

Universities in the fight against mafias

Research, teaching and training

Edited by Stefano D'Alfonso and Gaetano Manfredi

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As indicated in the forthcoming pages, this research was conducted in partnership with the CRUI, the anti-mafia parliamentary committee and the ministry of University and Research when this was led by ministry and Professor Gaetano Manfredi.

The person in charge of this research project is Professor Stefano D'Alfonso and the activity has been developed within the operations of the interdisciplinary research lab on mafias and corruption (Lirmac) of the Department of Social Sciences of the University of Naples Federico II in partnership with numerous professors of other Italian universities.

The book cover shows a section of the fresco of the Federico II University Board Room from the early 1900s. The artist is Gaetano D'Agostino. The subject depicted is the great historical ride of 1615, with the University's move from the convent of San Domenico Maggiore to the Palace of Studies. The city enters the Academy.

The photograph on the cover is by Professor Isabella Valente, published in the cultural heritage portal (porbec.it), in the Federico II section – Università dell'arte.

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Finally, a consideration must be made with reference to point (d), namely the heterogeneity of the documentation and the formal characteristics of the texts. It should be borne in mind that the products differ significantly not only in terms of type and scientific approach, but also in terms of quantity (e.g. length) and quality. It is obviously not possible to take these aspects into account in this work.

2. *Analysis of the review of research**

Chronological distribution

In Italy, the field of studies on the subjects of mafia organisations has only been recently acknowledged. Over the last few years, thanks to the solution to the issue of legitimization, a qualitative and quantitative growth has been witnessed in the works from scholars employed by university institutions. From this point of view, the analysis of the review of research represents a further confirmation of the wide range of scientific works that are developed within this investigation field by various departments of Italian universities. The corpus presented in this paper is comprised of 2273 original products published between 1999 and 2018. This number is undoubtedly significant and corresponds to an average annual production of more than 110 products across the whole national territory. Thus, the database exceeds 3000 records if papers written by teams are counted not as single works but on the basis of the number of authors.

A chronological analysis enables to track the trend in time of such research products. The Italian context stands out due to a significant increase in the number of studies on the subject of mafias spanning all sectors and geographical areas. The chronological analysis shows an outstanding surge in the distribution of research products starting from the end of the first decade of the 2000s (see figure 1). Indeed, since 2009, the percentage of these products has been on the rise with a significant increase in their annual average from 6.1 to 17.1.

Nevertheless, if we take a closer look at the time frame it is possible to notice that, compared with the entire decade, there was a decline in the number of published products in the last five years considered. In 2013, in fact, the chronological series reaches a peak with 195 products. Conversely, in the following

* This paper has been written by Attilio Scaglione, Elena Breno and Stefano D'Alfonso.

years there is gradual decline with figures dropping to 131 in 2018 but still more considerable than those of the previous period.

What stands out is a progressively growing attention towards the subject of mafias. This interest was undoubtedly driven by the political, institutional and scientific debate arising from the inquiries that laid bare the spread of mafia-related organisations in the central northern regions. Take, for instance, the inquiry named «mafia capitale» about the operations of syndicates in Rome as well as the great anti-mafia inquiries in Lombardy, Piedmont, Emilia-Romagna, Veneto and Liguria.

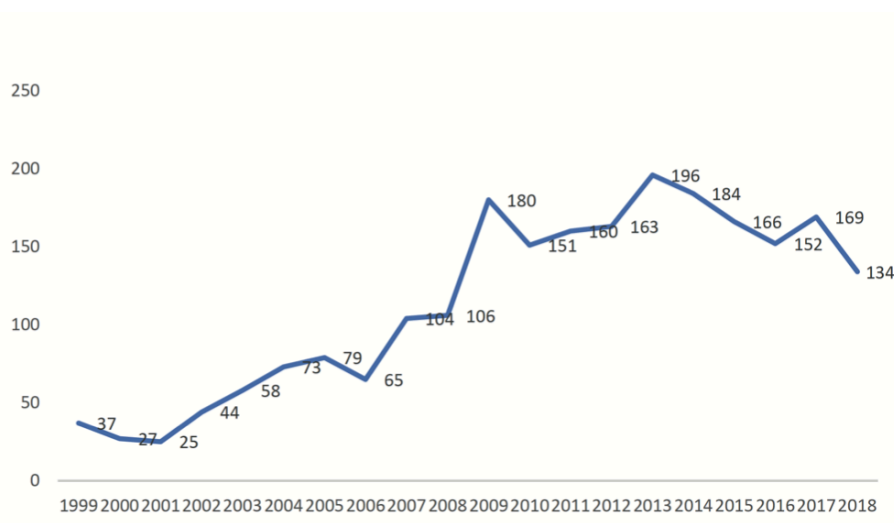


Figure 1. Annual trend of products.

Territorial distribution

If products are categorised by macro-region some significant differences can be noticed (see figure 2). Slightly more than half of the papers were published in the universities of the South (53%) and about a third in Northern universities while the remaining 16% is concentrated in the institutions of Central Italy. Looking at the chronological trend, however, a progressive increase in the number of contributions can be observed in Northern universities whose share grew from 26.7% in the first five-year period (1999-2003) to 35.3% in the second half of the decade (2014-2018). This is at least partly a result of the publicity of the inquiries mentioned above.

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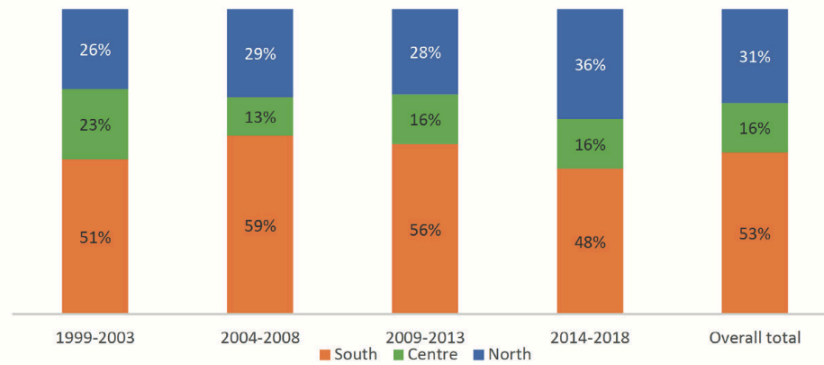


Figure 2. Percentage distribution of products by macro-area.

Having stated the higher relevance of southern regions, the data show significant variations at geographical level (see figure 3). Looking again at the 1999-2018 period, we can notice that the most significant contribution in terms of the number of products came from seven regions (two in the South, two in the Centre and three in the North) who account for over 85% of the total number of products: Sicily 31.3%, Campania 14.3%, Lombardy 12.9%, Lazio 7.4%, Tuscany 7.4%, Piedmont 7.1%, Emilia-Romagna 5%. What undoubtedly stands out is the Sicily figure as this region accounts for almost a third of the overall number of products and, when added up with Campania, these two regions cover almost the entire scientific production of southern universities in this field. On the other hand, a more even distribution can be observed in the Central-Northern area, where big regions show more homogeneous figures.

Taking into account university size as per indications from Censis, we can see that more than 85% of products come from the biggest universities,

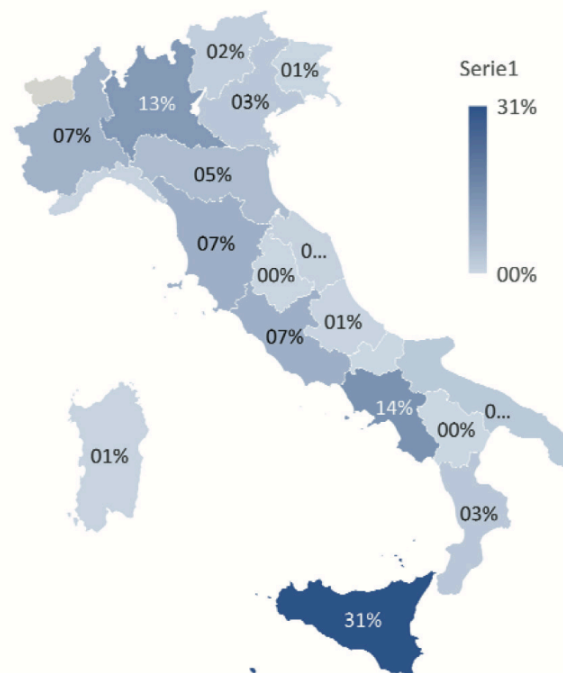


Figure 3. Percentage distribution of research products at regional level.

the so-called 'mega' which have more than 40,000 students, as well as from the 'large' ones (between 20,000 and 40,000 students). The former account for 64% of research products while the latter produce 20.5% of records. In addition, among the top 10 universities by number of products, there are 8 mega and 2 large ones. The field of studies on mafias therefore seems to be less important in medium-sized (between 10,000 and 20,000 students) and small universities (up to 10,000 students). The top three universities by number of published products are the university of Palermo, the university Federico II of Naples and the university of Turin. However, it should be stated here that these figures only consider quantitative data. It would be interesting, for instance, to relate this information to the size and available resources for each department.

Clearly, in this paper there is no room for conducting an in-depth analysis of all potentially interesting aspects. It is hoped, however, that based on the data hereby collected and on some of the elaborations presented, other analyses can be carried out by scholars to enrich the regulatory framework with an eye to supporting new scientific projects.

Academic disciplines

Table 1 presented below shows the distribution of products across the main disciplines in the twenty-year period analysed. The bar graph illustrates how the study and knowledge of the mafia phenomenon is deeply rooted in social and law disciplines which together account for more than 50% of overall scientific production. Other disciplines also give a significant contribution and these include Psychology, Economics, History which together cover more than a quarter of the total. Another significant share is accounted for by political and medical sciences.

The contribution given by most disciplines has partly changed over time. In percentage terms, over the two decades hereby considered, there was a growing number of sociological (+6%) and economic (+4%) studies. On the contrary, there was a reduction in studies in the field of Law (-5.1%), History (-2.3%) and Psychology (-6.6%).

Differences can also be found in terms of the specific attention given by different academic disciplines in the regions analysed. Sociological disciplines are more significant in the regions with a larger number of products (percentages higher than 24%). In particular, the most considerable figure can be found in Piedmont, where sociological studies account for almost 75% of the total at regional level, and in Lombardy with slightly less than 55%. The share of law studies is also especially relevant as it stands at figures below 20% only in three Italian regions. The most

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homogeneous samples can be found in Sicily and Campania where sociological and law products represent about half and slightly more than half of the total respectively. As for Sicily, there is also a significant share of studies in the fields of Psychology (17%) and History (8%) while in Campania a considerable number of products is found in Economics (14.5%) and History (14%).

Table 1. Percentage distribution of products across the main academic disciplines

Sociology	32.8%
Law	23.0%
Psychology	10.0%
Economics	9.5%
History	6.5%
Political Sciences	3.3%
Medical Sciences	2.6%
Language and literature	2.3%
Architecture	1.6%
Pedagogy	0.9%
Arts	0.9%
Geography	0.8%
Philosophy	0.8%
Mathematics and Physics	0.7%
Anthropology	0.4%
Engineering	0.3%
Agricultural Sciences	0.1%
n.d.	3.6%
Overall total	100.0%

However, Sicily is the region with the highest number of products per discipline. More than 75% of the production of psychologists, more than 50% of political subjects and about a third of the work of historians and economists is concentrated in Sicilian universities. Law Studies account for 27% of the total, while Sociology stops at 22%. In Campania, the percentages reached by the publications of Economics and History scholars stand out, with 30 and 27% respectively of the total on a national basis. A significant share of the products of legal disciplines is also concentrated in Campania's universities (14.7%). In

Lombardy and Piedmont, sociologists stand out with percentages above 20% in the first case and 15% in the second. Political sciences (17%) and history (17%) are strongly represented in Tuscany.

The main academic sectors listed in Table 1 are analysed in *Chapter III, Section 2 – University studies about mafias in the field of different scientific subjects*, starting with those in which there are the greatest contributions in a descending order.

The authors

The articles published in the period analysed were written by 930 authors. Interestingly, the average number of scholars writing about mafia-related topics each year grew significantly from 49.1 (1999-2008) to 140.1 (2009-2018), with a peak of 159 authors in 2014. As for Southern Italy, Sicily and Campania are the regions accounting for the highest percentages of authors, with 25.8% and 15.4% respectively. Other regions that stand out are Lombardy (13.4%) and Lazio (11.6%).

Another interesting piece of information regards the average number of products per author, where only three regions show figures higher than the national average (3.0). In particular, Piedmont is the first region with 4.8, followed by Sicily (3.9) and Tuscany (3.6). On the other hand, Lombardy and Campania stand just below the national average with 2.9 and 2.8 products per author respectively.

Further considerations should be made here with regards to the corpus of authors. If we take into account that access to the archive is only granted to regular staff of Italian universities, it is no surprise that 76% of the total number of authors on record are permanently employed while the remaining 24% is accounted for by individuals on short-term contracts such as PhD graduates, research fellows and other types of contract workers within the university system.

Leaving the latter individuals aside, due to the difficulty in identifying them, we can see that the corpus of authors takes on the shape of an upside-down pyramid – as is obvious when considering the higher average age of authors belonging to the more advanced categories – with a broad base made up of full professors accounting for 30% of the total, followed by associate professors (26%) and researchers (20%), until the lower narrow end of the pyramid accounted for by research fellows (6%) and PhD candidates (6.5%).

If we continue our analysis without considering non-regularly employed staff, we can see that the total number of authors surveyed accounts for 2% of overall university professors. This is a low figure, consistent with the niche-type character of studies on mafias. Nevertheless, as already mentioned in the methodology chapter, this figure is a partial one and does not take into account a significant share of

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scholars who escape this survey. Anyway, this is still an upward trend with increased importance due to the high level of interdisciplinarity in the field of studies on mafias which enhances its appeal both inside and outside of the academic world.

Going back to the authors of the database, it is interesting to notice that about a third of these are law scholars (31% with an average of 2.2 products per author), while sociologists, albeit being the most productive with 6.7 products per author only account for 14.5% of the total. These categories are followed by economists (11.6%) and historians (6.3%) and psychologists (5.3% with a higher than average per-capita production of 5.6 products per author).

As for the distribution by gender, the difference between men and women seems remarkable with 64% of authors being men and 36% women. Over the course of the years, though, this gap has been reduced by over 9 percentage points with women's share increasing from 29.5% in the period 1999-2003 to 38% in 2014-2018. This increase is more marked in the North of Italy where women account for 40% of the total while in the South and in the Centre of the country their share stands at 34% and 33% respectively. If we look at the ten regions with more than 30 authors, the women component appears greater in percentage terms in Puglia, Lombardy, Veneto and Emilia-Romagna with figures comprised between 45% and 40% which are still below the 50% threshold. In Piedmont, Sicily and Lazio women account for slightly more than a third of the total. The gender gap is wider in Campania (30%) and above all in Tuscany (36%) Calabria (23%).

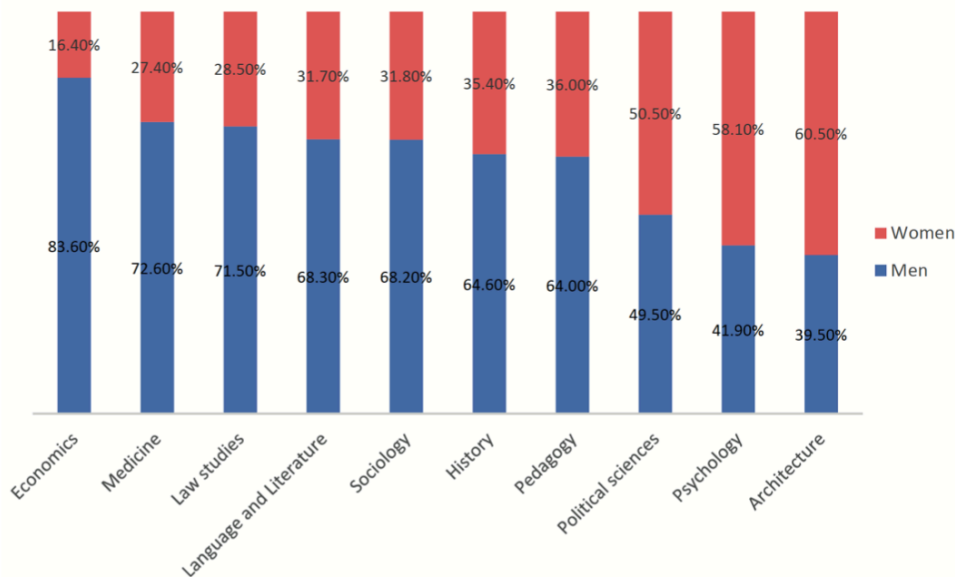


Figure 4. Percentage distribution of authors by gender and academic discipline

The comparison by academic macro-sector allows to highlight the different involvement of women in the research on mafias. Female scholars are less frequently present in the field of Economics where they account for a mere 20% of the total, and their share is also low in History, Law, Medicine and Political Sciences with percentages ranging from 30% to 37%. The female component appears more significant in the fields of Pedagogy (43%), Languages and Literatures (44%) and Sociology (44%). The male/female ratio is only reversed in two cases, namely among architects where women account for 52% and among psychologists where the increase in the female component is even more remarkable (61%) (see figure 4). It should be noted here that these observations do not take into account the overall distribution of products by gender within each academic discipline.

Types of research products

Let us now analyse types of products. Journal articles and essays in books account for about three quarters of the total number of publications included in the repository of research on mafias. On the other hand, monographs or curated texts account for 10%. The remaining products are comprised in various categories, such as «conference proceedings» (8.4%) and «PhD dissertations» (1.4%). The category «other» (4.2%) is comprised of products of a different type such as reviews, reports etc.

Publications of articles in scientific journals increased by more than five percentage points, from 38.3% in the period 1999-2008 to 43.9% in the time frame 2009-2018. Conversely, in the same period products published in books recorded a reduction from 35.3% to 32.8%. table 2 shows the distribution of publications by type in the period analysed.

A comparison between geographical macro-areas shows that the sample of Centre-North universities, with 47%, has a larger number of articles in journals than the sample of southern universities (40%). If we take a closer look at the regions with a larger number of products, we see that in Emilia-Romagna, Piedmont and Tuscany articles in journals exceed 50% of the overall corpus, as opposed to what happens in Campania where the lowest percentage is recorded (35.5%). Within the sub-sample of the South, higher percentages are shown by the categories of essays in books (38% vs 31%) and monographs (7.3% vs 5.7%). A final consideration should be made here about Emilia-Romagna, which also presents the larger number of monographs and curated texts, and Campania where the largest number of essays in books is recorded.

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Table 2. Percentage distribution of products by type in the period 1999-2018.

	<i>Year decade 1999-2003 and 2004-2008</i>	<i>Year decade 2009-2013 and 2014-2018</i>	<i>Total</i>
Other	4.60%	4.00%	4.20%
Article in journal	38.30%	43.90%	42.50%
Curated text	2.60%	4.30%	3.90%
Monograph	7.20%	6.10%	6.30%
Proceedings	11.90%	7.20%	8.40%
Essay in book	35.30%	32.80%	33.40%
PhD dissertation	0.10%	1.80%	1.40%
Overall total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

The prevailing editorial position of research products presents a few differences if academic disciplines are considered separately. Articles in journals are more commonly found in Law (46%) and Economics (45%) while Sociology (38%) shows the lowest percentage. Monographs are more frequently used by Historians. Monographs, curated texts and essays in books are less frequently used in Psychology, a sector where there is a high percentage of conference proceedings (28.5%).

Collaborations and internationalization

Collaborations are a crucial part of every scholar's academic pathway. Although the writing of a text represents neither the only nor the most significant form of collaboration among authors, levels of collaboration can be measured through *co-authorship*, i.e. the sharing of a text between many scholars.

An analysis of the data shows that more than a third of research products (37%) are the result of collaboration between two or more authors (41% two authors, 22% three authors, 19% four authors and 17% five or more authors).

Over the twenty-year span analysed, the number of co-authorships increased. This tendency remained stable over the course of the five-year timeframes. This might mean that authors have gradually strengthened their collaboration networks. The percentage of works written by more than one author grew by more than 20 percentage points, from 21% in 1999-2003 to 43% in 2014-2018 (see figure 5). This figure, nevertheless, does not differentiate between the different types of collaboration: within the same department, between departments of the same university or departments of different universities.

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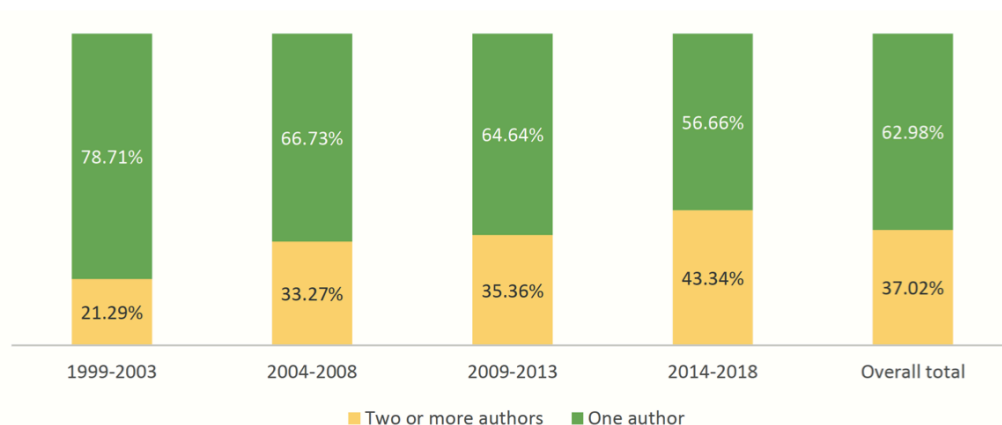


Figure 5. Percentage distribution of products with one or more authors.

Interest in teamwork seems higher in the sample of southern (40%) and northern (37%) regions while the sample of regions in central Italy shows a decidedly lower figure (27%). A closer look at each individual region enables a clearer identification of differences. Among the 10 regions with the largest number of publications, Sicily and Lombardy are those with the highest percentages of papers written by more than one author, with 46% and 45% respectively. Significant figures in terms of collaboration are also shown by Puglia (41%) and Lazio (39.5%), while the lowest values are recorded in Veneto (23%), Tuscany (16%) and Calabria (5%).

In addition, an analysis by sector also unveils other aspects. Teamwork seems to be a constant in Medicine, Psychology and Economics with percentages exceeding the 80% threshold. Conversely, individual work seems to be preferred by scholars of languages and literatures, Law scholars and historians with percentages of collaboration ranging between 9.5% and 13.5%. Clearly, this fact can also be explained in light of the assessment criteria on publications used for the *Abilitazione scientifica nazionale* (National Academic Qualification) in Italy. This is the case, for instance, of law scholars, whose works can only be considered if attributable to one single author, except for curated texts as in the same book there will naturally be a distinction between the contributions coming from each individual author (see figure 6).

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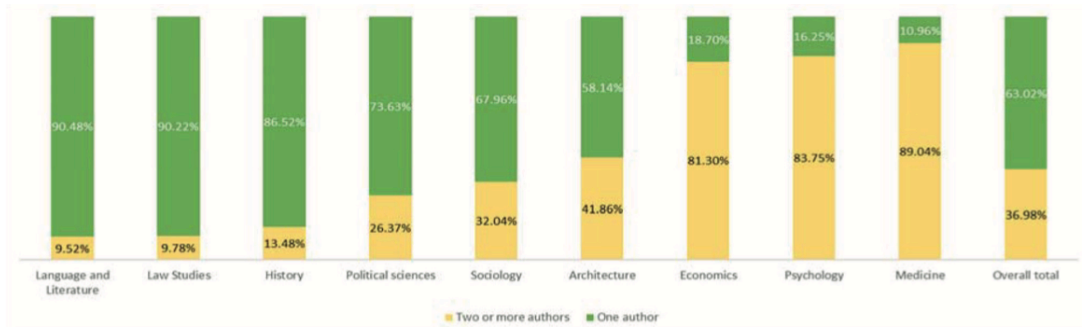


Figure 6. Percentage distribution of products with one or more authors by academic macro-sector

The last aspect to be analysed in this work concerns the presence of products in foreign languages. This is a fact that can also be read in terms of the internationalisation of research. The growing availability of studies in English can undoubtedly contribute to increasing the weight and presence of Italian scholars in the context of international research. On the other hand, it is paradoxical to note that, in the field of studies on mafias, the bibliographies of foreign scholars often almost completely ignore the works published in Italian.

Only 28% of the publications contained in the corpus were written in English or other languages. This is a significant figure that certainly indicates a critical point of academic research on the subject of mafias. However, it is worth noting that the number of publications in this language has increased significantly over the years. While up to 2008 the percentage of products in English stood at 16%, in 2014-2018 this figure reached 37%, an increase of more than 20 percentage points. This trend was not evenly distributed across the entire national territory. In the North, the percentage of studies in English or other languages reaches 35% while in the South and in the Centre this figure stands at 25% and 21% respectively.

The analysis by subject also allows us to highlight significant differences in terms of internationalization. Higher-than-average figures can be found in Economics (68%), Medicine (62%) and Political Sciences (54%). A mere 30% of publications in Architecture and 28% in Sociology are written in a language different from Italian. Finally, products in English or other languages are extremely rare among historians and law scholars, with percentages of 13% and 11% respectively.

One final consideration can be made with regards to the comparison between publications in a foreign language and the number of authors. These two variables

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show that the choice of writing in English or other languages is more frequent in co-authorships (47%) than in works with a single author (17%) (see figure 7).

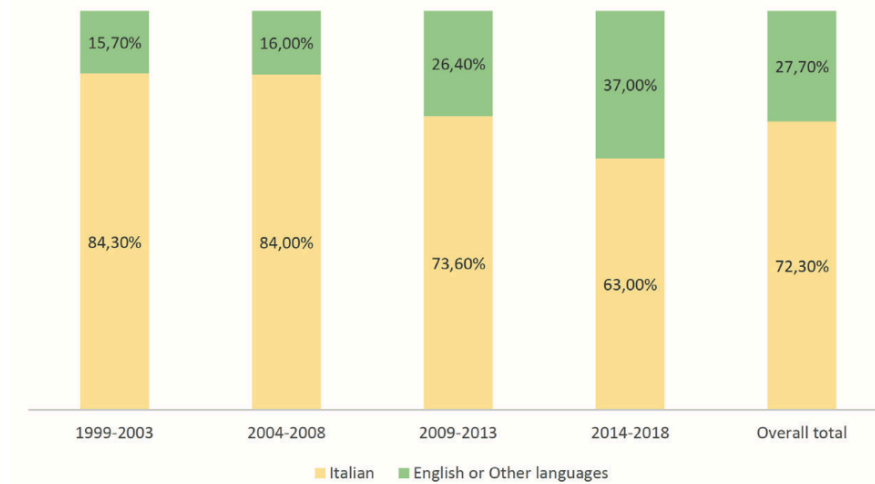


Figure 7. Percentage distribution of products in Italian or English and other languages

SECTION 2. UNIVERSITY STUDIES ABOUT MAFIAS IN THE FIELD OF DIFFERENT SCIENTIFIC SUBJECTS

1. *Sociology**

The sociology of mafias

For a long time, the mafia phenomenon was not among the subjects studied by sociology. It was not considered a relevant subject for social research, nor was it deemed to be particularly interesting for the analysis of the conditions in Southern Italy or in some of its areas⁶. In fact, in the first decades of the Republic, the subject did not attract much attention even from other academic disciplines⁷. It

* This paper has been written by Rocco Sciarrone.

⁶ The topic was probably also in the way of the paradigms in fashion to explain the social dynamics and processes of southern Italy (seen as a homogeneous whole, while the mafia was present in one area and not in another, maybe even adjacent to the first). Thus, for example, research was carried out on development processes or on other aspects of collective importance in areas with a high density of *mafiosi*, without ever mentioning or considering the mafia, behaving in practice as if it did not exist.

⁷ For a critical framework of the literature in social sciences on the subject of mafias, see U. Santino, *Dalla mafia alle mafie. Scienze sociali e crimine organizzato*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli

