Security Actors Today: The Role of Sociological Skills

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3. **Article accepted for publication**

   Date: August 2017

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Italian Sociological Review
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Abstract

The complexity of contemporary societies has strongly changed the concept of security and, as a consequence, altered the role and functions of law enforcement which is more and more expected to cope with complex situations requiring not only punitive measures and control functions, but also the capacity to interact in a structured manner with the different actors involved.

For their part, such changes pose questions on new required skills and subsequent training needs.

In this framework, it is interesting to illustrate the data which emerged from a study on graduates in Sociology in Italy – part of which is in law enforcement – showing the specificity of the employees in this sector with regard to the assessment of their own working position and the skills required for their job. This investigation showed that those working in law enforcement have a more positive evaluation of the average of their professional condition and that their working context greatly appreciate the richness and complexity of their work-related skills not only in the legal field, but also in the sociological field.

Data prove the inadequacy of the 'old stereotypes' on law enforcement which do not acknowledge the complexity of the job it carries out and the multiple skills required to face new challenges.

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In other words, for at least a part of top-ranking positions in law enforcement, an interdisciplinary preparation (in which there are sociological disciplines) is significantly and increasingly requested, as it allows not only to apply laws and rules, but also to interpret the ongoing changes and adopt an approach based on dialogue with the different actors (institutions and concrete individuals) with whom they have to interact in an 'urban security' perspective.

Keywords: law enforcement, sociological education, skills, evaluation of training, urban security.

1. Introduction: security as an evolving concept

The concept of security has also been affected by social changes in western societies and some critical reconstructions (Battistelli, 2008) claim that it is evolving (Burke, 2013; Hebberecht, Baillergeau, 2012, Lidskog, Persson, 2012; Tulumello, 2017; Zinn, 2015). Indeed, as a multidimensional polysemic concept, whose numerous variable meanings depend on sociohistorical context and attributed meaning, it takes shape as a social construct.

Battistelli (2013) claims that the concept of security first underwent a major rethink in the 1980s, when the idea of *public security* was supplemented with the concept of *urban security*. The best way to understand this change is to make a distinction between the conceptual and operative frameworks.

In conceptual terms, while the main aims of *public security* are protecting the integrity of people and property, *urban security* also focuses on quality of life and full enjoyment of the urban environment as fulfilment of post-materialistic needs (Battistelli, 2013; Stefanizzi, 2011; Tulumello, 2017a; Ingleahart, 2008; Secondulfo, 2011). It is important to underline that the emergence of these needs has not expunged others such as economic survival and physical integrity, which have actually increased as a result of numerous additional factors that trigger a sense of insecurity (Castel, 2004), including the financial crisis, the precariousness of working conditions, cultural miscegenation and urban decay.

It goes without saying that these alterations are also related to a new citizen call for security. This is what Crawford (2009) termed 'the preventive turn', requiring a reworking of the different relationships involving society, deviance and the function of punishment over the last twenty years or so. As a result, the emphasis has essentially shifted from a penal system that was increasingly unable to act as a deterrent on its own to a system based on situational prevention that attempts to tackle deviant acts and neutralise them if possible (Baillergeau, 2016). A prevention-based approach features different strategies from those established in the penal system, taking measures to

reduce, if not eliminate, the frequency of certain deviant behaviour, whether or not it is classed as criminal (Selmini, 2004).

In operative terms, as the paradigm of *urban security* entails satisfying more complex and diverse needs, it also involves other actors in addition to those traditionally deployed to prevent and tackle deviance and crime (Forum Italiano per la Sicurezza Urbana, 2014; Galantino, Ricotta, 2014).

One of the most interesting Italian examples following the logic of bottom-up security in an urban environment – closer to citizens' needs – is the *Nucleo di Prossimità* (Neighbourhood Centre) in Turin. Launched in 2003 by the municipal police force, the project uses a team who are specially trained in social and relational skills. By adopting conflict resolution and settlement techniques, the *Nucleo di Prossimità* deals with frequently occurring situations in everyday life (such as arguments between neighbours or night-time noise disturbing the peace of the area) in which the ordinary courts and the standard penalty-based method are largely ineffective. In these cases, as a wide body of literature suggests (Bonafé-Schmitt, 1992), it is extremely important to listen to people and understand their needs, which are not always obvious, making them feel safeguarded and worthy of protection. Emphasis is also placed on the involvement and participation of citizens themselves, sometimes through their associations (European Forum for Urban Security and International Centre for the Prevention of Crime, 2014).

As security and crime prevention are no longer the exclusive jurisdiction of law enforcement agencies in their most consolidated form, it can be assumed that a number of different professional figures need to coexist. Moreover, the responsibilities of those traditionally prescribed to perform these duties have to be structured more precisely and their training programmes consequently have to be reformulated.

Want of space prevents us from providing an overview of the main measures taken to guarantee 'new prevention' (Carrer, 2006), which would be a difficult undertaking in any case given the variety of different cases in Italy and across Europe. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that as this new concept of security has gradually evolved, more attention has been placed on the joint training of members of the *carabinieri* (military police), police forces, municipal police forces and other security actors[1].

These brief observations highlight the important role that interdisciplinary skills play in education and training, providing tools with a

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[1] For example, in 2001 Emilia Romagna was the first regional administrative body to sign an agreement with the Ministry of the Interior on the matter of urban security with initiatives regarding the joint training of different law enforcement agencies.

further reach than the technical and legal knowledge of those employed in public security management.

2.   Professions in the security sector and training requirements

In the collective imaginary – the most widespread and shared ideas, opinions and representations in terms of societal contexts – professions in the security sector seem to conjure up 'old stereotypes' that do not reflect the complexity of the duties or the many different skills now required to satisfy the aforementioned new demands of a society in constant flux (Del Carlo, 2013). Indeed, most people are not aware that law enforcement and security agencies have enhanced their skill set and expanded their professional mission over the last twenty years.

Francesco Carrer, a criminologist and author of comparative research about police training procedures in Europe, specified back in 1992 that the 'human factor' was a fundamental aspect of these processes. The transformations of the functions and roles of the police and, as a result, their training processes are reflected not only in the introduction of new subjects but also in the overall approach that foregrounds this human factor (Carrer, 1992). In this perspective, current training aims to integrate three elements; technical updates, psycho-sociological training and cultural development (Carrer, 2006).

In comparative terms, the differences in police training can be seen in the main models adopted – centralised as in France or decentralised as in the USA – which are naturally related to the organisational model of the law enforcement agencies in the countries in question. Therefore, while basic training in France reflects the centralised and generally uniform organisation of its police force, countries with several diverse organisations, such as the USA and Italy, are characterised by the adoption of different training methods in different law enforcement agencies (Alain, Désaulniers, Brassard, 2010; Striuli, 2016). Germany is an interesting case due to its 'mixed' character, as its objectives include reducing the traditional restricted nature of its police forces through the acquisition of skills which adapt to the ongoing socio-cultural changes. This has been accomplished by developing a training programme featuring a variety of disciplines: law, psychology, criminology and sociology. According to some researchers (Funk, Reinke, 1992), training with such a wide scope can allow police forces to develop greater sensitivity and heightened understanding of social phenomena – fundamental qualities in today's society that previous generations lacked.

The emphasis on training public security officers so that they are able to deal with the complexities of social change and not only slavishly apply laws and penalties is also found in a document drafted by the *Council of the European Police College* (CEPOL, 2007), a body responsible for training different police forces in Europe. This document states explicitly that the most appropriate training for a security actor consists of 'a process and a series of activities which aim at enabling an individual to assimilate and develop knowledge, skills, values and understanding that are not simply related to a narrow field of activities but allow a broad range of problems to be defined, analysed and solved' (CEPOL 2007: 141).

These considerations are addressed by Castelli and Merlini (2004: 214) with regard to local Italian police forces, highlighting the need for 'a training model that takes account of the importance of relational skills and their specificities also in terms of learning, shifting the axis of essential knowledge and skills for the role of local police officer from an exclusively legal and regulatory framework to one focused on integrating the different components of the professional role'.

Therefore, in the current standard conceptual framework it has become essential for security actors to possess interdisciplinary knowledge that includes theoretical and conceptual expertise and operative know-how that can support them in situations of growing uncertainty by not only drawing on regulatory categories of control and prescription. Indeed, the latter are now largely ineffective and inconsistent with the changed call for security, which can be seen in its tangible everyday form with the aim of supporting a good quality of life in urban and social environments.

3. Sociology graduates employed in law enforcement and security agencies

This overview, which highlights the need to reformulate the skills of security actors and therefore the training programmes they follow, seems to be confirmed by the findings of a study on sociology graduates conducted in 2015. It will be useful for our purposes as some of them work in the law enforcement and security sector in the broad sense of the term.

As this is a specific group of graduates with a degree in a presumably atypical subject compared to the majority of top-level professionals in the sector, they are not necessarily representative. However, especially given that there is a lack of specific research on the matter, we believe that many of the results of our research can at least be extended to those in management or in any case the top echelons.

Before addressing the specific issue of these actors' skills and assessments of their training programme, we will provide a brief description of the research objectives and methodology, along with the most important aspects that arose (Facchini, 2015).

The research involved all graduates of three-year degree courses in sociology between 2004-05 and 2009-10[2]. The study aimed to survey the working status of these graduates and their skills depending on their positions, investigate their assessment of their university programme and understand the relationship between professional position, assessment of university programme and previous socio-cultural characteristics. The questionnaire thus focused on issues regarding the social characteristics of their family of origin and previous education; reasons for enrolment; procedures adopted in their university course; employment status; professional position and assessment of the main features of the work done; the importance of certain skills in their jobs; assessment of the university programme followed and the skills acquired through it.

The research was conducted using the CAWI method, sending all recent graduates a link to access the questionnaire. They were then contacted by telephone if their email address was no longer valid or if they failed to respond to a second email, urging them to participate in the study.

Overall, 3779 graduates answered the questionnaire out of a total of 9044 for the period in question, with a coverage of just under 40%, which allows us to consider the data representative of the field under investigation.

Focusing on specific jobs and their required skills, the research highlights a significant breakdown in the professional positions of these graduates, featuring some profiles with a marked sociological connotation and others less clearly defined in which sociological skills are only one piece of the professional puzzle (Argentin, Assirelli, Giancola, 2015). Naturally, those who work in law enforcement and security agencies (hereinafter referred to as LESA) in the broadest sense of the term fall into the latter category.

In terms of basic figures, 140 interviewees work in this sector, equivalent to around 5% of the graduates in employment – not a high number, but

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[2] The research was supported by the AIS (Italian Sociological Association) and the Conference of Heads of Departments of Sociology. Participants came from all 25 degree courses belonging (until the Ministerial Decree of 16/03/2007) to class 36 – Sociological sciences and subsequently to class L40 – Sociology. The choice of timeframe made it possible to interview graduates at least 2-3 years after graduating in order to prevent the most recent graduates being penalised in terms of unemployment or underemployment. For further details on the methodological aspects, see Decataldo, 2015. Instead, see Facchini and Zurla, 2015 and 2015a for an initial reading of the data regarding skills and Facchini, 2015a, for an overview of the research.

nevertheless a fairly significant group. To understand their distinctive features, we will compare them to those working in other fields, excluding the unemployed, trainees and interns.

While it is somewhat predictable that the majority of those employed in this sector are men (72.5%, compared to 32.5% of other employees), it is interesting to note that they have more modest schooling and family origins than those employed in other sectors: the majority have a technical or professional school diploma (more than 70%, compared to 30%), while their parents also more often have a lower level of education (fewer than 7% have at least one graduate parent, compared to 18%, while 30% have both parents with no more than an elementary school diploma, compared to 7%).

The reasons given for choice[3] of degree course and university programme are also fairly atypical.

On one hand, although the percentages for these employees and others are similar in terms of making their choice either because of specific interest in the discipline (almost two thirds, compared to 70%) or as a 'fall-back'[4] (respective figures of 25% and 28%), more security actors are motivated by the requirement of a degree for their desired job (29.6%, compared to 16.7%) and advice from friends and acquaintances (11.3%, compared to 6.5%), while fewer mention interest in a basic cultural education to develop through more specific training (13.4%, compared to 27.4%).

On the other hand, there is a significant difference in the timing of university careers, with few enrolling immediately after finishing school (only 11.3%, compared to 63.5% of others) and many starting degree courses as adults (more than 80% were over 26, compared to 12.7%). Also for this reason, in the vast majority of cases students attended university as full-time workers (over 80%, compared to 12%) with a lower percentage of regular attendees, although it is interesting that 40% stated that they still attended the majority of their lectures.

Another element of differentiation is the marked incidence of those who attended the specific course 'Criminality and deviance' (54.4%, compared to 12% of others, who are far more spread out among the different subject areas[5]). In this respect, it is essential to note that the vast majority of these graduates (more than 80%) attended one of two centres (Forlì and Chieti, which belong respectively to the University of Bologna and the University of

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[3] As it was possible to select up to two reasons, the total was higher than 100%.

[4] In the sense that they did not manage to enrol in their desired degree course, considered it an easier path or made a somewhat random choice.

[5] These are: Communications and cultural processes, Work, Organisation, General sociology, Territory, Welfare and Social policies.

Chieti-Pescara), with a further 10% attending a third location (Narni campus, University of Perugia), whose degree course titles make explicit reference to criminology, investigation and security. At the same time, Chieti and Narni had agreements with the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defence, above all in the years in question, that recognised work in terms of university credits (CFU), thereby offering the concrete opportunity to shorten the length of a university course.

The specific attraction of these centres in terms of course content and benefits seems to be confirmed by the data on both non-resident students and, above all, the length of university studies. A decidedly higher-than-average percentage of these graduates attended a degree course in a province or region where they were not resident, thereby constituting an exception in a country where students usually attend a university close to home. This anomaly can be accounted for by the specific nature of the degree courses attended, not only in terms of content course but also concessions made to students.

Most of all though, a high percentage studied for less than 3 years (about a third, compared to approximately 7% of others). These might have been second degrees, with the consequent recognition of exams already done, but it seems improbable that so many employees in this field would take a second degree, especially considering the more modest social origins of these graduates and the fact that the percentage of degrees obtained in a shorter time accounts for roughly half of cases at universities that recognised work as a substitute for university credits. However, the idea of a second degree is supported by the fact that although the vast majority of these interviewees stated that they had worked full-time, fewer took four years or more to graduate (28%, compared to 32% of others).

Furthermore, there are differences in terms of postgraduate education: only 44% continued with a two-year specialisation or Master's degree, compared to 70% of others. This can be explained by various reasons, more often related to the desire to access managerial positions and interest in the subject than any difficulty in finding a job.

4. Duties performed and assessments of jobs

Given the important role played by professional placement in the study, the questionnaire surveyed not only the work environment and position with multiple-choice options, but also the specific duties performed with an 'open' question. There were several state police officers, but also some more managerial or specific positions such as state police inspector, municipal

police chief, security consultant, state police security coordinator, chief inspector of state police, security trainer, chief inspector of penitentiary police, military police sergeant, operations manager in the security sector, judicial police squad leader, investigative division and judicial police manager, administrative proceedings manager pursuant to Law 241/90, non-commissioned officer, chief superintendent of state police, environment and workplace prevention technician, and lieutenant colonel.

It is interesting to note that many interviewees define their professional role with extreme precision[6], which seems to demonstrate both a high level of identification with their jobs and satisfaction at having reached top-level specialised positions, especially given the nature of their families of origin.

At the same time, the data regarding the relationship between current job and any pre-university employment confirm that in many cases it was a question of consolidating previous work: more than 80% also did their current job before enrolment, while only 20% joined LESA after graduating or during their studies. These figures correspond to those for other employees.

We will now consider the assessments made by these employees regarding various aspects of their jobs, with scores given on a scale from 1 to 10: interest in the content, remuneration, stability, hours and flexibility, and degree of autonomy/participation in decision-making processes.

As Table 1 shows, all evaluations are at least equal to those provided by other employees. While those employed in this field are expected to give an extremely positive assessment of their job stability (on average 8.3, compared to 5.3), it is interesting to note that there are also higher values for working hours, remuneration (respectively 7.7 and 6.1, compared to 6.6 and 5.3 given by 'others') and interest in the job (8.2, almost as high as the value given for job stability). The only scores similar to those awarded by 'others' – although they are still positive evaluations – are those for autonomy/participation in decision-making processes (around 6.3).

At the same time, the table shows that there is a significantly lower standard deviation for these employees than other groups for every aspect

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[6] Examples of descriptions provided include: 'I deal with crimes against the person, offences of a sexual nature and to the detriment of minors. I attend seminars out of interest in my specific work'; 'I work in the urban security and anti-degradation department for a large city; I also do training work in lawfulness education at higher education institutes'; 'Chief Inspector of the State Police at the Health Directorate – Central Operations Service for Health – Centre of neurology and Medical Psychology'; 'Operations manager in the security sector and delegate for relations with police forces in South-East Italy'; 'Regional manager for communications and marketing for the armed forces. I'm also a freelance journalist'; 'Superior Inspector of the State Police, I manage personnel and train new arrivals'; 'I'm an officer, employed in the field of human resources management and communications'; 'Administrative Proceedings Manager pursuant to Law 241/90 and teacher in administrative law at a school for LESA'.

surveyed. This lower variability in assessments seems important as it suggests that there is greater professional uniformity among those employed in LESA than among other employees. Indeed, the latter feature on one hand highly qualified positions with strong sociological traits (in the fields of research, organisation of work, communications and social action), and on the other hand positions that often seem to be poorly qualified and misaligned with the qualifications acquired.

TABLE 1. Average assessment of certain job aspects: comparison between LESA and 'other' employees.

	Average		Standard deviation	
	LESA	Others	LESA	Others
Interest in job content	8.16	7.40	1.877	2.690
Remuneration	6.14	5.32	2.101	2.598
Job stability, security	8.31	5.35	2.048	3.059
Working hours/ holidays/ flexibility	7.70	6.56	2.121	2.731
Autonomy / involvement in decisions	6.33	6.32	2.617	2.846

Autonomous processing of research data

These generally positive higher-than-average assessments are confirmed by the fact that the sector also has the lowest percentage of workers actively looking for another job – 10.6%, compared to 44.6% of other employees.

5. Required skills: not only laws and regulations…

The most interesting aspect of our research concerns the interviewees' assessment of the required level of certain key skills in their jobs. The surveyed skills range from more theoretical and strategic abilities (such as being able to grasp the complexity of phenomena, writing projects and managing innovation) to typical characteristics of empirical research (abilities such as using quantitative and qualitative tools, analysing texts and/or data with software, finding sources and statistical data on certain phenomena, and analysing public policies), 'supplementary' qualities that are not technically sociological (such as the ability to read and interpret economic data, laws and regulations) and 'basic' interdisciplinary skills (like being able to write reports and present them in public, working in a team and communicating in a foreign language). Here too, interviewees were asked to award each skill a score on a scale from 1 to 10 (Facchini, Zurla, 2015a).

As Table 2 highlights, a higher-than-average level is required for those employed in the sector for every skill surveyed in our questionnaire. While it is easy to understand that there is significant deviation regarding the ability to

read and interpret legislative texts (8.9, compared to 6.7), it is less predictable that there are higher requirements for organisational skills, strategic skills (in the sense that they are more conceptual), interdisciplinary skills (such as the ability to write reports and present them in public: 8.7 and 6.7, compared to 7.3 and 4.5, work in a team: 8.8, compared to 8.3, or knowledge of a foreign language: 6.2, compared to 5.4) and even skills related to empirical research, though to a lesser extent.

At the same time, the standard deviation figures for this sector are again significantly lower than those for other fields, confirming that the content of security jobs is less disparate.

TABLE 2. Average score awarded to skills required by jobs: comparison between LESA and 'other' employees.

	Average		Standard deviation	
	LESA	Others	LESA	Others
Strategic skills				
Write projects	6.10	5.91	2.850	3.228
Highlight complexity of phenomena	7.23	6.57	2.415	3.063
Manage innovative measures	7.16	7.00	2.863	3.006
Organisational skills				
Research/ organisation	6.20	5.17	2.892	3.145
Human resources management	8.30	7.69	1.954	2.701
Communicative process management	7.59	7.25	2.414	2.817
Research skills				
Use of quantitative research tools	5.20	4.79	3.041	3.191
Use of qualitative research tools	5.19	4.77	3.033	3.231
Data analysis with software	5.80	4.95	3.026	3.254
Analysis of texts	6.38	5.67	2.695	3.091
Use of statistical sources	6.22	5.11	2.749	3.161
Analysis of public policies	6.43	4.68	2.765	3.141
'Supplementary' skills				
Interpret laws	8.93	6.68	1.633	2.738
Read economic data	4.86	5.45	2.750	3.007
Basic/interdisciplinary skills				
Present reports in public	6.74	6.45	2.512	3,022
Write reports	8.71	7.31	1.548	2.640
Work in a team	8.77	8.32	1.725	2.263
Foreign language	6.16	5.24	2.298	3.05

Autonomous processing of research data

As mentioned above, the 'others' often include a wide variety of different situations with low-qualified professional positions. However, it seems appropriate to underline that the security sector is not only recognised as qualified but also attributes clear importance to specifically sociological skills, especially in terms of the organisation and management of processes.

Moreover, the fact that the course of studies undertaken by these graduates is largely congruent with the professional qualities required by their jobs (beneficial to careers in addition to being a key factor in terms of formal certification) is also highlighted by the data regarding the perceived compatibility between their sociology degrees and jobs.

In terms of employment difficulties, some of the biggest problems facing young Italian graduates, including those with sociology degrees (Argentin, Assirelli, Giancola, 2015), are underemployment and misalignment (Carriero, Filandri, 2015). When analysing the extent of this problem among LESA employees, a higher percentage believe that a degree is useful even though it is not formally required or actually necessary (74.5%, compared to 43.9% of other employees). Furthermore, although the difference is much less pronounced, more LESA employees feel that they attended the degree course that is most compatible with their profession (8.5%, compared to 8.1%). Instead, a lower percentage believe that their degree was useless (7.7%, compared to 17.1%), needed it officially (3.8%, compared to 22.3%) and deemed it insufficient as a two-year specialisation was also required (13.8%, compared to 16.8%). At the same time, more LESA employees believe that an equivalent degree would also have been adequate (66.0%, compared to 54.8%), while fewer think that any other degree – even if extremely different – would have been useful (respectively 6.6% and 18.9%, compared to 16.2% and 20.8%).

6. Evaluation of training received

The assessments of the training received clearly highlight that while the formal qualification is important, there is also broad scope for genuine interest in the subjects of study and the tangible usefulness of the degree.

This data was collected in our questionnaire by asking whether the different subject areas in the course should have been developed more or less, or whether they were covered to a sufficient extent.

To this end, we should start by saying that only a small minority of all interviewees feel that the different subject areas should have been less demanding, while a much higher percentage believe that they should have been covered in greater depth (Facchini, Ricotta, 2015). This is true for specific areas of sociology (such as sociology of work, territory and cultural processes), different research methodologies (quantitative and qualitative) and certain 'supplementary' disciplines (such as law and psychology). It is slightly less valid for basic sociological disciplines (like general sociology or history of

thought) and economic disciplines, which feature a greater variety of answers although more interviewees would like greater depth than less depth.

It is interesting to note that LESA employees also call for the different subject areas to be supplemented, which would implicitly entail a more onerous obligation in terms of studies. Above all, the request does not only concern legal disciplines, although they are the most obviously implicated areas in this respect (Figure 1). More in-depth analysis is certainly more requested in these fields than in 'others' (61.9%, compared to 43.5%), but it also occurs in the disciplines of psychology (where 70.9% believe that greater coverage should be given, compared to 50.9% of others), specific sociology (46.7%, compared to 42.6%), general sociology (24%, compared to 18.7%) and methodology, although this is the only sector where there are fewer requests for greater depth (just over 30%) compared to 'others' (over 60%).

FIGURE 1. *Percentage of those who believe that more importance should be given to the different subject areas in sociology degrees: comparison between LESA and 'other' employees.*
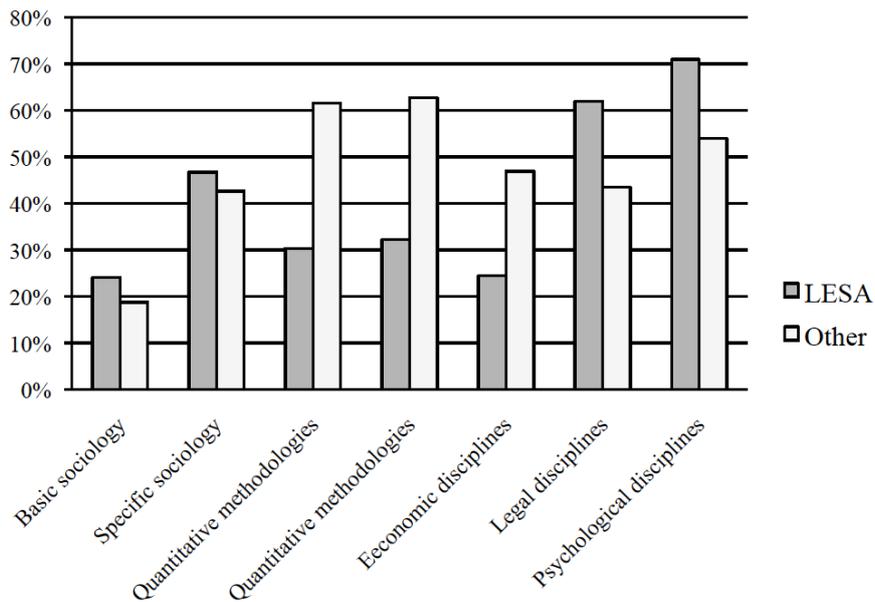
Autonomous processing of research data.

7. Brief conclusions

We will now draw together the threads of analysis and the considerations made so far.

For a number of years, LESA employees enrolled in sociology degree courses have benefitted from advantages (notable ones in at least one location) in terms of the recognition of work experience to acquire university credits, thereby shortening the length of studies. Therefore, it cannot be excluded that enrolments in these specific degree courses were also motivated by instrumental reasons.

Nevertheless, the data collected in our research highlight that the vast majority of graduates not only developed interest in the subjects they studied but also became increasingly aware of how useful they were for their professions and professional duties.

This means that the role performed in at least some of the top LESA positions seems to consistently – and perhaps increasingly – require interdisciplinary studies which provide training not only in applying laws and regulations, but also interpreting changes in progress and interacting with others as and when appropriate (Cristalli, Reggio, 2001; Knepper, 2007). These other people include a variety of institutional figures and the individuals that LESA employees engage with in the course of their daily work.

According to Negrelli's findings (2015) in a comparative study between the United States, Great Britain and France, the consolidation of sociology is positively correlated with the fragmentation of the requirements of the sociological profession; from an almost exclusively academic origin, it has expanded progressively and significantly to encompass a wide variety of public and private sectors outside the academic world.

In this framework, given that the 'new' security actors now need multifaceted training that includes technical and legal expertise along with the ability to read social phenomena, it is interesting to underline that LESA offer effective employment opportunities for sociology graduates in Italy in a similar way to other countries such as the United States (Senter, Spalter-Roth, Van Vooren, 2015).

At the same time, the data regarding the importance – according to graduates employed in LESA – of certain specific sociological skills suggest that the inclusion of such expertise would also be extremely useful to those undertaking training courses in law, politics and other subjects not specifically related to sociology.

Both cases, however, involve verifying the contribution that sociology can make to the analysis of social phenomena and innovative practices that

improve the traditional structure in an approach that, by adopting Burawoy's categories (2005), can be defined as public sociology.

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