we discussed the most important investigations conducted in this field, for example the economic studies on the causal relationship between education and criminogenic factors such as poverty, unemployment, social disorganization and so on. We had also analysed the recent works on the relationship between education and crime, finding that evidence of a negative correlation between most crimes and high school attainment were confirmed by Lochner (1999), Lochner and Moretti (2004), Buonanno and Leonida (2006, 2008), Webbink, Koning, Vujić, and Martin (2008) and Merlo and Wolpin (2009).

We attempted to identify whether in the 1995-2004 period there was a positive or negative relation between levels of schooling and criminality amongst the Italian population. However we were aware of the difficulties represented by the characteristics of data on crime and education trends, especially for the fact that Istat do not provide more accurate and detailed data about the population's education levels at annual frequency. On the other side, data of crimes are biased because many offences are not reported. In our investigation, we selected three categories of crime: property, white-collar and total crime. We estimated the correlation of each of these three categories with two variables of education - Diploma and Degree. We allowed for observable socio-economic and deterrent variables, as well as for measures of the presence of Mafia criminal associations in each region. Being conscious of the difficulties of finding effective measures of this

phenomenon, we tried to use data concerning reported Mafioso associations and the number of extortions. As for the socio-economic factors, we consider regional GDP pro capita and the regional rate of unemployment. As for the deterrent variable we used the percentage of crimes committed by unknown offenders.

However, an important variable was neglected, that is, the presence of illegal immigration. For reasons of lack of availability of this information, our data did not take into account a considerable number of people who live in Italy in a situation of economic privations. Population, for which we normalised data of criminality and education, did not include the number of immigrants that live in Italy, whose presence, and needs, remain unknown.

As a result of the regression of our 'criminal equation', we did not find any evidence of education effecting criminality.

In chapter 5 we tried to advance some hypotheses as to why this result occurred. As the case of Naples showed, many kinds of environmental factors contribute to neutralizing the education's effect on crime. A strong presence of the Camorra, diffused unemployment and poverty of the population, the cultural and structural obstacles that school's staff has to face, make a wealth field for the spread of deviance and criminality amongst young people. The government, during the 1990s, tried to solve the great problem of school drop-outs indicated as a cause of the high juvenile delinquency, by financing many projects, such as Chance and Fratello Maggiore, designed for the containment of this phenomenon, also through the involvement of families and neighbourhood. As we have seen in subsection 5.2.4, in recent years, there has been a decreasing trend of juvenile criminality. Yet, we can not state that this reduction is caused by the government investments and by the efforts made by teachers, volunteers and other associations towards the containment of school drop-outs. It would be of a great interest if future studies would ascertain whether there is also a causal relation, as the empirical evidence tends to suggest, between public expenditure in qualified educational projects such as Chance projects, and juvenile criminality.

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