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**State of distrust: interpreting 1970s  
Italy through the seriality of news  
media and the *poliziottesco*.**

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**Giulio Olesen**

**State of distrust: interpreting 1970s Italy through the seriality of news media and the *poliziottesco*.**

**Abstract**

This thesis explores the relationship between films, news media, and the perception of social reality. It analyses 1970s Italian police thrillers, the so-called *poliziottesco*, and argues that these films can be considered historical documents. Building on on-going debates on the *poliziottesco* (Bondanella, 2009; O’Leary, 2011; Marlow-Mann, 2013; Fisher 2014), this thesis argues that news media discourses on state, political, and criminal violence in the early 1970s are pivotal to interpret the films as part of a public debate on the meaning of such violence. Accordingly, this thesis takes the *poliziottesco* to investigate the impact of specific representations of the police, the judiciary, and the secret service on the negotiation of the blame for state inefficiency against political and criminal violence. Focusing specifically on the “conspiracy mode” (Fisher 2014, p. 173) of the *poliziottesco*, which centres on state-driven conspiracies, this thesis argues that repetitions and innovations in the representation of Italian civic institutions can be linked to the evolution of news media discourses on the so-called *strategia della tensione* (strategy of tension). Thus, Chapter 1 builds on scholarly notions of press (Elliot, 1981), television (Wagstaff, 1992; Mittell, 2004; Kelleter, 2017), and comic book seriality (Denson, 2011) to address a sum of individual films as a serial text and identify the discursive practices that defined the context of production and reception. It also sets the methodology of this thesis, which relies on film and newspaper analysis. Newspapers are analysed with the support of Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis (Baker et al. 2008), which consists in the alternation of qualitative and quantitative analysis of front-page articles from two newspapers, *Corriere della Sera* and *l’Unità*. The use of corpora in film analysis for the identification of common representational patterns is an original contribution to knowledge of this thesis. The concepts of remediation (Bolter and Grusin, 2000) and intermediality (Rajewsky, 2005) are mobilised to evaluate the merging of fiction and non-fiction in the films through the use of news media. Chapter 2 links the *poliziottesco* to the more politically committed cinema *di consumo impegnato*. It identifies how other forms of Italian cinema affected the representation of contemporary socio-political conflicts in the *poliziottesco* and its use of news media as devices. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 dig into the representation of specific civic institutions exploring the construction of the media figure of the rank-and-file policeman, the *commissario* (police inspector), and the judge in the *poliziottesco* and news media. The chapters argue that civic institutions in the films embodied conflicting conceptualisations of law and order arising from news media discourses. Finally, the thesis concludes by arguing for interpreting the *poliziottesco* as a product directed at mass audiences and sharing the same emotional triggers of mainstream news media in the attempt to reconcile different political constituencies into the defence of the democratic order.



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## Introduction

On December 12, 1969, an explosion occurred in the Bank of Agriculture in piazza Fontana, Milan. Newspapers reported thirteen dead and ninety wounded (Strambaci 1969, p. 1; Anon. 1969g, p. 1). The police and the judiciary immediately directed investigations against anarchist groups. Four days after, Anarchist Pietro Valpreda was arrested. Conservative news outlets celebrated the efficient work of Italian civic institutions<sup>1</sup> (Bugialli 1969, p. 1; Cervi 1969b, p. 1) that had provided a culprit to a nation shocked by a massacre defined at that moment as the “most cruel and brutal attack in the history of Italian terrorism” (Anon. 1969j, p. 1). Yet, not everybody accepted the account of civic institutions. The attack was conducted at the end of the so-called *Autunno Caldo* (“Hot Autumn”), a season of mass protest that had invested different sectors of Italian society. Within the ranks of the left, the attack was interpreted as a part of “fascist provocations and reactionary manoeuvres” (Strambaci 1969, p. 1) aiming at stopping the advancement of the working class. At the left of the Communist party, extra-parliamentary groups through their publications soon connected the attack to the action of deviant state apparatuses pointing to the return of the Fascist dictatorship (Anon. 1970g, p. 13).

The Piazza Fontana attack became the main stage for the development of conspiracy theories focusing on the misconduct of sectors of the state aiming at influencing the political life in Italy. Media played a pivotal part in the elaboration and dissemination of these conspiracy theories. News media, political magazines, theatre, and cinema participated in the attempt to fill the gaps left by the Italian judicial system. As Deaglio writes, “[f]rom 1979 to 2005, nine trials attempted to reach the truth about the bombing,

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<sup>1</sup> In this thesis, the term “civic institutions” or “civic authorities” is used to refer to those state institutions most prominently involved in the managing of law and order. These state institutions are the police (*questore, commissario*, rank-and-file policeman), *carabinieri*, the judiciary (*procuratore generale, sostituto procuratore, giudice istruttore, procura*), and the secret service. Duties and responsibilities of these civic institutions are described in the Glossary.

but no judicial truth has been reached<sup>2</sup>” (2017, p. 171). Consequently, the battle over the interpretation of Piazza Fontana and subsequent acts of political violence was primarily fought through media, addressing polarised political constituencies. Forms of entertainment cinema participated in this struggle with their own idioms. They placed civic institutions at the centre of their plots revolving around conspiracy theories<sup>3</sup>. They used news media as devices to address this struggle over interpretation and the idioms of news media to add further layers of meaning to the fiction of their plots. Moreover, they used forms and idioms of news media to encourage citizens to link the representations of the *poliziottesco* to their perception of the socio-political context.

This thesis interrogates the relationship between films, news media, and the perception of social reality. It explores that liminal space in which media representations attempt to superimpose on the material conditions of a given society, constructing the framework to interpret actual events and media texts alike. The focus of this analysis is the early 1970s in Italy. It centres on a serial product characterising the cinematic production of the decade: the so-called *poliziottesco*. As a product of Italian action cinema revolving around the police, the *poliziottesco*<sup>4</sup> is used to study how entertainment cinema

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<sup>2</sup> In this thesis, the contribution of Italian scholars is translated from Italian texts. All translations are mine.

<sup>3</sup> The plots of the most relevant movies analysed in this thesis are the content of Appendix C. As is explained below, this thesis focuses on specific scenes that epitomise particular serial features of the *poliziottesco*. Nonetheless, plots have been included in the appendices of this thesis to give the reader who may be interested a full account of the narrative of the films.

<sup>4</sup> The original derogative implication of the label *poliziottesco* (Bondanella 2009, p. 453) is not intended here. This thesis uses it to mark a distance from other local and international productions of the decade that presented police investigations at the centre of the plot. The *poliziottesco*, in this sense, comprises a bulk of low-budget crime movies produced in Italy from 1972 to 1978. It capitalised on the success of Hollywood cop movies such as *Bullit* (Yates, 1968), *Dirty Harry* (Siegel, 1971), and *The French Connection* (Friedkin, 1971) and of Italian cinema *di consumo impegnato* (cinema of committed entertainment) of directors like Damiano Damiani, Elio Petri, and Carlo Lizzani. Chapter 1 will interrogate the dissemination of the word “*poliziottesco*”. The term is conventionally used to classify different categories of movies. The attempt to define its boundaries needs to consider the discursive processes through which this label has been disseminated.

addressed media discourses concerning primary issues in 1970s Italy: the meaning of the action of civic institutions and the negotiation of the blame for state inefficiency against criminal and political violence. The *poliziottesco* is part of the milieu of *filone* cinema<sup>5</sup>, characterised by low-budget, fast-produced cycles of movies. This thesis focuses primarily on the “conspiracy mode” (Fisher 2014, p. 173) of the *poliziottesco*. This sub-strand of Italian police movies connected with the so-called *strategia della tensione*, a conspiracy theory that linked the chain of terrorist attacks that characterised the early 1970s to the action of reactionary groups, sponsored by sectors of the state, aiming at seizing power in Italy. The conspiracy mode of the *poliziottesco* exploited news media speculations concerning the implication of the state in these reactionary manoeuvres. It also registered shifts in media discourses concerning the attribution of the blame for these alleged institutional misconducts. Reviewing the current scholarship on the *poliziottesco*, this thesis identifies a gap concerning the analysis of the historical significance of this particular *filone*. Specifically, it shows how marginal is the focus on the significance of the representation of specific civic institutions. This thesis seeks to fill this gap.

The analysis of the literature on the *poliziottesco* also evidences a gap in research concerning the use of media in Italian movies. This thesis investigates the impact of news media on the construction of the diegetic world of the *poliziottesco*. Additionally, the use of press and audio-visual news outlets in this *filone* is investigated concerning the representational possibilities offered by the different properties of each medium. Hence, this thesis explores the appropriation by the *poliziottesco* of idioms of these same news media. As this thesis aims at demonstrating, these idioms became a mode of

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<sup>5</sup> This word, analysed in detail in Chapter 1, relates to specific strands of Italian genre movies and the subcategories within these strands, which emerged as a result of the commercial exploitation of previously successful models. As explained later on in this thesis, these strands shared a fast-paced and low-budget mode of production and were released mainly between the late 1950s and the early 1980s. In this thesis, the singular Italian noun *filone* is used to refer to the *poliziottesco* (“the *filone*”). When it is used to refer to other strands, it is accompanied by the name of that strand (e.g. “the *giallo filone*”). The Italian plural noun *filoni* is used to refer to more than one of the strands within the Italian genre production (e.g. “In other *filoni* such as the *giallo* and the spaghetti western”). When the thesis addresses the sum of movies comprising Italian genre production described above, it uses the label “*filone* cinema” or “*filone* milieu”.

expression of the movies that contributed to link the fiction to audiences' perception of the material conditions of 1970s Italy. News outlets are also explored concerning the specific mode of addressing socio-political conflicts characterising the early 1970s. Arguably, the films replicated news media representations of actual events. They also appropriated the "serial" idiom of news media, which established and repeated specific patterns of representation concerning the action of civic institutions and acts of political and criminal violence. Building on Fisher's (2014, p. 174) conceptualisation, this thesis argues that *poliziottesco* filmmakers relied on "levels of prior knowledge assumed to be shared by their [the movies] immediate target market". The representational patterns of news media constituted the "prior knowledge" assumed by filmmakers, allowing them to avoid complex socio-political analysis and focus on action sequences. Ideally, the replication of these patterns contributed to provide further layers of meaning to the fiction of the *poliziottesco*. As will be explained in the following chapters, criminal and political violence coalesced in the same interpretative framework in news media. Together, they fostered the perception of a society under constant threat of violence, undermining the foundations of Italian democracy. The *poliziottesco* addressed this perception to increase the emotional impact of the movies. Hence, silences, omissions, and gaps in the narrative of the films can be best understood by examining news media discourses that characterised this period and around which audiences' "prior knowledge" may have been formed.

In order to understand the impact of news media representations on the mode of expression and content of the *poliziottesco*, the analysis needs to consider the use of civic institutions as political symbols in the Italian media environment. The political debate in news media revolved around the legitimacy of the use of violence, primarily by the police. Newspapers judged Italian civic authorities according to the political implication of their activities. The press had oriented media discourses around the meaning of the action of civic institutions. The interpretation of that meaning, by film audiences and newspaper readers, mostly depended on the prior knowledge acquired through previous exposure to news media representations. The *poliziottesco* targeted that sector of the population that was experiencing violence primarily through media representations. In the 1970s, civic institutions were placed physically and politically at the centre of Italian conflicts. They were the target of protesters' violence, citizens' requests for protection, and media complaints about the respect of civil rights. As such, the *poliziottesco* exploited the political value attributed to *commissari* (policemen) and

*procuratori*<sup>6</sup> (judges). It used civic institutions to convey conflicting conceptualisations of law and order. As will be explained throughout this thesis, the dialectic between policemen and judges in the movies embodied the tension between conflicting conceptualisations of law and order. Arguably, these conceptualisations can be interpreted as a way to address the different political constituencies that comprised the audiences of the *poliziottesco*. Through the representation of actions and behaviours of policemen and judges, the movies participated in the national debate over state, criminal, and political violence. The *poliziottesco*, juxtaposing different ideological perspectives, can be read as a synthesis of this debate. Organised around the form of an episodic narration, the *filone* registered shifts in the perception of the socio-political reality of 1970s Italy.

In this respect, seriality and rituality are relevant concepts to explore the connection of the *poliziottesco* to news media discourses. The adaptation of fictional institutional characters from news media representations in specific socio-political contexts is a central part of the pattern of repetition and innovation of the *filone*. Representations of civic authorities in the movies also participated in the replication of practices of public mourning related to the outcomes of criminality and political violence. These practices of mourning related to the death of law enforcement agents provided a framework to attribute further layers of meaning to the representation of policemen in the *poliziottesco*. Newspapers conveyed these practices, which were repeated at every death of a policeman, but also at every massacre and attempted coup. These events involved in the framework of the *strategia della tensione* – the Piazza Fontana massacre and Borghese’s attempted coup (revealed by the press in March 1971), among many others – were used as a source of inspiration for the plots of the *poliziottesco*. Unfolding in newspapers day-by-day, these events were represented to dramatise the repetitiveness of political violence. The engagement of the *poliziottesco* with idioms and forms of news reporting seems to have led to the incorporation of a similar ritualistic performance. The

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<sup>6</sup> In this thesis, I will use Italian job titles of specific civic institutions. This decision is motivated by the different functions and duties that characterise them in the Italian and Anglophone contexts. Translating the Italian *commissario* with “police commissioner” would imply a different set of duties. Functions and duties of Italian civic institutions named in this thesis are explained in the Glossary.

replication of the formulas of news media provided a believable background that could be filled by the actions of cinematic policemen.

Hence, the *poliziottesco* needs to be linked to contemporaneous forms of cultural production. Besides the analysis of news media, this thesis considers the continuous dialogue between the *filone* and the so-called cinema *di consumo impegnato* (cinema of committed entertainment). The latter term describes films produced at the turn of the 1970s that moved between Hollywood conventions and social critique concerning the exertion of power in Italy. Defined by Uva (2013) as “a form of political cinema that merged popular, politically committed and escapist dramaturgical modes”, cinema *di consumo impegnato* paved the way to the conspiracy mode of the *poliziottesco*. It proved the profitability of narratives centred on institutional misconducts and media manipulation of public opinion. The focus on actions, functions and responsibility of the state in the struggle against violence unites the *poliziottesco* to news media representations and cinema *di consumo impegnato*. As is explained in Chapters 2 and 5, the *poliziottesco* put aside the critical tension of *consumo impegnato* but maintained some formal strategies associated with the mode of representation of these movies. In the *poliziottesco*, power and social relations were employed as taken for granted assumptions: the judge impeded police investigation, politicians were depraved corrupt entities, criminals were ferocious beasts with no personal history or psychology. These tropes can be interpreted as the result of the mode of representing the present that characterised the cultural production in 1970s Italy. Thus, the shared elements of seriality between news outlets, films *di consumo impegnato*, and the *poliziottesco* impacted form and content of the *filone*. Additionally, they are the sign of a consistent representational strategy developed across diverse cultural products to frame the actors involved in the social and political conflicts characterising the country.

Chapter 1 examines features of seriality in the *poliziottesco* and build upon scholarly notions of seriality to propose a methodological approach capable of connecting films to news media discourses on the actions of civic institutions. As explained in Chapter 1, this approach centred on seriality is not new for the analysis of this *filone*. Nonetheless, it is central for this thesis because it allows me to connect the films to news media discourses about civic institutions. Borrowing from comic book seriality (Eco 1984; Denson 2011), Italian cinematic *commissari* and *procuratori* are read as “serial figures” (Denson 2011, p. 536) that adapted comfortably to different settings and situations of

the *poliziottesco*. Their actions and behaviours in the films retained the characteristics of previous iterations. At the same time, they addressed new controversial elements related to the political meaning accorded by news outlets to actions of the police and the judiciary. Kelleter's (2017) conceptualisation of seriality is particularly useful to explore the films not as individual units of analysis but as a form of episodic narration. Supported also by Wagstaff's (1992) analysis of the spaghetti western *filone*, Mittell's (2004) approach on television studies and television genre theory is helpful to investigate the definition and meanings of the *poliziottesco*. As Chapter 1 shows, such meaning can be found in discursive practices of evaluation, interpretation and definition by audiences, the industry, scholars, and critics in a specific historical time.

Elliot's (1981) "press performance as political ritual" is used to interpret the representation of societal conflicts in the *poliziottesco* and the shared element of seriality between news media and this particular *filone*. News media used emotional triggers to unite a divided citizenship around the struggle of the police, the judiciary, and political parties against perceived threats to democratic order. The mode of addressing criminal and political violence adopted by mainstream news outlets such as the conservative *Corriere della Sera* and the Communist *l'Unità* connects to the representation of villains and civic institutions in the *poliziottesco*. As this thesis argues, actions and behaviours of judges and policemen in the *filone* echoed the debate between opposing news outlets and opposing political constituencies concerning the attribution of the blame for the failures of the state in protecting citizens. The positioning of policemen or judges as negative characters in the conspiracy mode of the *poliziottesco* arises from the replication of features of the press ritual that condemned the lack of appropriate solidarity for the victims by specific representatives of the national community.

Additionally, Chapter 1 proposes a methodological approach that takes seriality in popular culture to read the employment of news media in the *poliziottesco*. Building on the theoretical frameworks of remediation (Bolter and Grusin, 2000) and intermediality (Rajewsky, 2005), the chapter deploys the methods to read both the use of idioms of printed and audio-visual news media and the use of news media as devices in the films. There seems to be a gap in scholarship for the identification of methods able to read the impact of the intermingling of different media over the representational possibilities of films. My analysis of media discourses and the serial repetition of formal devices goes

some way to fill this gap. In this respect, the use of corpora for discourse analysis of newspapers concerning film narratives is an original contribution to knowledge from this thesis. Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis (Baker et al., 2008), which mixes qualitative and quantitative approaches, was chosen in opposition to mainly quantitative methods of newspaper analysis used by scholars such as Tarrow (1989). Two corpora comprising first page articles of two newspapers, *Corriere della Sera* and *l'Unità*, between November 1969 and February 1972 allow me to track patterns in the representation of Italian civic institutions. The primary focus of this thesis is on media discourses on the *strategia della tensione*. Hence, this methodology is primarily devised to understand to what extent changes in the interpretation of the conspiracy theory impacted the selection of topics and the representation of institutional characters in the *poliziottesco*. The literature review and methodology chapter, thereby, provides the tools to undertake the analysis of the use of news media and civic institutions in the *poliziottesco* as conductors of broader debates.

Chapter 2 investigates elements of formal continuity between the *poliziottesco* and cinema *di consumo impegnato*. It primarily focuses on the use of news media as devices in both cultural products. These devices worked to blur the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction, appealing to the emotional triggers of news media. The analysis serves to demonstrate that the *filone* remediated the relationship between films *di consumo impegnato* and the socio-political conditions of the 1970s, which relied on the interaction of different media idioms. As Chapter 2 argues, the *poliziottesco* put aside the critical tension of films *di consumo impegnato* but maintained some formal strategies associated with the mode of representation of these films. Hence, this chapter explores news media representations of political violence and uses two films *di consumo impegnato*, Lizzani's *Banditi a Milano* (1968) and Bellocchio's *Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina* (1972), to investigate how they comment on the impact of news media on the perception of social reality by Italian citizens. The analysis of emotional cues employed by news media to provide meaning to political violence and the elaboration of these narrative strategies by the leftist milieu supports the analysis of the representation of civic institutions in the *poliziottesco*. As Chapter 2 explains, news media employed ritualistic practices to make the victims of violence political symbols in the struggle for the defence of democracy. The same representational strategy is analysed in Chapter 3 to investigate how news media and the *poliziottesco* framed policemen as victims of criminal and political violence. This analysis is particularly

useful in relation to the early 1970s, when this victim status was contested by opposing political constituencies.

Chapter 3 uses Stefano Vanzina's *La polizia ringrazia* (1972) and the death of Agent Antonio Annarumma as case studies to explore how the political struggle in Italy in the late 1960s was conducted using civic institutions as powerful political symbols. The framing of the low-ranking policeman as a victim is identified by this thesis as a shared strategy of news outlets and *poliziotteschi* to foster audiences' identification with law enforcement agencies. The representation of Agent Annarumma, who died during the general strike in November 1969, is used as a model to explore the depiction of the rank-and-file policeman in Vanzina's movie, and the evolution of this "serial figure" in other *poliziotteschi*<sup>7</sup>. Newspaper articles, representing and commenting on actions of policemen and judges are analysed to introduce the broader cultural-political context that surrounded the production of *La polizia ringrazia* and impacted the representation of the protagonists, *Commissario Bertone* and *Sostituto Procuratore Ricciuti*. Moreover, *La polizia ringrazia* has been chosen for a dedicated chapter because it is considered to offer the basic formula of the conspiracy mode of the *poliziottesco*. The formulaic structure of the *filone* problematises the identification of a "founding text". Nonetheless, *La polizia ringrazia* provides a model from which to study the accumulation of narrative tropes and emotional triggers that manifest in subsequent movies. The innovations delivered by these movies inaugurated new cycles of films. Yet, these cycles continued to dialogue with previous iterations of the *poliziottesco* that had proved to be successful at the box office. As such, the influence of *La polizia ringrazia* has been registered especially concerning the relationship between *commissari* and *procuratori* in subsequent *poliziotteschi*. The movie frames the police at the centre of the anti-democratic conspiracy that forms the basis of the plot. Despite the initial conflict that positions the judge negatively, the event of the movie leads to a reconciliation of the two conceptualisations of law and order that the characters uphold. At the moment of the release of the film (February 1972), specific events contributed to

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<sup>7</sup> In this thesis, the singular noun *poliziottesco* is used to describe features related to the sum of individual films that comprises the *filone* as a whole. The plural noun *poliziotteschi* relates to two or more individual movies and is used when it is necessary to describe differences between them.

the framing of the *sostituto procuratore* as the last hope against reactionary manoeuvres.

The evolution of the formula provided by *La polizia ringrazia* is the focus of Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 examines the re-working in the *poliziottesco* of the figure of *Commissario* Luigi Calabresi, who was assassinated in May 1972. The struggle over the meaning of Calabresi's death conducted in news media impacted the evolution of the "serial figure" of the *commissario* in the *poliziottesco*. The changes in discourses concerning Calabresi's death and the *strategia della tensione* affected the evolution of the cinematic *commissario* in the conspiracy subset. Through the superimposition of Calabresi's media figure over the protagonists of the films, the cinematic *commissario* expresses the negotiation of the meaning of state violence and the evolution of media discourses around issues of police brutality. The gradual overlapping of Calabresi-like figures and violent cops in the movies registers the heroic status achieved by the Calabresi figure and the evolution of the meaning concerning his past, characterised by harsh accusations of brutality by the left. In this respect, Chapter 4 questions existing scholarly arguments that interpret the re-working of Calabresi in the *poliziottesco*. These arguments connect with the conviction in 1997 of former leaders of the leftist group *Lotta Continua* for the murder of Calabresi. They identify in forms of communal "guilt" (Corsi, 2006; Uva, 2007) and "disavowal" (O'Leary, 2011) by the Italian cinematic milieu the reason for the shift of the blame for Calabresi's death from the left to the right in the *poliziottesco*. Nonetheless, this chapter argues that, in the early 1970s, the thesis connecting the assassination of the *commissario* to the framework of the *strategia della tensione* made Calabresi a believable victim of reactionary forces.

Chapter 5 analyses representations of judges in the *poliziottesco*. It fills a gap in research concerning the impact of cinematic judges in the construction of the relationship between the *poliziottesco* and the socio-political conditions of 1970s Italy. Additionally, the chapter connects with Fisher's framework of "prior knowledge" (2014, p. 174) to interpret the engagement of the *filone* with news media discourses about the judiciary. The analysis of cinematic representations of judges also serves to investigate how the *poliziottesco* adapted narrative structures and cinematic tropes of cinema *di consumo impegnato* to meet the demands of its action-oriented plots. In the *poliziottesco*, judges move ambiguously between corruption and loyalty to democracy, depending on the plot of individual movies and the state of the debate concerning the

*strategia della tensione*. Focusing also on hybrid forms of the *poliziottesco*, the chapter exposes the instrumental use of the judiciary to link the cinematic action to the *strategia della tensione*. O’Leary sees in the cinematic policeman “a scapegoat and fantasy representative who assuages or avenges the spectator’s sense of social and economic insecurity or political impotence” (2011, p. 103). By 1974, the judiciary started to attract criticism concerning their handling of investigations related to the *strategia della tensione* and the weak action against neo-fascist terrorism. Despite the identification of the *commissario* as a “fantasy representative” of audiences’ desire for justice, Chapter 5 argues that judges, and not policemen, are the “scapegoat” of the conspiracy mode of the *poliziottesco*. Films like *La polizia ha le mani legate* (Ercoli, 1975) and *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide* (Martino, 1975) register the evolution of news media discourses on the *strategia della tensione*. Cinematic judges are blamed for the failures of the *commissario* to dismantle conspiracies in the movies. Although maintaining a tendency towards reconciliation, the representations of the relationship between policemen and judges that follow *La polizia ringrazia* register a more explicit condemnation of the action, or lack of it, of the Italian judiciary. As such, these representations hold traces of the public debate concerning the failures of specific civic institutions in the struggle against political and criminal violence.

In conclusion, this thesis uses news media to connect the representations of the films to the construction of meaning around the action of civic institutions in 1970s Italy. It argues that the *poliziottesco* registered this struggle over meaning and participated in the negotiation of the political value of institutional violence and action against criminal and political violence. Read as a repository of conflicting conceptualisations of law and order deployed through the juxtaposition of opposing ideological instances, the *poliziottesco* can be interpreted as a historical document. Targeting mass audiences, it documents the negotiation of the blame for state inefficiency against violence. Accordingly, the *filone* also documents the exploitation of the distrust of Italian citizens towards their state authorities. The confusion characterising the interpretation of the events of the early 1970s “has created the sense that history, above all in the Italian case, could and should also be written outside the courtrooms or historical archives” (Antonello and O’Leary 2009, p. 10). Even if it is not my intention to make claims about the accuracy of the interpretations provided by the *poliziottesco*, this thesis argues that the *filone* offers the possibility of addressing the information available in the 1970s to make sense of the events of the decade. As is explained in the following chapters, the

films constructed a “flat present” that gave consistency to their story world. By “flat present”, I mean the compression into film narratives of references to events that unfolded across the first half of the 1970s. The same flat present was constructed adhering to the mode of representation of the socio-political conditions deployed by news media. The political ritual performed by the press helped to maintain the perception of a society under constant threat to legitimise the violent outcomes of state actions. Similarly, the *poliziottesco* exploited the framework of the *strategia della tensione* to return to the point of departure at the end of each movie. As a form of episodic narration, democracy and the quiet life of the average citizen had to be constantly menaced by obscure and undefeatable forces to make necessary a new intervention of the *commissario* and justify his violent methods once again.

# Chapter 1 - Literature review and methodology: seriality in the *poliziottesco* and news media

## Introduction

“Words! Newspaper headlines for a couple of days, a pomp funeral and then smaller articles in inside pages. [...] Thus, in a week or two people will become indifferent. It is inevitable and fatal as a heart attack, but who killed him? Our system!”<sup>8</sup>

*Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia* (Martino, 1973).

In *Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia* (Martino, 1973), the *commissario* (police inspector), Giorgio Caneparo (Luc Merenda), directs his anger against the local chief of police (*questore*). The above outburst comments on the letter of condolence from the Minister of the Interior to the colleagues of *Commissario Del Buono* (Chris Avram), who has been assassinated in the previous scene. Caneparo reacts against the lack of protection accorded to law enforcement agents. The police are abandoned by media and by the higher ranks of the state in the struggle against violence in Italy.

Luc Merenda repeats the same words in *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide* (Martino, 1975), playing the role of *Commissario Solmi*. His words exemplify how the *poliziottesco* can be illuminated through established scholarly notions of “seriality” (Wagstaff, 1992; Kelleter, 2017), which will be a key topic of this chapter. *Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia*, released in 1973, addresses the debate on the meaning of institutional deaths in the wake of the killing of *Commissario Luigi Calabresi* (May 17, 1972). The scene replicates a recurrent practice of news media facing acts of political violence: the reporting of messages of condolence by prominent institutional figures. *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide*, released in 1975, addresses the debate on the inefficiency of state action against violence in Italy. This time the words are directed at the television screen, from which the newscaster commented on the

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<sup>8</sup> All dialogues presented in this thesis are translated from the Italian-language dub of the movies. All translations are mine.

ineffective action of civic institutions in the face of mysterious murders. Merenda's words had become part of a set of standardised reactions associated with the protagonists of the *poliziottesco*.

The meaning of these words could be detached from the context of the assassination of a policeman. The historical context had created the possibility of using a recurrent film trope to reference other media discourses. Characters' reactions were recognisable because they had been experienced in other similar movies but also because they often addressed recognisable tropes of news media. As such, seriality helped filmmakers to adapt individual movies to the historical and cultural context. Additionally, it supported producers in the exploitation of cycles of films that possessed a formal consistency. As this thesis will demonstrate, different movies replicated news media discourses and practices to provide a further layer of meaning to the cinematic spectacle. The press and television news are used in the *filone* as devices to reinforce the link between the fictional action and the socio-political conditions of 1970s Italy. Arguably, *poliziottesco* filmmakers aimed at exploiting the properties of other media, the representational patterns that characterised their narration of the present, and the emotional triggers used by news media to suggest a shared interpretation of fiction and social reality.

This chapter argues for the identification of the precise link between the films and media discourses specifically characterising the early 1970s. It engages with scholarship on seriality to explore the elements of seriality shared by television, the press, and the *poliziottesco*, which are central to understand the relationship between the form and the content of this *filone* and between the movies and the socio-political conditions of 1970s Italy. Elements of seriality shared by movies and news media encapsulate the historical significance of these films. The deployment of features of serial narrative that characterised news media made the *poliziottesco* part of the national debate on the legitimacy of state violence and the meaning of tragic events. As such, the chapter contributes to the historical discourse that stresses the link between historical events and their mediated representations (Fisher, 2014). In this respect, the representations of newspapers are a valuable source to trace "the language, ideas and habits which helped to make the sense which people were able to make of political realities and social orders" (Pirdawood 2016, p. 2).

The analysis of seriality proposed by Kelleter (2017) offers relevant insights to explore the links between the seriality of different products of popular culture. As this chapter

explains, the *poliziottesco* did not employ seriality for narrative continuity from one movie to the next. Rather, it followed the logic of Italian genre production (*filone* cinema), using seriality as a marketing strategy (Wagstaff, 1992). Accordingly, the chapter argues for considering patterns of serial repetition typical of episodic narrative more than the narrative unity of individual films. This analytical approach allows this thesis to read the conspiracy subset of the *poliziottesco* in relation to other subsets and to the cultural and political context of the Italian 1970s. In this respect, the chapter considers *filone* cinema as a “formulaic” expression of Italian film production (Wagstaff, 1992). Following Wagstaff’s (1992) suggestion, television studies (for example, Mittell, 2004) offer relevant tools for the analysis of the genre conventions of the *poliziottesco* in relation to seriality. These tools help to expand the investigation into the cultural and historical factors that participated in the definition of the *poliziottesco* as a generic label. Thereby, the chapter argues for the necessity of addressing critics’ reviews and the debate on cultural hierarchies in the definition of the *poliziottesco* as a “cultural practice” (Mittell 2004, p. 12). This approach supports the reading of the *filone* as dialogically constructed in relation to the cultural production of the early 1970s, outlined in Chapter 2.

Additionally, the scholarship on comic book seriality supports the analysis of the characters of the *poliziottesco* and the relationship between the socio-political context and the story world of the films. Concepts like linear and non-linear seriality, and “serial characters” and “serial figures” (Denson 2011) support the analysis of the construction and evolution of cinematic institutional characters and conspirators. As we will see later on, comic-book seriality is also relevant to understand the effort to link the world of the *poliziottesco* to “the real and non-diegetic world” (Denson 2011, p. 539) in which the 1970s spectator consumed the movies. This is primarily done through the use of news media as devices and through the effort to replicate narrative and formal tropes experienced by Italian audiences through news media.

Concerning the reference to actual events, different *poliziotteschi* exploited the interpretative framework that characterised media discourses on the *strategia della tensione* (strategy of tension). This conspiracy theory hypothesised the plot of the most reactionary sectors of the state for an “‘artificial’ exacerbation of social conflict aiming at orienting the public opinion towards the right; also aiming at building the foundations of an authoritarian government” (Crainz 2003, p. 368). As this thesis explains, the

“conspiracy mode” (Fisher 2014, p. 173) of the *poliziottesco* relied heavily on omissions and contradictions that emerged from such a framework. In terms of content, the *filone* benefitted from the “serial” features that characterised news media representations of the events of the decade – never-ending investigations, surprising twists, suspensions or changes of courts of trials – which resonated in the organisation of the narrative of different *poliziotteschi*. As this thesis aims at demonstrating, the form and the content of the *poliziottesco* were interdependent. “Serial” features of news media impacted on the peculiar evolution of the *filone*, which advanced to new formulas and retreated into more secure ones depending not only on market trends, but also on the evolution of news media discourses on the *strategia della tensione*.

Regarding news media seriality, the chapter also explores the concepts of “press performance as political ritual” (Elliot, 1981) and “framework of interpretation” (Schlesinger, 1981), which, in this thesis, aid the interpretation of linguistic patterns in news media. Moreover, the press ritual connects the *poliziottesco* to news media seriality. Ritualistic practices of addressing political and criminal violence in the 1970s support the analysis of the representation of institutional characters in the *filone*, performed in Chapters 3, 4, and 5. The interpretation of the present based on the framework of the “violent society” (Schlesinger 1981, p. 91) helps to connect news media representation of socio-political conflicts to the cinematic action. In this respect, the second half of this chapter illustrates the methodology of this thesis, which aims at identifying and explaining the significance of shared serial features within the Italian cultural production of the 1970s. Hence, this methodology complements film analysis with qualitative and quantitative analysis of newspaper articles on the actions of Italian civic institutions. Arguably, modes of expression peculiar to the *poliziottesco* simulated idioms of other media, similarly addressing news media discourses on violence. This relationship between media idioms and discourses in the *filone* helps me to investigate the socio-historical field of the movies. In this respect, this thesis argues that the repurposing of different media features in the *poliziottesco* was central to build the relationship between the representations of the *poliziottesco* and the perceived material conditions of 1970s Italy.

Methods of Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis (CADA) (Baker et al., 2008; Partington, 2004) will contribute to my analysis of linguistic patterns and discourses in newspapers. CADA mixes qualitative (Critical Discourse Analysis) and quantitative

(Corpus Linguistics) analysis of naturally occurring language in the genre of news production. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) focuses on how “linguistic forms are used in various expressions and manipulations of power and control” (Baker et al. 2008, p. 280). Corpus Linguistics methods “are quantitative and/or make use of statistical tests, which are performed by computer software” (Baker et al. 2008, p. 274). This approach provides empirical data for identifying precisely the links that connected the *poliziottesco* to the representations of crime news (Bondanella, 2009). The same empirical data supports the close reading of selected newspaper articles, helping to connect the *filone* to the state of the debate concerning the *strategia della tensione*, especially concerning the responsibility of civic authorities. The final aim is to provide evidence to the often taken-for-granted assumption of the link between the *poliziottesco* and the socio-political climate of its time.

The use of this approach allows me to move back and forth from the specificity of the historical context to broader representational patterns of news media. The integration of film and discourse analysis provides evidence of the historical significance of the *poliziottesco*. As will be argued in this chapter, the *poliziottesco* addressed the web of discursive practices that participated in the interpretation of its socio-political context. My analysis of newspapers permits me to address this process of meaning-making. Moreover, my methodological approach facilitates the connection of close reading of specific scenes and still-frames to the patterns of serial repetition that characterise the *poliziottesco*. The interrelation of media in the *poliziottesco* is analysed through the frameworks of remediation (Bolter and Grusin, 2000) and intermediality (Rajewsky, 2005). The two concepts, explored in this chapter, often overlap. Remediation considers the repurposing of different media features into another medium. As such, it provides a theoretical framework to explore the crossover of media idioms in the *filone* and the consequences of this crossover on the relationship between the *poliziottesco* and the socio-political conditions of 1970s Italy. Intermediality is “the participation of more than one medium of expression [or communication] in the signification of a human artefact” (Wolf 1999, p. 1). I use intermediality as an analytical tool to link strategies of remediation to the formal language and content of the *filone*. Intermediality is helpful to read the effect of the use of news media as devices on the modes of expression of the *poliziottesco*. Both concepts described here will orient the close reading of specific scenes that employed idioms of audio-visual news media (newsreels and television news) and frames that deployed television screens or the front pages of newspapers.

## Beyond economic factors: the historical significance of the *poliziottesco*

For the purpose of the argument of this thesis, the *poliziottesco* needs to be considered in its exact historical context. Moreover, as this section argues, it is necessary to go beyond the narrow focus on the industrial organisation of the *poliziottesco* to fully grasp its contribution to the historical discourse on the Italian 1970s. It is central to go in-depth into contemporaneous media discourses and representations of the present for understanding the significant investment of the films in conspiracy theories. Such discourses pertained more to the daily consumption of news media than to contemporary historical readings looking back at the 1970s. Films and news media, in this respect, are not used as reliable sources to infer the historical truth concerning what happened. They are used to explore the framework available in the 1970s to make sense of social reality. Additionally, they serve to demonstrate how the interconnectedness of idioms and representational strategies between different media participated in shaping processes of meaning making. The information available nowadays, informed by forty years of historical research and by a large amount of trials, risk overshadowing the impact of silences, omissions, and interpretations as ephemeral as contradictory, over processes of meaning making in the early 1970s. These gaps were exploited by the *poliziottesco*, which, as this thesis demonstrates, relied on the information provided by news outlets.

Only in the last two decades, edited collections (Bayman and Rigoletto, 2013) and single-authored volumes on Italian (Wood, 2005; Bondanella, 2009; Della Casa 2013; Forshaw, 2017) and European cinema (Mathijs and Mendik, 2004) have analysed the *poliziottesco*. Additionally, Fisher (forthcoming) is due to publish a single-authored book on Italian crime cinema, demonstrating the increasing interest in this cultural production in the Anglophone context. In Italian language volumes, on the other hand, the *poliziottesco* is primarily addressed through dedicated reference books (Patrizi and Cotumaccio, 2001; Luperto, 2009; Magni and Giobbo, 2010; Bruschini and Tentori, 2011; Curti, 2006; 2013). Other history-oriented studies in English and Italian language insert this cycle of Italian cop thrillers into the cultural production dealing with the representation of terrorism by Italian cinema (Uva, 2007; O'Leary, 2011; Leotta, 2013); the representation of justice in Italian cinema (Vitiello, 2013); and the elaboration of the political imagery in Italy (Uva and Picchi, 2006).

In the Anglophone scholarship, much effort has been put to the identification of the value – historical, cultural, or aesthetic – of the *poliziottesco* and to explain the reason behind the fascination of intergenerational audiences. Inserting the *poliziottesco* into the trajectory of Italian cinema, scholars have tried to establish links between the representation of the Italian socio-political context in this *filone* and specific issues of trauma (O’Leary 2011; Glynn, Lombardi, and O’Leary, 2012); psychoanalytical neuroses related to masculinity (O’Leary 2011; Mendik, 2015); negotiation of an unresolved past (Fisher, forthcoming); the attempt to make sense of the confusion of the decade (Wood, 2003; 2012); or to reveal unspoken truths behind acts of political violence (Barry, 2004). However, once scholarship established that the *poliziottesco* possessed strong relations to its socio-political context (Barry, 2004; O’Leary, 2011; Glynn, Lombardi, O’Leary, 2012; Fisher, 2014) the next question - how this relationship was expressed concerning form and visual language - is often evaded.

The connection between news media discourses and the representation of the 1970s’ present of the *poliziottesco* has already been signalled by different scholars. Bondanella wrote that “[t]he Italian police film represents a completely *contemporary* genre in the sense that, not unlike the content of the American *Law & Order* television series, many of its plots and its most popular themes could easily have been lifted from the pages [...] of any urban newspaper” (2009, p. 454, emphasis in the original). He continued stating that “[r]eal events of the period inspired many Italian crime films, and the *cronaca nera* [crime news] of most metropolitan newspapers furnished plenty of raw materials” (p. 456). Other scholars registered that many *poliziotteschi* “alluded to the news imagery” (O’Leary 2011, p. 94) or performed a “daily stripping of the news with instant movies” (Fatelli 2013, p. 104). Nonetheless, Marlow-Mann, recognising the reference to recent news in the films, warned his readers about the risk of assuming the significance of this link: “[m]ost accounts of the *poliziesco* [*poliziottesco*] are undermined by a naively ‘reflectionist’ understanding of the relationship between film and society” (2013, p. 134).

As said above, in fact, silences and omissions are pivotal to understand why filmmakers and audiences alike took some information for granted. In order to provide empirical evidence to a widespread interpretation that is often used to connect the *poliziottesco* to its socio-political context, it is necessary to engage with the content and language of the *cronaca nera*. This research will try to produce this data, filling a gap in the scholarship

on the *poliziottesco* by undertaking an in-depth analysis of the use of media in the *poliziottesco* and media discourses that, with their contradictions, seem to influence the *filone*. The decade saw a proliferation of press media (Marco 2007, p. 240) and the mass diffusion of television (Forno 2013, Chapter 5). As explained by Fisher, “the events of the 1970s were inseparable from the processes of mediation that grew around them” (2014, p. 173). Explicit references to contemporary events and media discourses are central to grasp this process. It is fundamental to engage with the daily consumption of media to comprehend the significance of the emotional triggers mobilised by the movies to make Italian audiences return to the theatres.

The majority of the scholarship listed above uses elements of seriality to understand the overall significance of the *poliziottesco*. Wagstaff identified the hook to Italian audiences in cinematic “pay-offs” (1992, p. 253), an anticipated thrill or gratification coming from the repetition of a given formula. Additionally, Wagstaff identified in the industrial organisation of Italian cinema one of the features that led productions to rely heavily on the formulas of *filone* cinema: “seriality was the most important mechanism available to the Italian production sector, given the way it was organised, for meeting the particular requirements of the exhibition sector” (1992, p. 255). The industry had a relatively low level of exploitation of a relatively large number of films (1992, p. 249). Therefore, the production was characterised by large numbers of cheap films “rather than well financed ones in moderate quantities” (1992, p. 249). Seriality, in the form of imitation and repetition, was the way “to increase output without any available increase in creative resources” (1992, p. 249).

As Wagstaff’s argument indicates, the term “*filone*” is a label that invests heavily in production-related factors. “*Filone* cinema” or “*filone* milieu” refers to the Italian genre production between the 1950s and the 1980s. It points to strands of Italian genre movies and the subcategories within these strands – the subsets or sub-strands - which emerged as a result of the commercial exploitation of previously successful models (a “*filone*” is one of these strands). There is broad agreement in the scholarship on the low-budget structure of the *filone* milieu (Koven, 2006; O’Leary, 2011; Fisher, 2014), which is central to establish the relationship between the *poliziottesco* and its precise historical context. Bondanella highlighted that *filone* movies were “consumer-driven: audiences flocked to a few specific films that gave birth to the craze for such a film. [...] Producers then sprang to imitate the trend” (2009, p. 178). Thus, the label “*filone*

cinema” finds agreement between scholars for the identification of these productions, even if other definitions have been proposed to establish a difference from mainstream cinema – Koven proposes “vernacular cinema” in his analysis of the Italian *filone* of the *giallo* (Koven, 2006). Implying issues of repetition and seriality, O’Leary (2011, p. 83) and Wood (2005, p. 11) label them “cycles” or “strands” – Wood clarifies that a *filone* is “a strand of similar films, rather than a genre” (2005, p. 11).

These definitions of *filone* cinema do not differ significantly from notions of film genres, defined in the simplest way as “those commercial feature films which, through repetition and variation, tell familiar stories with familiar characters in familiar situations” (Keith Grant 2007, p. xvii). At the same time, however, *filoni* defy this standard interpretation of the internal conditions of genres. The identification of a clear pattern of development is difficult as the *poliziottesco*, similar to other *filoni*, “originated as a hybrid form” (Brunetta 2007, p. 382). As argued below in this chapter, the formulas were not fixed but rather a fluid footprint that helped filmmakers to incorporate contemporary cinematic trends and media discourses. The short cycles of exploitation of specific market opportunities required a level of responsiveness to local and international cinematic trends superior to that of Hollywood productions. However, exploiting these trends could not suffice to compete in the market with the organisation and economic power of U.S. productions.

Contemporary media discourses offered a way to innovate in repetition and influenced the non-linear evolution of the *poliziottesco* in particular. If urban settings remained stable throughout the *filone*, the formulas of the *poliziottesco* varied responding to news media discourses on issues of law and order. As documented in Chapters 3, 4, and 5, the positioning of institutional characters in the films also evolved responding to news media discourses, while their action and reactions remained stable and easily recognisable. Accordingly, the *filone* followed the same chaotic development of news media, which advanced towards new interpretations suggested by specific developments of investigations on the *strategia della tensione* and returned to previous formulas when the investigations came to a dead end. Film after film, the *poliziottesco* accumulated narrative and formal tropes that returned and disappeared inconsistently depending on contextual factors more than on an established generic grammar.

Academics have already identified indirect links of *filone* cinema to socio-political concerns of the times of their production to explain the historical significance of the

movies (Fisher, 2011). It can be asked why the Italian cultural production of entertainment cinema shifted its focus towards the present, after two decades of Greco-Roman and Biblical epics (the mythological epic film: *peplum*) and 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries westerns (the spaghetti western). Beside production-related factors, it is pivotal to explore how the *poliziottesco* was constructed discursively, establishing a continuous dialogue with other productions, and cultural, political, and social practices. The group of Italian scholars named Douglass Mortimer (2013) explained the shift over the explicit representation of the 1970s' present with the increasing level of conflict that characterised Italy:

“Few other film forms have been able to put on screen with such energy, dynamism and rhythm, the themes of the territory, the social conflict, and violence as a language common to criminals, citizenship, and law enforcement agencies” (p. 31).

The use of media and civic institutions in the *poliziottesco* was instrumental in addressing fears and neuroses of the present, reworking a conflict between Italians and their civic authorities that had reached a dramatic peak in the 1970s with the increase of political and criminal violence in the country. Accordingly, shifts in news media discourses on the action of the police and the judiciary are central to comprehend the historical significance of the *poliziottesco*. Issues of accuracy or truthfulness concerning the information conveyed by such discourses are not the focus for the purpose of the argument pursued by this thesis. Dealing with movies produced within a limited time-span, it is a matter of zooming in on specific interpretations born and died within an extremely limited amount of time. In this respect, Buttafava (1980, p. 116) commented that the *poliziottesco* performed a sort of *pornografia cronachistica* (news pornography), exploiting the novelty of the news to maximise the emotional impact of the violence portrayed on screen.

The *filone* constructed a story world around news media representations. These representations also participated in the negotiation of the social role of Italian civic institutions. Scholarship often focuses on a general approach of the movies towards the state (Barry, 2004). However, representations of specific civic institutions – and their evolution alongside the evolution of the *poliziottesco* – provide a better framework to understand the engagement of this *filone* with media discourses on the *strategia della tensione*. These representations offer the possibility of tracing the process of negotiation

of the blame concerning acts of political violence in the decade, including state violence. Such violence started to enter into the households of Italian citizens through news media, escaping the perimeters of factories and universities. The press voiced the shock caused by these representations for the sector of the population not directly involved in the political struggle. “The challenges to authority [...] seemed to many observers to be going beyond the acceptable realms of carnival” (Lumley 1990, p. 225). The *poliziottesco* directly addressed this part of the citizenship. Extreme conflicts between students, criminals, and law enforcement agents monopolised the public debate in Italian media, becoming part of the daily consumption by Italian citizens. The deserts of the south-western USA and Mexico were helpful to project contemporary socio-political conflicts in the spaghetti western of the 1960s. However, by the 1970s, as is explained in Chapters 2 and 3, the success of specific movies gave filmmakers the confidence to invest in contemporary settings.

The increasing impact of media on processes shaping the 1970s’ socio-political context<sup>9</sup> gave filmmakers the possibility of projecting fears and anxieties on a recognisable urban landscape, close and distant at the same time. Such a landscape was familiar especially because it had been already mediated by and experienced through news media. Nonetheless, other factors contributed to the primary focus towards the present featured in the *poliziottesco*. To understand its role in the national debate on violence, the analysis of this *filone* needs to consider how the movies engaged with their socio-political and cultural context. Accordingly, the analysis needs to connect with the ways filmmakers dealt with the impact of cultural hierarchies, resulting in particular formal strategies and thematic choices. The theoretical framework of television and television genre studies can offer relevant insights to undertake this analysis.

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<sup>9</sup> In this respect, in the last decade the concept of “mediatization” emerged in media studies, considering “the interplay between media, culture and society” (Hepp et al. 2015, p. 315) in socio-political processes and the “influences of media and communications in other social and cultural domains” (p. 316).

## Distracted audiences and predictable outcomes: exploring the seriality of the *poliziottesco* through television studies

This section explores the extent to which television studies can furnish relevant theories to investigate a sum of individual movies as a form of episodic narration. The section aims at reading the serial features of the *poliziottesco* as a sum of habits of consumption, marketing, and formal strategies. The section leads to the next argument that sees television genre theory as a relevant framework to undertake the analysis of the marketing, cultural, and historical factors that contributed to the definition and evolution of the *filone*.

Seriality, concerning this work, is considered as a “practice of popular culture” (Kelleter 2017, p. 14). For Kelleter, texts “can be regarded as simultaneously serial and nonserial, depending on the perspective from which it is seen — or, more properly, depending on the historical situation in which its textual activities are mobilized in one way or another” (2017, p. 14). Even if the movies did not possess all the characteristics of a series (see below for a definition of these characteristics in relation to the *poliziottesco*), the products were immediately defined as *prodotti seriali* (serial products) by the majority of Italian critics (Micciché 1989, p. 10; Brunetta 2007, p. 382). The term “*prodotti seriali*” implies the production on an industrial scale of a certain object. Popular culture is conceived like “a set of social and aesthetic practices [...] closely tangled up with the logic of industrial reproduction and the technological affordances of new mass media” (Kelleter 2017, p. 9).

Wagstaff (1992), analysing the 1960s spaghetti western, divided the production into movies directed at *prima visione* cinemas (cinemas of the major Italian cities) and *terza visione* cinemas (cinemas in the outskirts of the cities and the countryside). *Terza visione* venues were considered to be characterised by “distracted” consumption, similar to television audiences (Wagstaff 1992, p. 253). As such, he proposed that the analysis of *filone* cinema should adopt methods of television studies, rejecting the approach of film studies that “have traditionally seen the individual film as the unit to be studied, and have assumed that the object of the spectator’s attention is that unit in its integrity” (p. 253). However, as Corsi (2001) documents, in the 1970s, *terza visione* cinemas suffered an irreversible crisis. The market quota for Italian films – the ones projected in *terza visione* cinemas - shrunk considerably, also responding to Hollywood overcoming its crisis of the previous decade (Wagstaff 1992, p. 251). Hence, the mode of

consumption of *terza visione* venues is less useful to explain the persistence and success of the *poliziottesco* in a period of such a radical crisis of Italian cinema. As Chapters 2 and 3 argue, formulas and forms responded with efficacy to the evolving cinematic taste of the public, employing new idioms to increase the pace of the narration and meet the grammar of the televisual medium. Accordingly, the subdivision of Italian audiences around the coordinates of class seems reductive. Nevertheless, the consideration related to the necessity of going beyond the exploration of individual films as “units to be studied” remains valid. It seems like the production demand to meet “distracted” audiences remained as a mode of production, even if the movies were directed mainly at *prima visione* cinemas.

The narrative units of the films continued to be interchangeable, as Wagstaff had registered concerning *terza visione* spaghetti westerns:

“villains threatening, heroes rescuing, changing of alliances, pursuit of quest, etc. It can sometimes be hard to tell from the credits of a film and its synopsis whether a particular film is a spaghetti western or an example of another formula such as bandit, gangster, Mafia, thriller or political suspense. A still, particularly if someone is wearing a hat, usually clears up the mystery” (Wagstaff 1992, p. 252).

Narrative units, in this respect, were organised similarly to the front page of a newspaper. The layout of the front page follows fixed patterns depending on the format of the paper (e.g. broadsheet, Berliner, tabloid), which is also influenced by market trends. Lead, local, foreign, feature stories, on the other hand, always change depending on the “social constructed concept of news value” (Bateman et al. 2006, p. 168). Moreover, depending on the concepts of news value, novelty, proximity, such stories become prominent on the front page. The *poliziottesco* had to adapt rapidly to market trends while maintaining the possibility of exploiting secure formulas. As stated by director Sergio Martino, “I come from a ‘tribe’ who does commercial cinema and is fully aware of this. I did what they [producers] told me to do. [...] when I shoot a film, I know what ‘ingredients’ I need to produce the spectacle” (1980, p. 121). If producers requested to follow a specific trend (*giallo*, vigilante, erotic, horror), filmmakers worked to integrate recognisable tropes of this trend into the formula that was more profitable at that time. Hence, like the front page of a generalist newspaper, which presents to the reader different genres of news, interchangeable units of content rotated around a more or less stable structure, experimenting with the intermingling of various generic

conventions more than simply reinforcing recognisable narrative and formal patterns with minor variations.

The development of standardised plots, the responsiveness to the changes in the market and the reference to contemporary socio-political issues, facilitated by the fast pace of production, made *poliziotteschi* more similar to telefilms than to feature films. Following the same approach, actors as well were interchangeable, “[j]ust as Telly Savalas had regularly identifiable side-kicks in the *Kojak* series. And villains were all played by actors recruited from a certain stable” (Wagstaff 1992, p. 255). The Cuban actor Tomas Milian is a primary example of this dynamic. He repeatedly switched between the role of the *commissario* (Figure 1.1), the vigilante (Figure 1.2), and the villain (Figure 1.3). Depending on his role, he was surrounded by recurring *commissari* (Maurizio Merli, Luc Merenda, Henry Silva), sidekicks (Gianfranco Barra, Michele Gammino, Enzo Sancrotti), and villains (John Steiner, Giuseppe Castellano, Antonio Casale, Carlo Gaddi, Nello Pazzafini).



Figure 1.1: Tomas Milian as *Commissario* Nico Giraldi in *Delitto in Formula Uno* (Corbucci, 1984).



Figure 1.2: Tomas Milian as Rambo, a vigilante in *Il giustiziere sfida la città* (Lenzi, 1975).



Figure 1.3: Tomas Milian as il Gobbo, the villain of *La banda del Gobbo* (Lenzi, 1978).

Accordingly, the *poliziottesco* can be characterised as a “series” more than a “serial”, taking inspiration from the formalist approach on seriality. The latter stands for a narrative that unfolds progressively within a story arc. The former is, as Kelleter cites Williams (1974), “an episodic narrative of repetitive variation” (2017, p. 12). Akin to the *Columbo* series (1968-2003), the plots develop in recognisable places – the streets of Genoa, Milan, Rome and Naples - and in the present. Compared to previous *filoni*, the *poliziottesco* expressed a “uniquely time-and-place bound character” (Bondanella 2009, p. 466). In the *poliziottesco*, the recursive element of serial progression (Kelleter 2017; see below) involved specific narrative patterns that anticipated the outcomes of the action portrayed. A sexually perverted serial killer, a girlfriend murdered, personal vendetta, a treacherous friend, conspirators defeated but not their sponsors were narrative tropes that provided audiences with familiar situations. This familiarity, however, did not come only from internal conditions of the *poliziottesco*, but from the

recognition of generic tropes that travelled across different *filoni*. Consistent with the approach of *filone* cinema, power and social relations in the *poliziottesco* were employed as matter-of-fact. The rich, like politicians, incorporated all the vices of society that balanced the screen-time accorded to ferocious lower-class criminals. If spectators of *Columbo* (1968-2003) knew from the start the identity of the culprit, the audiences of the *poliziottesco* experienced what Fisher (forthcoming) calls “a ritual recognition of familiar and assumed tenets in a serial text”. The recognition of a link between fiction and contemporary media discourses could contribute to provide further layers of meaning to the familiar and assumed tenets, which usually came from references to Hollywood and Italian films.

The *poliziottesco* lacked the creative coordination that characterised the production of television series. Nonetheless, the fast-paced mode of production facilitated the adaptation of the plots to media discourses on contemporary events. Similar to serialised television narratives, fast-produced movies responding to market trends can be analysed through the criteria of commercial serial storytelling:

“the quick timing of narrative steps in commercial serial storytelling—that is, the speed with which installments follow each other, in some formats weekly, in others even daily—enables the ongoing story to respond directly to current events and become part of its recipients’ daily realities and routines” (Kelleter 2017, p. 13).

Not only did filmmakers assume their audiences to have already experienced the action through the news; they often made news content the “familiar and assumed tenets” of the *filone*. Audiences’ pleasures, identified by Wagstaff as “laughter, thrill, [and] titillation” (1992, p. 253), could be conceived, similar to serial narratives in television, at the level of the “promise of perpetual renewal” (Kelleter 2017, p. 8). The revelation of the culprit was often denied in *poliziotteschi*, pointing to obscure power elites through elements of the *mise-en-scène* (Figures 1.4 and 1.5). The ringleader of the conspiracy, identified in the movies as the source of all that was wrong in the country, needed to be left anonymous in order to be renewed in the next movie. Serial patterns of representation functioned to secure an emotional response. This emotional response was maximised by adapting plots to the historical contingency, also thanks to the absence of a strict narrative continuity between films. The instigators of the great conspiracy called the *strategia della tensione*, in fact, had not been revealed to Italian citizens. The *poliziottesco*, thereby, connected its seriality to the context of reception continuing to

reiterate a feeling of insecurity and indeterminacy that characterised the interpretation of the 1970s present by news media.



Figures 1.4 and 1.5: the faces of the conspirators hidden through the mise-en-scène in *La polizia ringrazia* (Vanzina, 1972) and *La polizia ha le mani legate* (Ercoli, 1975).

### Television genres and the *poliziottesco*: the discursive construction of a generic label

It is difficult to ascertain if the *poliziottesco*, as a generic label, originated from the logic of seriality internal to this *filone*, from issues of pure marketing, or from the profitable opportunity of exploiting the emotional tension derived by the Italian socio-political context. As this section argues, it seems to arise from the sum of these three elements that concurred in creating an original cultural product. As the previous section explained, particular modes of television seriality that do not rely on narrative continuity are helpful to investigate patterns of repetition and innovation in *filone* cinema and the *poliziottesco*. Mittell's approach to television genres, which studies them as "a conceptual category formed by cultural practices" (2004, p. 12), permits two

distinct operations: it allows the exploration of the discursive construction and accumulation of generic conventions that, through “repetition and difference” (Neale 1980, p. 48), provided continuity to the *poliziottesco* as a “series” of films. Additionally, it allows us to consider the influence of the cultural and socio-political context on the content and production of the movies. The “cultural practice” approach helps a historical analysis that addresses the *poliziottesco* as “something that emerges from situated historical actors and agencies with particular modes of describing and performing themselves” (Kelleter 2017, p. 11).

Seriality and television genre theory will be mobilised in this thesis to explore how the *poliziottesco* negotiated the tension between spectacle and political commitment discursively. This analysis is central to Chapter 2 of this thesis, which explores the influence of local cinematic tropes on the *filone*. Mittell uses David Bordwell’s approach of historical poetics, “situating formal practices of media-making within explicit historical contexts of production and reception” (Mittell 2004, p. 117). As Mittell suggests, “[g]enres are formed through the cultural activation of textual conventions, linking them to various assumptions of definition, interpretation, and evaluation, all under the categorical rubric of the given genre” (2004, p. 118). Mittell then considers the specificity of the televisual medium concerning production, circulation and reception, identifying many different sites where the categories that constitute a given genre are debated, negotiated and evaluated (2004, p. 9). As a production rooted in the present and aiming at exploiting conflicts and controversies of its time, the study of the *poliziottesco* needs to consider the plurality of agents that operated in its definition. It is important to explore what elements operated discursively to construct the *poliziottesco* as a generic category – marketing strategies, fans and academia. It is also relevant to investigate what cultural practices contributed to the construction of its story world – media representations of the socio-historical context. Finally, it is central to address what other practices participated in “its reception as a proto-fascist genre” (Marlow-Mann 2013, p. 134) – the discursive struggle over the meaning of political and institutional violence. Mittell’s approach helps to register the interconnectedness of these elements.

Concerning the industry, producers consciously operated to provide a sense of seriality through marketing strategies that oriented the viewer. As Wagstaff wrote concerning the spaghetti western *filone*, the movies “used titles as a means to assert continuity with

other films of the *filone*, and with other films in specific subcategories. [...] Each title had the dual function of identifying the ‘series’, and characterizing the individual ‘episode’” (Wagstaff 1992, p. 254-255). The *poliziottesco* replicated the same strategy identified by Wagstaff concerning the spaghetti western. The use of the word “*polizia*” (police) in the titles established a serial link. Titles, however, do not entirely resolve the issue of the *poliziottesco* as a label that involves many movies that do not have the noun “police” in the title. This marketing choice, however, denotes the intention of exploiting a market trend but also the employment of seriality as a way to prolong that trend<sup>10</sup>.

Culturally, the impact of critics and academics in the creation of the *poliziottesco* as a generic label is significant. In the pages of specialised magazines and newspapers, critics identified common narrative patterns of individual movies that affected their reception and their inclusion in specific strands of Italian cinema. They constructed a set of definitions that oriented the consumption of these products. Complex formulas were created to insert movies into pre-determined categories like “*filone giudiziario-politico-sociale*” (judicial-political-social *filone*; Anon. 1972n, p. 8), “*filone dei giustizieri all’italiana*” (vigilante Italian style *filone*; Al. Fer. 1976, p. 17), “*filone politico-poliziesco*” (political-police procedural *filone*; Au. Sa. 1973, p. 17). These labels also overlapped and changed, depending on the political orientation of the newspaper or magazine. The critic Giovanni Buttafava coined the term *poliziottesco* in 1980 as a way to distinguish these films from more respected police procedural narratives of Anglophone origins. Implying depreciative meanings (Bondanella 2009, p. 453; Marlow-Mann 2013, p. 134; Fisher 2014, p. 168; Uva 2015, p. 25), Italian critics were using the term to identify mostly poorly-executed groups of movies sharing particular themes or characters. The word “*filone*” also possessed the same signification linking

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<sup>10</sup> Another connection could be made concerning the use of long titles to link *poliziotteschi* to politically committed films. Many political movies of the early 1970s, in fact, have long titles. *Confessione di un commissario di polizia al procuratore della Repubblica* (Damiani, 1971) can be connected to the success of titles as Petri’s *Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto* (1970), on which it sought to capitalise. Other titles engaging with political themes of the season 1971-1972 possessed very long titles such as *Lettera aperta a un giornale della sera* (Maselli, 1970), *Imputazione di omicidio per uno studente* (Bolognini, 1972), or Marco Bellocchio’s *Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina* (1972).

that milieu to the industrial production of *prodotti seriali*. Accordingly, Bondanella (2009) dismisses the word *poliziottesco* and analyses the Italian production of crime movies from the late 1960s to nowadays under the label *poliziesco*. Nonetheless, the use of the term by many scholars (Barry 2004; Curti 2006; Uva and Picchi 2006; Uva 2007; O’Leary 2011; Fisher 2014; forthcoming) provides more evidence of the discursive construction of genre categories that characterises *filone* cinema especially. If some academics use it to mark a distance from “contemporaneous political ‘auteur’ films” concerning “mode of production and consumption” (Fisher 2014, p. 168), others are attempting a critical “rehabilitation” of some of these movies (O’Leary 2011, p. 91 [n.13]). The need for a “rehabilitation” signals the impact that cultural hierarchies had on the *poliziottesco* in the 1970s.

The word “*poliziottesco*” can be considered retrospectively to represent the sum of numerous different *filoni* released in the 1970s<sup>11</sup>. However, if this retrospective categorisation of the films under the label *poliziottesco* has been possible, it means that those movies possessed some internal features that made them associable and other external features that facilitated this association. Returning to Wagstaff’s definition: “The *filone* can be subdivided into a number of parts, often consisting of subspecies” (Wagstaff 1992, p. 254). In retrospective readings, the interchangeability of these parts made the label “*poliziottesco*” elastic enough to include every crime film that shared a mode of production and consumption characterising Italian genre production in the 1970s. In turn, these readings attest for the inherent fluidity of genre conventions within the broad category of *filone* cinema.

The success at the box office of such politically committed titles as *Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto*<sup>12</sup> (Petri, 1970) gave confidence to producers for investments in such controversial topics as state violence. In this process, critics played

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<sup>11</sup> Websites such as *Wikipedia* (Wikipedia, 2018) or the fan-maintained *The Grindhouse Cinema Database* (The GCDb, 2018), for instance, group most of this production under the single label of *poliziottesco*. The fan-made website *Pollanet Squad* does not use the label *poliziottesco* but lists a variety of crime movies produced after the war, distinguishing them by sub-strands (mafia movie, *giallo*, noir, *poliziesco*, and others).

<sup>12</sup> Rossi (1997, p. 33) reports *Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto* in the 6th position concerning revenues in *prima visione* cinemas in the season 1969-1970.

a pivotal role in the definition of cultural hierarchies that affected the reception and definition of the *poliziottesco*. The cultural tension internal to Italian post-war society had a central role in this process. During the 1960s, many filmmakers adopted a political approach oriented to the left (Gundle 1995, p. 182). Critics and personalities of Italian culture opposed the so-called *cinema politico* (political cinema) to *cinema di consumo* (commercial cinema). The logic of profit that dictated the production of politically committed movies created some frictions between established directors such as Petri, Lizzani and Pontecorvo and critics<sup>13</sup>. From the specialised publications of *Ombre Rosse*, *Cinema&Film* and *Cinema Nuovo*, critics stigmatised the commercial operations of movies focusing on politics but “lacking the revolutionary input” (Fofi 1971, p. 128). Micciché (1989, [1972]), for instance, coined the term *cinema di consumo impegnato* (cinema of committed entertainment) to label the films of directors like Damiano Damiani and Carlo Lizzani, who mixed spectacle and politics. In Micciché’s analysis, Vanzina’s *La polizia ringrazia* (1972), as will be analysed in Chapter 3 of this thesis, is also part of this group of films that were considered to operate in this liminal space between commitment and entertainment. The primary criterion to judge a movie was not entertainment but political complexity. It was not just the political or militant cinema against which the *poliziottesco* was compared, but also and foremost the already dismissible “series” of movies labelled *cinema di consumo impegnato*. If political elements were denied a place in commercial cinema, *poliziotteschi* were automatically condemned for not providing a political solution or explanation to the human misery portrayed on screen.

The cultural hierarchy outlined above provides further evidence to the impact of the historical context on the definition of the *poliziottesco* and the development of its form and content. The *filone* became successful through the formula of *La polizia ringrazia*. The movie is part of the conspiracy subset of the *poliziottesco*. Fisher defined the conspiracy subset as films “whose plots revolve around the exposure of official cover-ups and high-level *coup d’état* conspiracies”, and, specifically, “films that explicitly depict official collusion in acts of politically motivated violence, and that use this to put

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<sup>13</sup> The most illustrative case is the negative reception of ultra-leftist critics to the Oscar winner *Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto* (Petri, 1970) considered to be “too American” (Giusti 2006, p. 238).

forward theories of authoritarian coup plots” (2014, p. 168). As the following chapters explore, the theme of state-driven conspiracies and attempted coups was central in the public debate. On the one hand, news about investigations changed continuously and favoured the adoption of an episodic narration in the *poliziottesco*. On the other hand, by focusing on the spectacle and providing spatiotemporal coordinates that pointed to the present, the *filone* was able to compress the narrative of different movies into a flat present. Merging a shallow social and political denunciation with the spectacle, the conspiracy mode of the *poliziottesco* seemed to make an effort to compress into the canons of action cinema different tensions stemming from the cultural, political, and historical context. The reworking of different events into the plot of individual movies constructed the flat present and made the overall depiction of the decade – and of the conspiracies that characterised it – internally consistent. As Higgins suggests about serial narrative, “[c]ompression and repetition forge a cinematic world at once clear, direct, and single-minded but also frantic, compulsive, and focused to the point of obsession” (2017, p. 99). The *poliziottesco* achieved compression mostly through productive efforts around spectacle. Repetition allowed them to get rid of “character development, complex motivations, and fleshed-out relationships” (Higgins 2017, p. 98) as those features became auto-referential within the formal and narrative conventions of the films. The narrative weaknesses of many plots of the *poliziottesco* became irrelevant in relation to the spectacle. As we will see later on in this chapter, following Wagstaff’s (1992) logic of units and actors’ interchangeability, audiences could recognise patterns that responded to repetitive schemes of characters’ systems of actions and reactions.

The lack of complexity was beneficial also to the political approach of the *filone*, which was instrumental in attracting different political constituencies in a time of extreme political polarisation. As Marcia Landy explains about popular films, the ones that “appear to be most invested in a particular political position must seduce their opposition; hence they incorporate counterpositions in the interest of dramatizing and enhancing the potential for consent” (1996, p. 24). Therefore, the *poliziottesco* aimed at presenting a story world open enough to interpretation to incorporate different levels of meaning. The nihilistic approach of the *filone* ensured the possibility of denouncing without furnishing a solution; of portraying crime without the necessity of offering any social or psychological motivation. The approach appealed at the same time to audiences outraged by the escalation of neo-fascist violence, by political corruption, or

by the new democratic (dis)order. The conscious choice of not suggesting a preferred ideological reading connected with the necessity of presenting “an ideology of pluralism manifested in the notion of the undifferentiated movie audience” (Carrol and Bordwell 1996, p. 444).

Similar to Bordwell’s approach on Hollywood films, the *poliziottesco* can be read outside a conception of genre as “monolithic”, which risks overlooking “the essential opportunism” (1996, p. 442) of the creative practice related to the *poliziottesco*. “A movie’s inclusion of contradictions, gaps, and blanks allowed it to be consumed as at least two discrete, even opposing stories going on in the same text” (Carrol and Bordwell 1996, p. 443), and the deployment of confused ideological instances in the *poliziottesco* worked in this direction for the sake of maximising possible revenues across mass audiences. The attempt to impose order on the overlapping of conflicting ideological instances in the *poliziottesco* risks to impose a fictitious order on narratives built on the outcomes of news media representations. Accordingly, a strict ideological reading of the *poliziottesco* would fall “victim to the charge of ahistoricity” (Carrol and Bordwell 1996, p. 8), as it would fail in recognising how media representations of events and public figures in the 1970s shaped discursively the processes of interpretation of the fiction of the *poliziottesco* and social reality alike. These representations were ideologically inconsistent within mainstream news media, problematising the recognition of a linear ideological trajectory in the movies.

In fact, Marlow-Mann identified the ideological incoherence of the movies as “an element of the strategy to create an emotional tension in the viewer” (2013, p. 145), engaging her in an emotional trip through the depiction of the fears and neuroses of Italian popular spectatorship. Thus, the answer to why those movies sought to exploit the “explosive” Italian context has been proposed on an emotional level (O’Leary, 2011; Marlow-Mann 2013; Fisher 2014). These analyses connect the violence of cinematic policemen to a ritualistic catharsis expressed in the form of an emotional release. The *commissario* becomes a “scapegoat and fantasy representative who assuages or avenges the spectator’s sense of social and economic insecurity or political impotence” (O’Leary 2011, p. 103). Specific devices channelled audiences’ identification towards the police or the judiciary, whose actions were invested by a specific ideological reading in the 1970s. However, this thesis argues that the positioning of characters such as policemen and judges was never left unproblematic as

it responded to media discourses on law and order coming from opposing ideological positions. Audiences' interpretation of the texts could vary depending on what Fisher calls "levels of prior knowledge" (2014, p. 174). The movies, rather than attempting to "impose order" (Wood 2003, p. 53) on incomprehensible conflicts or to reveal "what newspapers at that time did not dare show" (Barry 2004, p. 82), invested in the emotional impact of the spectacle. This relied on shallow socio-political commentaries to increase that impact.

Through the deployment of seriality, the films mobilised levels of prior knowledge through the recursivity of serial progression. Kelleter suggests a definition of recursivity as "the continual readjustment of possible continuations to already established information" (2017, p. 17). Episodic seriality needs to be designed to engage audiences even if "nothing is continued at the level of the plot and when the narrative world supposedly returns to its eternal point of departure" (Kelleter 2017, p. 17). The conflicts that characterised the historical context, thus, provided the *poliziottesco* with the opportunity for renewal in repetition. Similarly, the different levels of "prior knowledge" furnished the "already established information" that allowed audiences to get pleasure from the recursivity internal to the *filone*. As has been said above, the release of tension concerning spectatorship was not tied to the resolution of mysteries but to the cathartic emotional release of the protagonist. The *commissario*, in fact, usually "exploded" in avenging fury especially due to the impossibility of providing a definitive solution to the events. The prior knowledge necessary to maximise the emotional impact, connecting to Fisher's argument, was composed of a significant amount of conflicting media representations and interpretations of the present. Conceiving this prior knowledge outside mediated representations is hard. The majority of the Italian population was experiencing political and criminal violence solely through representations provided by newspapers, television, political and specialised magazines, and cinema.

The instrumental mobilisation of the "prior knowledge" in the *poliziottesco* registered the confusion that reigned at that time concerning the interpretation of the meaning of political and institutional violence. Italian institutions were struggling without success to provide a shared interpretation of the events, fostering a struggle over the meaning of violence. The serial mode of the *poliziottesco* could address this struggle elastically, moving from one position to the other. It allowed filmmakers to play with minor details

that often contradicted themselves if read from an ideological perspective, but that responded to the historical contingency, various levels of prior knowledge, and to political tensions internal to Italian cultural production.

### Comic book seriality in the *poliziottesco*: serial characters and multi-layered representations

Notions of seriality are particularly helpful to understand the interplay of references to the socio-political conditions of the early 1970s in the *poliziottesco*. Serial features of other media like the comic book also provide relevant elements to analyse the *filone*. Comic book seriality can be useful for two different aspects. Firstly, it allows me to draw a parallel between the use of news media in comics and in the *poliziottesco* and mark a difference with operations of “worldmaking” (Bordwell, 2006). As Chapters 2 and 3 show, the intersection of different media allowed filmmakers to play with different levels of representation: a set of representations presented as unmediated images entwined with the explicitly mediated cinematic world. Secondly, comic book seriality is helpful to understand how the *poliziottesco* constructed its characters. It is also useful to analyse how recurring characters evolved responding to their previous manifestations in other *poliziotteschi* and adapting to innovations within the *filone*. This analysis is not only relevant to trace narrative and formal patterns in the *poliziottesco*. It is central to the argument of this thesis because it provides a framework to link characters’ development in the *filone* to evolving media discourses on criminal, political, and state violence.

Shane Denson (2011) wrote a relevant essay on seriality in the comic book, focusing on the character of Frankenstein and its adaptation in the Marvel story world. Denson distinguished between two types of seriality that “are co-present and overlap in the graphic and narrative depictions of characters and events: a linear form of serial continuation and development and a non-linear form of ‘concurrent’ (compounding or cumulative) seriality” (2011, p. 532). This approach seeks to establish the “interconnectedness amongst the media of popular culture’s serial forms” (p. 532) by focusing on the nexus between mediality and seriality. To explain the latter point, Denson distinguishes between serial characters – typical of linear seriality – that progress “within a continuing narrative” and serial figures that “exist *as series*” (Denson 2011, p. 536). The latter is conceptualised as a “stock character of sorts, who appears again and again in significantly different forms of adaptation, contexts, and in various

media” (p. 536). Moreover, what differentiates mostly serial characters from serial figures is that the latter hold traces of previous instantiations in the new world they inhabit. Thus, to take Denson’s case study, the Frankenstein serial figure is involved in various ways in the Marvel universe maintaining some essential characteristics – usually those of Boris Karloff’s 1930s cinematic Frankenstein – while its history is re-written using previous media incarnations of the character. One version uses old Frankenstein movies as archive footage of previous attempts to revive the monster; another references Shelley’s book as a novel based on real events that justify the involvement of the monster in the Marvel story world. The cross-media features of the Frankenstein serial figure, hence, allowed for the repurposing of previous incarnations into different story worlds.

Denson’s analysis of Frankenstein as a serial figure in the Marvel universe could be used to understand the role of seriality in the construction of the characters of the *poliziottesco*. It is a parallel that is helpful to investigate how the films managed to innovate their characters addressing media discourses more than directly using news media as devices. Recurring and interchangeable actors provided consistency to the *filone*. They also permitted the creation of a set of fixed patterns of actions and reactions. These fixed patterns gave space for cinematic institutional figures to change their positioning and adapt to the state of the debate concerning the *strategia della tensione*. If audiences could expect the protagonist to act and react in a specific manner, the *commissario* could turn into a vigilante or a magistrate (*procuratore*) without affecting the overall narrative. The major change involved the moral tension of individual movies. As is argued in Chapters 3, 4, and 5, presenting the *commissario* or the *procuratore* as the sidekick, the protagonist, or the villain, the movies registered shifts in the negotiation of the blame for state inefficiencies in the struggle against violence in the country. Institutional characters – *commissari* and *procuratori* – villains – economic or state elites – and sidekicks – low-ranking policemen or petty criminals – maintained the same behaviour. A certain physical characteristic was often replicated to exploit the short cycle of a *poliziottesco* sub-strand or another *filone*. Accordingly, previous incarnations resonated in each new appearance as a necessary feature to be recognisable and innovative.

Tomas Milian is again a useful example. His character of “il Monnezza” (the garbage) is a petty criminal who helps the police in *Il trucidato e lo sbirro* (Lenzi, 1976) and *La*

*banda del Trucido* (Massi, 1977). He speaks with a strong Roman accent and has a recognisable curly hairstyle (Figure 1.6). Franco Gasparri plays Mark the Cop in three different movies (Stelvio Massi's *Mark il poliziotto*, 1975; *Mark il poliziotto spara per primo*, 1975; *Mark colpisce ancora*, 1976). The last movie came out some months after *Il trucido e lo sbirro*. Gasparri's character, a *commissario* in the first two movies, becomes an undercover agent. Similar to Monnezza, he is now a liminal figure, half-way between a man of the law and a criminal. Moreover, he now shares with Tomas Milian's character a curly hairstyle (Figures 1.6 and 1.7) and a strong Roman accent. There are clear marketing reasons behind this resemblance. Nonetheless, elements of episodic seriality derived from television – interchangeability of narrative units and actors, recursivity – made the transition from one actor to the other unproblematic. Elements of comic book seriality favoured the fluidity of characters' features. Gasparri in *Mark colpisce ancora* is meant to behave in a certain way. He is expected to behave in that way due to audiences' exposure to il Monnezza. The face of the actor was not as significant as the way he behaved.



Figures 1.6 and 1.7: Tomas Milian in *Il trucido e lo sbirro* and Franco Gasparri in *Mark colpisce ancora*.

More importantly, serial figures allowed a return to the point of departure of the movie, restarting again in the next movie. A different actor could play a similar role but deployed the same actions and reactions. Additionally, previous successful roles of that actor became an opportunity to add new features to the character. Similar to Superman, the protagonist of the *poliziottesco*, being him a *commissario*, a judge, or a vigilante, is an “inconsumable hero” (Eco, 1984). “Vices, gestures, nervous tics permit us to find an old friend in the characters portrayed” (Eco 1984, p. 118). The character becomes “inconsumable” moving between the realm of myth and everyday life.

“Umberto Eco astutely pointed out how Superman comics needed to devise a way of holding off closure, and of producing conflicts whose resolutions did not lead to progress. Superman must not change, and the world cannot be made free of villains (Eco 1964). One of the essential requirements of serial narratives is that the story more or less begin [*sic*] again next week” (Wagstaff 1992, p. 259)

Similarly, the protagonists of the *poliziottesco*, practically in all the different subsets, change many times and return to be the same in the next instalment. What brings consistency to these characters is the fact that they react violently to the violence that unfolds in front of them, and, at a certain point of the plot, they cross the boundaries of the law to release their anger. At the same time, they return to the point of departure: returning into the perimeters of the law or re-confirming their uneasy relationship with the code.

It could be established that the set of emotional reactions that characterise the different protagonists of crime movies is the “serial figure” of the *poliziottesco*. These reactions *make* the protagonist and allow him to move throughout different *filoni* in a consistent story world that is populated by other serial figures. In these terms, in the *poliziottesco*, innovation is managed through new embodiments of these reactions and by innovations concerning the spectacle. Every *commissario*, being part of a conspiracy, *giallo*, mafia, or erotic subplot, beholds the features of previous *commissari* and of the actions and reactions that characterised them. At times, the connection is at the level of physical resemblance (Figures 1.6 and 1.7); at other times, it manifests itself through self-citation. It is in these ways that the *commissario*, the judge or the vigilante is able to move within the standardised formula of a given subset but also invade the space of other *filoni*, creating hybrids that can still be considered part of the *poliziottesco* milieu. In this way, moreover, the set of rules that governed a standardised formula could

become subplots of other movies, as they continued to orbit around the same types of protagonists moving in the same story world.

Concerning the story world of the *poliziottesco*, Denson's contribution on comic book seriality is also useful to identify how seriality contributed to shaping it. It is also helpful to the analysis of the use of television in the movies performed in Chapter 2. The adoption of different media idioms was used to play with the indexical properties of traditional and new media like newspapers and television. The repetition in film after film of a media-rich environment like 1970s Italy allowed filmmakers to create a story world in which audiences could recognise their social context. In order to justify the inclusion of Frankenstein in the Marvel Universe, Denson accounts for the operation performed by Marvel Comics, which decided to reunite all the different, parallel worlds inhabited by its characters into a single story world, called Earth-616.

“Under this policy, all aspects of ‘our’ world, that is, the real and non-diegetic world in which the reader consumes Marvel’s comics, were absorbed into the diegetic world of the Marvel Universe, complete with its own Marvel Comics Group that prints comics that are identical to those we read, with the sole difference that they chronicle non-fiction adventures of really existing superheroes” (Denson 2011, p. 539).

This operation aimed at mirroring the world of comic-books readers and assured the possibility of repurposing previous representations into Marvel's Universe through the stratagem of the fictional Marvel Comics Group. A similar discourse can be made about the use of television and newspapers as devices in the *poliziottesco*. By proposing multiple layers of mediation, the *filone* sought to make its cinematic world explicitly “our” non-diegetic world. Presenting the world of the *poliziottesco* through the gaze of the television camera or newspaper front pages, filmmakers suggested that the two types of representation – cinema and news media – were superimposable. Accordingly, this mode of representation established powerful associations between the perception of the socio-political context provided by news media and the fictional story world of the *poliziottesco*.

This operation of filling the story world of the *poliziottesco* with a vast number of details that mirror “our” non-diegetic world can be connected to Bordwell's idea of “worldmaking”. For Bordwell, “[m]ore and more films have been at pains to offer a rich, fully furnished ambience for the action”, which permit fans to explore the story

world in more depth (2006, p. 55-56). Hence, “[l]ayered worlds, complete with brands names and logos” (2006, p. 56) are seen as a strategy to enhance audiences and increase revenues, as each detail opens the space to expand the narrative into new venues. However, it is not the intention of this thesis to allocate to *filone* cinema such level of complexity related to a consistent business organisation. As has been said above, this business model was fragmented and relatively uncoordinated. Indeed, the setting in the major Italian cities and the presence of logos and brands worked to secure the exploitation of the success of other similar films by investing in similar cinematic tropes. This form of worldmaking, moreover, worked to re-create a concrete milieu that could be easily recognised by Italian audiences. However, I argue that these devices possessed a more complex function than those outlined by Denson and Bordwell. Newspapers and televisions as devices, in particular, worked to connect the content of the movies with actual representations of news media. As explained below and in Chapters 4 and 5, these devices are evidence of the relationship between the *poliziottesco* and the perceived social reality. They worked to “historicise” the fiction by linking the cinematic image to the narrative employed by news media to represent contemporary socio-political conflicts in the 1970s.

### *Irrational evil and national solidarity: press rituals in news media and the poliziottesco*

As has been introduced above, the interplay of news media in the *poliziottesco* led to the adoption and intermingling of specific media idioms, affecting the form of this *filone*. At the same time, news media seriality provided the *poliziottesco* with the interpretative framework to organise the set of actions and reactions of the protagonists around recognisable and familiar tenets both internal and external to the texts. The features of seriality that are shared by news media and the *filone* can be related to three different elements, which are: the mode of production of news and *filone* cinema; the impact of media practices on the representation of civic institutions in the films; and the idioms adopted to represent violence in these different media.

The fast pace of production of the *poliziottesco* has been explained above, identifying the possibilities opened by this mode of production for addressing the concerns of the present and adapting to changes in media discourses related to state and political violence. As Kelleter and Loock recall:

“the first defining forms of popular seriality were developed in media characterized by relatively fast rhythms of production and reception, such as newspapers and radio. These ‘quick’ media, with their short-cycled but regular consumption frequencies, encourage the explicit serialization of narrative material, typically in the form of recurring episodes or ongoing installments” (Kelleter and Looock 2017, p. 128)

*Filone* cinema can be read similarly to news media as a “quick” medium. The necessity to exploit up to saturation shorter and shorter cycles of movies “encouraged” serialisation. The various movies focusing on the *squadre speciali* (special squads), (Corbucci’s *Squadra antiscippo*, 1976 *Squadra antifurto*, 1976; *Squadra antitruffa*, 1977; *Squadra antimafia*, 1978; *Squadra antigangster*, 1979) for instance, worked to foster the impression of an episodic narration that explored different criminal practices that had filled the headlines of local and national crime news. The *poliziottesco* used television and newspapers (Figures 1.8 and 1.9) to exploit properties and ideological implications of other media. As will be explained in Chapters 2 and 3, this operation inscribed the fictional narrative of the movies in the framework of a “public debate about violence and legality” (Fatelli 2013, p. 112). It became a formal strategy to deploy “explicit references to contemporary social reality and to recent news” (Marlow-Mann 2013, p. 133-134), benefitting from the fast pace of production.

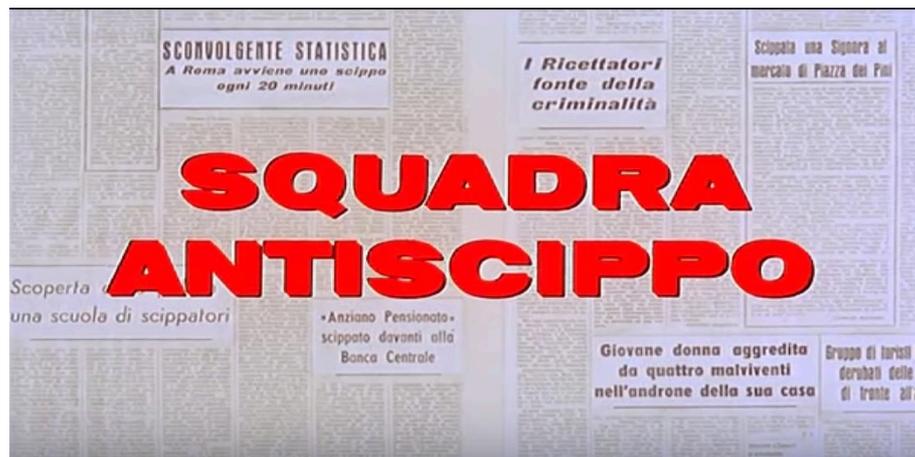


Figure 1.8: opening titles of *Squadra antiscippo*. The title superimposes on newspaper articles that list what seem to be official statistics and real news related to the criminal practice of *scippo* (robbing the purse of a woman by running or from a motorbike).



Figure 1.9: a television interview in *La polizia incrimina: la legge assolve* (Castellari, 1973).

Both news media and the *poliziottesco* registered the public outcry concerning the inability of the state to prevent and fight violence. As Barry writes, “Italian crime/cop films not only stood against the police force, but they blazed away at the government as a whole, which is always represented as crumbling into despair and fully corrupt” (Barry 2004, p. 82). Cinematic excesses of criminal violence relied on the repetition of specific tropes that echoed the news and highlighted the weak action of Italian institutions. The anti-establishment rhetoric of the movies exploited “the feeling of alienation and cynicism derived from the accumulation of articles, trials, and public demonstrations” (Foot 2009, p. 424-425) that surrounded events like the massacre of Piazza Fontana. Names and situations used to come back regularly on the front page of Italian newspapers due to never-ending trials that seldom provided a culprit within the decade. The legal procedures behind the actions of policemen, *commissari*, *procuratori*, and judges, together with detailed descriptions of victims and their suffering, were central parts of media practices related to the reporting of acts of political violence. The proliferation of trials and police investigations reiterated a standardised narration of the investigative procedure in news media and films alike.

As will be explained in Chapters 3, 4, and 5, the narrative stemming from news media can be considered to have an impact on the characterisation of institutional figures in the films, their relationship with each other, and with media themselves. News media and Italian civic institutions had a privileged relationship, expressed through such ritualised practices as the press conference that the *poliziottesco* frequently dramatised. As Forno recognised, it was not uncommon for the Italian press to privilege institutional sources (2013, Introduction). “The infiltration of the press by the secret service”

(Lumley 1996, p. 209) and the intense exchange of information between journalists and *questure* (provincial police offices) (Forno 2013, Chapter 5) further exemplify this close relationship. At the same time, news media played a “credible role in withstanding authoritarian manoeuvres” in the framework of the *strategia della tensione* (Lumley 1996, p. 212). Also concerning leftist terrorism, newspapers used to be ahead of civic institutions, publishing communiqués of terrorist groups and interviewing fugitives<sup>14</sup>. Civic institutions in the films were inextricably tied to their representation in news media so as to be easily recognisable. News media representations were the blueprint around which to develop compelling cinematic depictions of law enforcement agents. This is not to say that the movies reproduced institutional action accurately. They modelled institutional characters and their actions around media discourses that expressed specific conflicts between the police and the judiciary, elevating them to an expression of opposing approaches to law and order. The reliance on standardised practices of news reporting and investigative procedure avoided the necessity of providing complex motivations behind the institutional action, allowing the suspension of an overt political judgement. The serial repetition of this cinematic legal procedure made it something similar to an “empty signifier”<sup>15</sup>, which meaning could emerge from the reference to contemporary events and media discourses. Audiences’ “levels of prior knowledge” contributed to expanding the range of possible interpretations of these actions.

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<sup>14</sup> An illustrative example is Giorgio Zicari, journalist of *Corriere della Sera* and informant of the secret service (Porter 1983, p. 76) who interviewed fugitive Ivo Della Savia, suspected of the bombing of Piazza Fontana. The article claimed to have “discovered Della Savia’s secret hideout in Brussels” (Zicari 1970, p. 1).

<sup>15</sup> The “empty” or “floating signifier” is a concept variously defined by scholars such as Lévi-Strauss (1987), Laclau (1996), and Hall (1997), who questioned the existence of a fixed relationship between signifiers and signified. Floating signifiers possess only a vague, highly variable, unspecifiable or non-existent signified. The meaning of such signifiers depends on who interpret the sign and the context in which the interpretation occurs. As Hall states, they are “subject to the constant process of redefinition and appropriation [...] being constantly re-signified, made to mean something different in different cultures, in different historical formations, at different moments of time” (1997, p. 8).

Concerning the representation of violence, the conspiracy subset of the *poliziottesco* possessed features that make it comparable to the framing of political violence in news media. The concept of “press performance as political ritual” (Elliot, 1981) can be useful to link the *poliziottesco* to newspapers. The shared features of seriality encompassed both the content and the emotional triggers of articles and the *filone*. The ritualistic features of press performance can be connected to the ritualistic catharsis and recognition of familiar tenets identified by O’Leary (2011) and Fisher (2014) in the *poliziottesco*. Nadel states that “any type of behaviour may be said to turn into a ‘ritual’ when it is stylised or formalised and made repetitive in that form” (1954, p. 99). Press rites, in this respect, are identified in “those stories which the press as a whole unites in treating as important. They are stories which reflect on the stability of the social system by showing it under threat, overcoming threat or working in a united consensual way” (Elliot 1981, p. 142). Press rituals become, as Elliot expands, “rule-governed activity of a symbolic character involving mystical notions which draws the attention of its participants to objects of thought or feeling which the leadership of the society or group hold to be of special significance” (1981, p. 147).

Elliot analysed the press ritual in relation to the report of the Guildford bombings (October 5, 1974). He identified six ways through which the press expressed a political ritual:

1. “Reports of messages of sympathy and acts of solidarity by civic, political and religious leaders. [...].
2. Reports of statements of condemnation by such leaders, particularly politicians, policemen and others responsible for enforcing the law. [...].
3. Reference of [*sic*] political and law enforcement issues raised by the incident to be pursued and debated by parliamentary politicians. [...].
4. Reports of subsequent law and order activity, in particular the police hunt for those responsible. [...].
5. Condemnatory reports of those not following the example of the leaders in 1 above by showing the appropriate solidarity and sympathy. [...]
6. Reports of the bombings themselves and their aftermaths in human interest terms which showed them to be horrid and senseless” (1981, pp. 149-150).

In news media, each act of terrorism witnessed the replication of the same press performance charged by symbolic value. The representation of violence was replicated over and over in newspapers, not able to provide explanations but only emotional

accounts of a democratic system under threat. Schlesinger talked about media coverage in the United Kingdom of the so-called “Troubles” in Northern Ireland during the 1970s. In a context in which the British state struggled to demonstrate the legitimacy of its violent action in Northern Ireland, Schlesinger explained the framework used by British media to interpret different acts of dissent under the same umbrella concept: violent society. Industrial-relations conflicts, juvenile hooliganism, political demonstrations and anti-state violence were all “assimilated to the ‘violent society’ framework” (1981, p. 91).

“The coverage of Northern Irish affairs in British media [...] has tended to simplify violent incidents, to avoid historical background, to concentrate upon human-interest stories, and to rely heavily upon official sources” (Schlesinger 1981, p. 91).

Schlesinger explains this kind of coverage as resulting from the “drift towards more authoritarian forms of rules” in the British struggle against political violence. “The socio-political impasse in Northern Ireland has contributed to a wider ‘crisis of legitimacy’ of the British state”, which “has made much more crucial the role of media in winning consent for increasingly coercive policies” (Schlesinger 1981, p. 91). The joint venture between criminals, radicals, and irrational forces constituted the “framework of interpretation” of news media concerning violence also in Italy in the first half of the 1970s. As we will see in Chapters 4 and 5, almost all forms of dissent that originated outside the channels of traditional parties was associated with criminality. Otherwise, they were defined as acts of anonymous provocateurs.

As is outlined in following chapters, all six points of Elliot’s list were typical of reports of terrorism and criminal violence in Italy during the early 1970s. These features repeated themselves in newspapers over and over, especially concerning police fatalities, massacres, and attempted coups. These events, unfolding in newspapers day-by-day, were represented to stress the repetitiveness of political violence dramatically. In Italy, the objects of thought mobilised by the press and political parties to stimulate

unity and consensus were the Resistance<sup>16</sup> to the Nazi occupation and the democratic order. Following different perspectives, the two great opponents, the Communist Party (PCI) and the Christian Democracy Party (DC), sold themselves as the only force capable of opposing the enemies of democracy and competed to win their constituencies using democracy as the primary value of political struggle. Accordingly, many different expressions of dissent or deviation from social norms were criminalised as a threat to democracy. This framework is central to interpret the similar approach over political violence by opposing news outlets like *Corriere della Sera* and *l'Unità*, despite their different political orientation. The news described Italy on the verge of collapse, suffering from the overlapping of different violent outcomes of societal conflicts. Accordingly, news media identified the primary threat depending on the historical context. When the neo-fascist threat became more evident, mainstream newspapers joined in the crusade against fascism. Fascism became the abstract agent of subversion. Definitions like *strategia della tensione* and *trame nere* (black plots), vague and nebulous concepts, functioned to nominalise the threat, eliding agency.

The *poliziottesco* seemed to replicate the same framework of interpretation. As explained in Chapters 3, 4, and 5, it exploited the abstract character of neo-fascist subversion and the tendency of news media to conflate the violence of the extreme left and right into a single anti-democratic plot. The *filone* addressed complex political and social issues simplistically, seldom providing explicit political markers to the conspiracies in the plots. Social and political conflicts were the means to present a general critique of violence. Leftist students (*Squadra volante*, Massi 1974), dockworkers in a strike (*La polizia incrimina: la legge assolve*) and alternative lifestyles (*Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia*) only appeared in the movies to show them as inextricably tied to a violent behaviour. This behaviour was the result of an inherent naivetés of these actors, manipulated by obscure forces, or, alternatively, a predisposition to violence. Intersecting with the marketing strategies outlined by

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<sup>16</sup> The Resistance had been the legitimising force of traditional parties. The PCI, elaborating its central role in the Resistance, “centred on the idea that the working class had the task of forging a national solidarity that the weak bourgeoisie was incapable of doing” (Lumley 1990, p. 12). The DC and its allies had not forgotten that their legitimation in the democratic system resided in the Resistance and the Constitution born from Antifascism (Colarizi 2000, p. 382).

Wagstaff (1992), many titles seem to confirm this analysis, deploying the noun *violenza* (violence) beside the names of Italian cities (*Roma violenta*, Girolami 1975; *Napoli violenta*, Lenzi 1976; *Milano violenta*, Caiano 1976; *Torino violenta*, Ausino 1977). Hence, the “violent society” seems to be the framework of interpretation that mainstream news media and action cinema used to read the socio-political context. In the framework of the conspiracy subset, the identification of right- and left-wing political violence with criminality was complete. Random violence against random innocent citizens, perpetrated by beasts with human faces (Figure 1.10), denied any political motivation to self-proclaimed political militants. As documented by Elliot et al. (1983) concerning television fiction, “the villains d[id] not need to be rounded characters to fulfil this role. They simply ha[d] to personify threats to order in a readily recognizable form” (p. 164).



Figure 1.10: a hallucinating Giulio Sacchi (Tomas Milian, left) kills innocent people in *Milano odia: la polizia non può sparare* (Lenzi, 1974). The English title *Almost Human* exemplifies better the representation of criminals in the *poliziottesco* (see plot in Appendix C).

In *poliziotteschi* and news media, the necessity of presenting the acts of criminals and terrorists as “horrid and senseless” aimed at dehumanising the perpetrators, to whom it was denied any sort of political motivation. As Elliot et al. (1983) write, “[t]he consequences in terms of human suffering are horrendous so that nothing can justify the resort to violence and terror. Those who engage in such behaviour do not have ‘reasons’ in the normal sense of the world. Their behaviour is senseless, irrational, and inhuman” (p. 165). “A particular sign of this exclusion from the humane tradition is the [...] disregard for the value of individual human life, and his supposed necessary indiscriminacy in taking it” (p. 157). Accordingly, news media denied rationality and

political motivation to criminals and terrorists to stimulate disgust in the readership. They provided a consistent depiction of a country in shock, threatened by the violence sponsored by obscure entities aiming at overthrowing the democratic order.

The same obscure entities echoed in the artifices of *poliziotteschi* filmmakers to avoid showing the face of the ringleaders behind the fictional conspiracies. The appeal to international links seemed to point at the same goal, as “part of the way the origins of [an] incident were made complicated and mysterious” (Elliot 1981, p. 167). Almost all significant acts of terrorism were described by news media as sponsored by obscure international organisations<sup>17</sup>. Not surprisingly, a similar approach was taken by many *poliziotteschi*, featuring Italo-American (*Milano calibro 9*, Di Leo 1972; *La città sconvolta: caccia spietata ai rapitori*, Di Leo 1975), French (*La polizia incrimina: la legge assolve*; *Genova a mano armata*, Lanfranchi 1976; *Squadra volante*) or unspecified international gangsters (*Il grande racket*, Castellari 1976), or international secret services ruled by anonymous bureaucrats (*Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia*; *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide*; *Mark colpisce ancora*).

As is explained in Chapter 2, the engagement of the *poliziottesco* with idioms and practices of news reporting seem to have led to the incorporation of a ritualistic performance that can be compared with Elliot’s analysis of the press. The outburst of *Commissario Caneparo*, introduced at the beginning of this chapter, can be linked to the first point of Elliot’s list, reporting “messages of sympathy and acts of solidarity by civic, political and religious leaders” (1981, p. 149). These sorts of messages of condolence can be considered to be a recognisable marker of this ritual, initially unfolding in news media and replicated in a cinematic form. The human-interest approach of the Italian press is analysed in Chapter 2 and related to the mode of representation of the *poliziottesco*. Moreover, mirroring the approach of mainstream newspapers, the movies punished the irrational reaction of the protagonist and the

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<sup>17</sup> They were not always far away from the truth. For a more accurate analysis of the documents linking neo-fascist actions to international organisations see Franco Ferraresi (1996).

citizenship<sup>18</sup>, considered as another threat to the continuity of the democratic order. In the films and in Italian society as a whole, the reaction had to come from the civic authority within the parameters of the law. Any deviation from this norm was stigmatised as a threat to the system.

This approach represents an exception in the milieu of 1970s action-adventure series, especially in Anglophone countries. As Elliot et al. (1983) wrote, the extreme violence of terrorists in British television series “legitimizes the state’s use of violent countermeasures in which consideration of civil liberties, democratic accountability, and due process, are held in abeyance in the interest of efficiency” (p. 169). The scholars link it to the official discourse that had to legitimise the use of violence in the context of the struggle of the British state in Northern Ireland. In Italy, widespread media discourses identified in the Italian state one of the sponsors of terrorism. An enemy within, defined with the formula of *apparati deviati dello stato* (deviant state apparatuses), problematised the identification of the actual threat. Similar to the fascist threat, *apparati deviati dello stato* were vague and obscure entities that could be exploited by the *poliziottesco* to link the fiction to actual media discourses. In this respect, cinematic conspiracies connected more with oppositional discourses than with official discourses. In the conspiracy subset, the final outcome of the *commissario* was the deconstruction of the rhetoric of the national interest. If the state was willing to go so far as to kill its citizens to repress dissent, extreme violence could be justified if directed at dismantling the same system of power<sup>19</sup>. Thus, the power of conspiracy justified the violent outcomes of the cinematic *commissario*, not powerful enough to defeat anti-democratic plotters within the state and power elites.

The latter point is pivotal to understand the inherent ambiguity of the representation of civic authorities in the *poliziottesco*. The behaviour of public figures in the *filone* is

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<sup>18</sup> As is explained in Chapters 3 and 4, the violent behaviour of the *commissario* leads almost always to the death of his beloved ones. As is explained in Chapter 2 and in the Conclusions, the furious crowd, violently reacting to criminal actions, is always depicted as the outcome of the crumbling of the values of society and as the result of the failures of the state to perform its duties.

<sup>19</sup> As Foot documents (2009, p. 426), this thought had spread in different sectors of the leftist milieu, leading to the dismissal of non-disruptive means of changing the system.

always questionable due to the violence that they perform or that originates from the lack of resolute actions against criminals and terrorists. The result is a nihilistic approach that problematises the recognition of the “hero” in the films. The *commissario* embodied this ambiguity. He has the role of delivering justice to citizens but the way he does his job is not left unproblematic. As is explained in Chapters 3 and 4, media discourses on the legitimacy of the use of force by civic authorities contributed to cast a negative light onto the behaviour of policemen in the films. This was done primarily through the representation of a conflicting dialectic with the judiciary and the suffering of the *commissario*’s beloved ones. On the other hand, media discourses on the *strategia della tensione*, provided filmmakers a means to justify the violent outcomes of the *commissario*. The same discourses, moreover, made his behaviour necessary to protect democracy.

Similar to television action-adventure series, the movies “place[d] terrorism firmly within a criminal rather than a political frame and define[d] it exclusively in terms of the violence it entail[ed]” (Elliot et al. 1983, p. 169). The force exerted by the cinematic *commissario* against these thugs was justified by the violence they had performed in previous scenes. When the state was involved as a primary sponsor of terrorism, the *commissario* had to perform a sort of “armed struggle” against his employer. The conspiracy subset could seem like a patchwork of conflicting ideological inputs if it is not read in the light of news media discourses about violence. These discourses added confusion more than clarity, especially concerning the interpretation of the *strategia della tensione*. Similar to news media, the movies did not provide solutions to the issue of an inherent violent society, avoiding narrative closure. *Poliziotteschi* start with an act of violence and end with another one, highlighting a vicious circle that links political, criminal, and state violence. Moreover, as is highlighted in Chapter 4, the transposition of these discourses in the *poliziottesco* signalled the significant discomfort with state violence in Italian public debates at the turn of the 1970s. The films dramatised conflicting conceptualisations of law and order through institutional characters. This conflict was presented through an emotional reportage on the consequences of violence, which granted the possibility of focusing on victims. The presence of conspiracies allowed them to place the state itself as the target of justice. Both approaches fostered the identification with the quest of the protagonist by the diverse political constituencies that constituted the audiences of the *poliziottesco*.

Elliot et al. (1983) wrote about discourses on terrorism in British television, differentiating between texts deploying official, alternative, and oppositional discourses. The official discourse justified the use of violence by the state; alternative discourses challenged the use of violence by the state and proposed opposing, non-violent means of managing societal conflicts; oppositional discourses “justif[ied] the use of violence in the pursuit of political ends” (p. 158). The same kind of discourses applied to the Italian context overlapped confusingly. Leftist terrorism forced the Communist Party to align with the government in the condemnation of all violent outcomes of protest. At the same time, in the struggle against neo-fascism that characterised the early 1970s, it continued to celebrate the myth of the Resistance, inextricably tied to violence. On the other side, the same struggle pushed the government to question the violent excesses of the state while defending its prerogative to exert violence to maintain public order. The articulation of this tension within the framework of parliamentary politics is central to the analysis of the conspiracy mode of the *poliziottesco*. Newspapers and the *filone* participated in spreading through ritual performances conspiracy theories that expressed the tension between state violence and the means to oppose it. In both cultural forms, the narration of the present was organised around the “sacred dimension of nationhood” (Elliot 1981, p. 96) to involve the majority of the citizenship in a mythical quest against the violence expressed by the enemies of democracy.

More than absorbing oppositional discourses into the official, the movies aimed at having a foot in both camps. As Elliot et al. wrote, “series are at the centre of the battle for the mass audiences which means that they are required to work with images and ideological themes that are most familiar and endorsed by the widest range of potential viewers” (1983, p. 163). The analysis of media discourses seems to be an effective way to read the ambiguity through which the *poliziottesco* articulated the issue of violence. Political violence was an extremely debated theme that had sponsors across the political spectrum. In the framework of the violent society, in the *poliziottesco* and news media, the only discourse that did not find its place was the alternative, non-violent one. I am not saying that political and state violence had the full support of mainstream news outlets such as *Corriere della Sera* and *l’Unità*. However, these papers did justify specific acts of violence, being them performed by the police against violent protesters, or by protesters reacting against the violence of the police or neo-fascists.

The *poliziottesco* took this approach to an extreme. Violence seems to be necessary for terrorists, criminals, and the state to pursue their goals. As has been said above, the films ridiculed non-violent means of protesting and ambiguously addressed non-violent means of enforcing the law. In this respect, it needs to be considered, as O’Leary does (2011, p. 66), to what extent these plots, based on a mixture of official and oppositional discourses, both rooted in violence, ratified the typical conception of society held by the right-wing. As the 1970s progressed, newspapers became more and more cynical about the possibility of reaching the truth. In the face of ungraspable conspirators, readers and spectators alike risked being left with a feeling of impotence. In a society regulated by violence, the exertion of authority and power ends up being the only thing that matters, hence the common equation between *poliziotteschi* and neo-fascist rhetoric. Not surprisingly, the movies have often been read as part of the strategy of the government to orient the cultural production and audiences towards the right (Au. Sa. 1973, p. 17; m. c. 1974, p. 7; Fatelli 2013, p. 101).

This powerful rhetoric embedded in violence relegated into the background many creative and powerful forces that, with peaceful means, attempted to change the system in the 1970s. These people, in the *poliziottesco*, were usually victims or naïve and idealistic figures. Returning to Fisher’s statement that “the events of the 1970s were inseparable from the processes of mediation that grew around them” (2014, p. 173), it can be argued that the loudest voices were those of the people who were framed as protagonists by these processes of mediation. It can be comprehended why contemporary representations of the decade focus solely on the outcomes of this ritualistic discourse on violence. As is explained in the Conclusions, the season of terrorism of the early 1970s seems to be addressed by these products primarily through the suffering of individuals directly affected in the attacks and the popular reaction against violence. It could be interpreted as the sign of a consistent narrative developed in the 1970s across diverse cultural products.

### Repurposing media features: a methodological approach to remediation and liveness

In the opening sequence of *I ragazzi della Roma violenta* (Savino, 1976), a television journalist asks questions about juvenile delinquency to passers-by. The sequence adopts the perspective of a television camera (Figure 1.11).



Figure 1.11: a frame of the opening sequence of *I ragazzi della Roma violenta*.

It alternates interviews and still-frames of actual articles of the Roman newspaper *Il Messaggero* describing acts of extreme violence. The articles refer to actual crimes (kidnappings, bank robberies, brutality, and murders). The most explicit reference, in one article (Figures 1.12 and 1.13) and in the voice of an interviewee, is to the Circeo massacre. This event was characterised by the kidnapping and brutalisation of two girls, and the murdering of one of them by upper-class young men, identified by the press as neo-fascists (Munzi 1975a, p. 1).



Figure 1.12: one of the articles from *Il Messaggero* in *I ragazzi della Roma violenta*. It describes the arrests of upper-class young men for brutality against a 12-year-old girl.



Figure 1.13: the actual article in *Il Messaggero* (Ferrara 1976, p. 5). The article was published one month before the release of the movie (March 25, 1976) and compared the reported crime to the Circeo massacre (“It could have been a tragedy similar to the Circeo massacre”).

The prologue adopts a “semi-documentary” (Curti 2006, p. 206) approach to link fictional events and the socio-political context by employing the conventions of television journalism. The opening sequence relates to the rest of the movie only for the theme addressed by the journalist. As the sequence ends, the narrative unfolds into the violent actions of neo-fascist young thugs, providing a shallow sociological explanation of the brutality performed by upper- and lower-class youth (the plot can be found in Appendix C). People from all ages and classes are asked to propose a solution to the unstoppable spiral of violence in Italy. They express fear for their lives and those of their beloved, and angrily ask for the death penalty and stronger action by state institutions. As such, the sequence guides the reading of the movie in emotional terms, advising a shared interpretation of the actions in the film and the representations of news media. Successfully or not, it suggests that representations that usually come to Italian households through television can be superimposed to what the film is showing. At the same time, the overlapping of film, television news, and the press signals to the viewer the artifice of mediation.

The interaction between different media highlights their diverse properties. In the context of strong competition between television and cinema such as 1970s Italy, the film promised an experience more complete than that provided by television news through the alternation of spectacle and documentary. This operation was reinforced by the repetitiveness of televisual modes of representation in the *poliziottesco*, benefitting from the internalisation of televisual idioms by Italian audiences. Serial repetition,

hence, made these tropes typical markers of the *filone*. The opening sequence of *I ragazzi della Roma violenta* epitomises the impact of news media as devices and as simulated idioms on the possible interpretation of the cinematic images offered to audiences by *poliziottesco* filmmakers.

The rest of this chapter will present the methodological approach used by this thesis to interpret the historical significance of the *poliziottesco*. This section introduces the concept of “remediation” (Bolter and Grusin, 2000), which helps to understand the role of news media in establishing the relationship between the *poliziottesco* and the socio-political conditions of 1970s Italy. As the subsequent section will explain, “remediation” is used along the concept of “intermediality” (Rajewsky, 2005) to provide a theoretical base to the close reading of specific scenes and freeze-frame reading of uses of news media in the movies. The aim is to show how these concepts can aid the analysis of the features of seriality possessed by news media and the *poliziottesco* that were outlined above in this chapter. Accordingly, “remediation” and “intermediality” help to link the analysis of news media discourses, performed through the alternation of qualitative and quantitative methods, to the representations of civic institutions and societal conflicts in the *poliziottesco*. This interdisciplinary approach will permit this thesis to move back and forth from close readings to the analysis of the *filone* as a whole, always informed by considerations of the socio-political context expressed by media discourses.

The concept of remediation describes the repurposing of media features: “to take a ‘property’ from one medium and reuse it in another” (Bolter and Grusin, p. 45). This concept ties with the approach towards popular culture and genres outlined before in this chapter: media, including the *poliziottesco*, are defined by a set of discursive practices. Accordingly, to understand how filmmakers used media in the *poliziottesco*, it is essential to study the social, historical, and cultural factors that shaped functions and representational properties of each medium. As Bolter and Grusin write, “[n]o medium today, and certainly no single media event, seems to do its cultural work in isolation from other social or economic forces” (2000, p. 15). Hence, “[a]ll currently active media (old and new, analog and digital) honor, acknowledge, appropriate, and implicitly or explicitly attack one another. Various media adopt various strategies, which are [...] sanctioned or discouraged by larger economic and cultural forces” (p. 86).

The use of television in the *poliziottesco* can be read in relation to the threat perceived by the film industry facing for the first time the fierce competition of public and private broadcasting. Television started to broadcast in Italy in 1954, and the presence of television in Italian households increased vertiginously until the first half of the 1970s when more than 70% of families possessed a television (Figure 1.14). As Corsi writes, “the unregulated broadcasting of films, once limited by the agreement between the film industry and RAI [Italian public broadcaster], questioned the role of cinema in the media environment, modifying the concept of popular entertainment” (2001, p. 21). Referring to the USA in the 1950s, Bolter and Grusin noticed that “the remediations between television and film were often charged with rivalry, because of the concern that television might displace film altogether” (2000, p. 172). Up to the 1960s, the consumption of television in Italy had been mostly communal in public places like bars (Gozzini 2011, Chapter 1). In the 1970s, the monopoly of popular entertainment that was granted to cinema in post-war Italy saw the signs of an irreversible erosion by television.

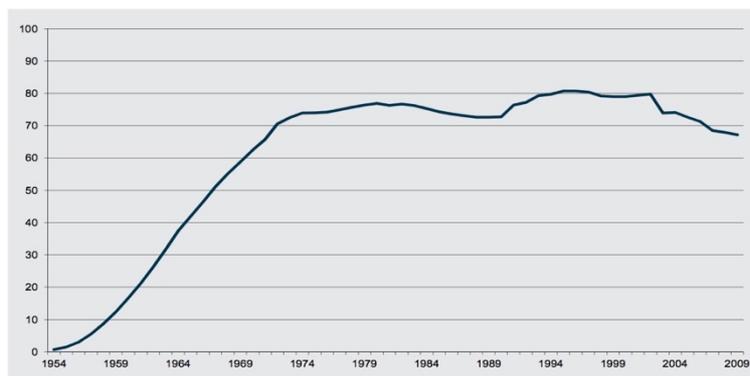


Figure 1.14: number of television licences – 1954-2009 (for 100 resident families) (Istat 2011, p. 414).

The concept of remediation focuses mostly on the repurposing of features of old media in new media like the Internet and digital technologies in contemporary society. Renga (2017), for instance, analyses fan-produced web-videos and their merging of historical documents and elements of the feature films (2005) and television series *Romanzo criminale* (2008-2010) as examples of remediated texts. She aims at understanding the “changes [that] take place in viewer reaction when fiction and non-fiction converge in remediated texts in web-based digital media” (p. 138-139). However, as in the case of television in the *poliziottesco*, this thesis will not present remediation as a historical progression but as “a genealogy of affiliations” (Bolter and Grusin 2000, p. 55). In this

genealogy, “older media can also remediate newer ones” (p. 55). Features of television as a medium were repurposed within the *poliziottesco* to “invade” the representational space and challenge the power of television to present the world in real time. There seems to be a gap in scholarship concerning the remediation of both older and new media by film. This thesis contributes to fill this gap by identifying in the use of idioms and forms of audio-visual news media the convergence of fiction and non-fiction in the *filone*.

In this thesis, I utilise the concept of remediation for film analysis to address the formal strategies employed by the movies to achieve a higher degree of authenticity and immediacy. The concept informs the close reading of specific scenes in selected *poliziotteschi*. These scenes are characterised by the employment of idioms and forms of audio-visual news media. They are compared with modes of news reporting that were typical of *cinigiornali* (newsreels) and *telegiornali* (television news). Hence, these televisual images are put in relation with the cinematic images, interrogating the relationship that originated between them concerning the engagement with the socio-political conditions of 1970s Italy. Both *telegiornali* and *cinigiornali* are episodic: the first has the form of a daily report of “hard” news (Iyengar 1991); the second was a short film on actuality, “a time-delimited swift report on events” (Howells and Matson 2009, p. 99). These audio-visual news media shared significant features. Television news remediated features of earlier media such as the newspaper, the radio, and the *cinigiornale* (Pira 2000, p. 81). The latter, in fact, “pioneered many of the conventions of contemporary television journalism, such as the voice-over, and the mixing of drama and human interest with major news events” (Lewis 1999, p. 173). Conceptualised as such, newsreels can also be used to trace the internalisation of television idioms in the *poliziottesco*.

The *poliziottesco* often employed the episodic structure of audio-visual news media not only concerning the relationship between the different movies comprising the *filone*, but also in the narrative structure of individual films. Commenting on *Roma violenta* (Girolami, 1975), Curti writes that the narrative of the movie “does not develop into a unitary structure, but through a series of episodes, with violence as the unifying thread” (2006, p. 123). The same fragmented structure of *Roma violenta* was replicated in different movies, participating in the interchangeability of characters and narrative units described in Chapter 1. Resembling a collage of media languages and presenting a

mixture of cinematic registers (action, documentary, television reportage, social critique), the *poliziottesco* seems to respond to the “double logic” of remediation: “the transparent presentation of the real and the enjoyment of the opacity of media themselves.” (Bolter and Grusin 2000, p. 21)

“[E]arlier media sought immediacy through the interplay of the aesthetic value of transparency with techniques of linear perspective, erasure, and automaticity [...]” (Bolter and Grusin 2000, p. 24). Referring to photography and expanding to film and television, Bolter and Grusin argued that these media “achieved transparency through automatic reproduction,” removing “the artist as an agent who stood between the viewer and the reality of the image” (2000, p. 26). Besides being conceptualised as a goal for media producers, immediacy is considered to respond to a desire of the viewer. The viewer’s desire for immediacy corresponds to the acknowledgement and delight of “hypermediacy”.

“In its epistemological sense, hypermediacy is opacity - the fact that knowledge of the world comes to us through media. The viewer acknowledges that she is in the presence of a medium and learns through acts of mediation or indeed learns about mediation itself. The psychological sense of hypermediacy is the experience that she has in and of the presence of media; it is the insistence that the experience of the medium is itself an experience of the real. The appeal to authenticity of experience is what brings the logics of immediacy and hypermediacy together.” (Bolter and Grusin 2000, p. 70-71).

In other words, by remediating older or newer media, each medium promises to its audiences a more authentic experience of reality, “arous[ing] in the viewer ‘a desire for immediacy’” (Bolter 2000, p. 62). This process exposes the act of mediation inherent to our perception of the world because “there is also a sense in which all mediation remediates the real. Mediation is the remediation of reality because media themselves are real and because the experience of media is the subject of remediation” (Bolter and Grusin 2000, p. 59). By watching a television screen broadcasting in a movie, the viewer is confronted by the immediacy of the representation of real-life experience – cinematic characters sharing with her specific habits rooted in her daily routine. At the same time, she is confronted by the inherent construction of what she sees – a television screen in a cinematic screen that she is watching in a theatre. In turn, the contrast originating from the superimposition of these modes of representation leads the

spectator to question, more or less critically, the relationship between the mediated image and the world she inhabits.

Similar to photography, the adoption of linear perspective in film and the automaticity of its production and reproduction, points to the blurring of the relationship between fiction and non-fiction<sup>20</sup>. As stated before in this chapter, comic-book seriality provides an analytical framework to read the merging of fiction and non-fiction in the *poliziottesco*. Remediation helps to link the outcomes of this analysis to the engagement with news media idioms by the *filone*. If “the events of the 1970s were inseparable from the processes of mediation that grew around them” (Fisher 2014, p. 173), it is essential to question the impact of this media-saturated environment on the perception of the material conditions of the decade. It is the concept of remediation that complements film analysis, providing the theoretical framework to interpret specific sequences in the light of their relationship with different forms of representation – television and press news, and the films. As will be argued in the rest of this thesis, the *poliziottesco* merged television and film languages to achieve the illusion of transparency under a double perspective: the representation of the socio-political context and the reproduction of emotional triggers tied to these media representations.

Discussing the use of digital media like special effects by dramatic series and “made-for-TV” movies, Bolter and Grusin address the relationship between media images and the material conditions that characterise the world of the spectator. They suggest that “[t]he claim to the real here is not based on events that ‘really happened’” (2000, p. 188). The claim to the real is mostly based “on the authenticity of the emotion that the image provide[d]” (p. 188). In the *poliziottesco*, real events were reworked and loosely referenced providing only an emotional framework to read the action. The excesses in terms of spectacle signalled a discrepancy between the action and the life outside the

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<sup>20</sup> This line of enquiry goes back to Bazin (1960), who, in the 1950s, explored the ontology of the photographic image, considered to establish an indexical relationship between image and referent. For Bazin, photography and film satisfy “once and for all and in its very essence, our obsession with realism” (1960, p. 7). However, the particular line of argument outlined in this chapter questions this indexical relationship, which is not considered an ontological quality of film. This thesis aims at identifying the strategies employed by filmmakers to blur the difference between representations and the material conditions of which they were referents.

screen. However, the movies connected with audiences' experience of the socio-political context by mirroring the emotional triggers mobilised by news media in the ideological struggle over the meaning of violence. Audiences of the *poliziottesco* could recognise specific representational patterns of news media, to which they were asked to react in similar emotional terms and get pleasure from that recognition. *Poliziotteschi*, borrowing from television, needed "to win the moment-by-moment approval of their [...] popular audiences, to evoke a set of rapid and predictable emotional responses" (Bolter and Grusin 2000, p. 187).

Scenes that employed television idioms and forms will be compared with forms of news reporting. Additionally, they will be connected to the general plot of each movie and to the serial repetition of these practices of remediation in the whole *filone*. Hence, the serial repetition of these forms will be related to the narratives of actual newspapers concerning the *strategia della tensione*. Accordingly, this operation will allow me to relate the emotional triggers employed by the movies to those employed by news media concerning form and content. The form and the content of the movies strived to communicate a sort of live coverage of the consequences of violence on the life of Italian citizens. In this respect, the concept of television "liveness" will be used in Chapter 2 to interpret the remediation of television in the *poliziottesco*. It will also be used to identify the formal strategies that participated in increasing the emotional charge of the plots linking the fictional action to the narrative of the *strategia della tensione*.

Mimi White (1999) relates "liveness" to historical narratives. She focuses especially on television coverage of catastrophes, which need "to be made catastrophic [...] through the process of historical narrative elaboration [...], placing events in the past, and the on-going production of a retrospective narrative to explain the sequence of events leading up" to the disaster event (p. 42-43). In other words, the catastrophe represents the spectacle that attracts audiences. Around this spectacle, a narrative is constructed to provide a sense of immediacy, presence, and flow. The spectacle is repeated, and experts are addressed to provide an explanation, which builds on a historical narrative that helps to make sense of the event, defining its characteristics through comparison with previous events.

Live events build on a narrative that detaches them from their temporality, addressing audiences through a continuous flow of information that "partially overcomes the disruption produced by other aspects of televisual practice" (White 1999, p. 45). Hence,

the impression of flow overcomes the fragmentation of televisual modes of representation – made of a “collage of film, video, and ‘live’, all interwoven into a complex and altered time scheme” (p. 44). The live event is also constructed “regardless of its actual temporal relationship to the real-world events it purports to present” (p. 45). The coverage of an explosion is not presenting the catastrophe “live” but is instead constructing the “liveness” around an already mediated event.

“Liveness” “is considered one of the defining qualities of the medium [television], distinguishing it in its singularity and immediacy from cinema in particular” (White 1999, p. 40). It is a feature of television language that will enable the analysis of film sequences that alternate the cinematic and the televisual image. Referencing Feuer’s (1983) work, White interprets this alternation as a formal strategy that exploits television “liveness” as “the prevailing ideology of the medium, promoting an impression of immediacy” (White 1999, p. 44). Televisual images connected the narrative of *poliziotteschi* to the exact present and participated in building the symbiotic relationship between the putative reality represented by media and the concrete socio-political conditions of the early 1970s. The interaction of different media texts resembled the “live” performance of television news, which helped to overcome the fragmentation of this mode of representation.

In the *poliziottesco*, similar to audio-visual news media, the most dramatic sequences that reproduce police operations are narrated through the juxtaposition of different sources (Figures 1.16 and 1.19). These sources participate in giving the impression of news reportage typical of a *telegiornale* or *cinegiornale* (Figures 1.15, 1.17, 1.18, and 1.20). Similar to the *cinegiornale* reporting the aftermaths of the Piazza Fontana bombing, this sequence of *La polizia incrimina: la legge assolve* (Castellari, 1973) shows police operations (Figures 1.20 and 1.21). These operations are surrounded by references to other media like the newspaper (Figures 1.15 and 1.16) and television (Figures 1.17, 1.18, and 1.19). Through the presentation of this multimedia environment, this *cinegiornale* report can be interpreted as a means to fully address audiences’ experience of the news through different news formats. The sequence of *La polizia incrimina: la legge assolve* replicates the idiom of the *cinegiornale*, mirroring the same multimedia experience of the news.



Figure 1.15: the opening of the news on the bombing in Piazza Fontana shows the front page of the newspaper *l'Avanti!* in the newsreel *7G Rotocalco cinematografico* (17/12/1969).

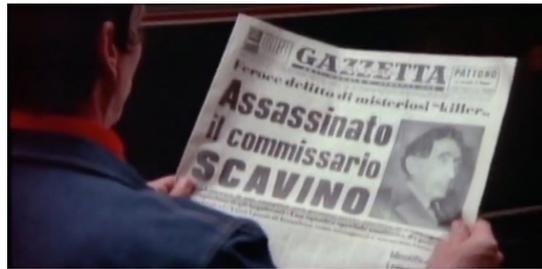


Figure 1.16: the sequence in *La polizia incrimina: la legge assolve* ends with frames of the front page of a newspaper reporting the murder of Scavino.



Figures 1.17 and 1.18: people, presumably policemen, watch images of the wounded of the bombing in Piazza Fontana on a television screen in the newsreel *7G Rotocalco cinematografico* (17/12/1969).



Figure 1.19: the sequence that follows the murder of *Commissario Scavino* on television in *La polizia incrimina: la legge assolve* (Castellari, 1973). Passers-by watch the news on television.



Figure 1.20: a policeman performs police operations in the aftermath of the bombing in Piazza Fontana in the newsreel *7G Rotocalco cinematografico* (17/12/1969).



Figure 1.21: the sequence in *La polizia incrimina: la legge assolve* continues by showing police operations.

Presented in a form that replicated audio-visual news, *poliziotteschi* constructed a historical narrative that linked actual events to their cinematic reworkings through comparison. According to White (1999), a tragic event increases its emotional (and political) value if the meaning of the event is inscribed into a historical narrative. Not surprisingly, in Italian newspapers, every tragedy was followed by a recap of previous tragedies or by an evaluation of similarities with other historical periods. In the framework of the conspiracy subset of the *poliziottesco*, the plots juxtaposed references to actual conspiracies to other acts of political and criminal violence reported in the news. This operation contributed to the construction of the flat present, analysed before in this chapter, which linked the fiction to recent events, suggesting an interpretation for both.

### Intermediality: analysing newspapers as devices

The concepts of remediation and liveness provide a first theoretical framework to read the strategies adopted by the *poliziottesco* to establish a close relationship with the material conditions of 1970s Italy and connect with the emotional triggers employed by news media. The concept of intermediality (Rajewsky, 2005) is particularly useful as an analytical tool to read the specific function of news media as devices in the *poliziottesco*. The concept “considers the relationship between two (or more) art forms, and the interplay that exists between them in a specific text” (Mcgill 2014, p. 42). Actually, Rajewsky states that remediation can be considered as a form of intermedial relationship (2005, p. 49). However, remediation tends to blur the boundaries between the properties of different media. Conversely, “intermediality presumes that there is a specificity to different media, even when they are being radically put into question” (Lopez 2014, p. 136). Accordingly, this concept is helpful to explore how the *poliziottesco* used news outlets and re-worked elements and structures of these same media through the media-specific means of expression of film. The analysis of the use of newspapers and television as devices in the movies permits me to answer positively to these questions: can news media as devices affect the relationship between the cinematic image and the concrete socio-political conditions? Can news media as devices become a formal tool that expresses this relationship visually? Intermediality will drive the still-frame analysis of newspaper front pages and television screens in the movies. The content of newspapers in the films will be related to the plot and to the media

discourses they evoked. Additionally, these frames will be analysed concerning the means by which they merged different forms of representation.

There are plenty of examples in the history of cinema concerning the use of newspaper and television, especially in genre production like the gangster and horror movie. Newspapers are used to signal the moral panic in a given society (Figure 1.22). They are used to show the interaction and mutual influence between media, criminals, and the police (Figure 1.23). They also highlight the newsworthiness of the action portrayed (Figures 1.24 and 1.25). Television, on the other hand, is used to suggest a parallel between characters in different movies (Figure 1.26) or to pay homage to other directors (Figure 1.27). Additionally, television is used to mirror practices of communication between citizens and authorities in the framework of natural or paranormal events (Figure 1.28). These examples are the simplest manifestation of intermedial practices. They relate mostly to *mise-en-scène* elements, which take the form of other media (newspapers, television screens) but, read in isolation, do not influence the mode of expression and form of the medium into which they are transposed. However, considering the patterns of serial repetition typical of episodic narrative, these practices can be considered to have an impact on the generic tropes of the *poliziottesco*.



Figure 1.22: *Scarface* (Hawks, 1932). The newspaper is shown after a dialogue between a journalist and his editor. The editor suggests this headline to stimulate an emotional reaction on the readership.



Figure 1.23: *Scarface* (Hawks, 1932). Tony Camonte (Paul Muni) reads on the newspaper the outcomes of his criminal activities.



Figures 1.24 and 1.25: *47 morto che parla* (Bragaglia, 1950). The fake newspaper headline signals to the audience the international resonance of what has just happened on screen.



Figure 1.26: X-23 (Dafne Keen) and Wolverine (Hugh Jackman) watching *Shane* (Stevens, 1953) in *Logan* (Mangold, 2017). The sequence suggests a comparison between *Shane* (Alan Ladd) and Wolverine.



Figure 1.27: Alfred Hitchcock's *Spellbound* (1945) in Cy Howard's *Lovers and other strangers* (1970).



Figure 1.28: *Night of the living dead* (Romero, 1968). The newscaster communicates emergency measures to the population.

The juxtaposition of film and television idioms as can be seen in the first sequence of *I ragazzi della Roma violenta*, analysed at the beginning of this chapter, exploits the representational possibilities of television to blur the boundaries of the two media. The idioms of these different media, in fact, are embedded in the film. Conversely, television screens, newspaper front pages, and their content makes explicit the bending of these media and their idioms to the rules of film. These two different operations participated in a similar effort: the blurring of the difference between fiction and non-

fiction. As we will see in the following chapter, in the *poliziottesco*, these devices participated in situating the movies historically. The merging of fake and real articles on front pages of cinematic newspapers was part of the patterns of serial repetition of the *filone*; it was a generic marker and became a formal tool to link the movies to current affairs.

Alfred Hitchcock's *North by northwest* (1959) provides an example (Figure 1.29) of this dynamic that is not new to the history of cinema. A fake newspaper merges articles commenting on the fictional action of the movie with articles on issues of primary relevance in the context of 1959, and a typical newspaper rubric of that time entitled "Racing results". The prominent article on the front page reports the supposed murder of a U.N. diplomat by the protagonist (Cary Grant). On the left, there is an article entitled "Nixon Promises West Will Remain in Berlin". The movie revolves around espionage in the framework of the Cold War. The reference to the tension between the West and Soviet Union concerning Berlin connects the movie to the political climate of its historical time. This intervention of the newspaper in the *mise-en-scène* of the film repurposes the properties of the newspaper related to the perceived temporal proximity with the news. More importantly, it makes the broader discourses that are embedded in the front page of the newspaper subservient to needs of Hitchcock's narrative.



Figure 1.29: a fake newspaper merging fake and real news in Hitchcock's *North by northwest* (1959).

Additionally, Rajewsky defines a sub-category of intermediality that is useful to read the re-working of news media discourses in the *poliziottesco*: intermedial references. Through intermedial references a given media-product "thematizes, evokes, or imitates elements or structures of another, conventionally distinct medium through the use of its

own media-specific means” (2005, p. 53). In this process, as outlined by McGill, “a text may use its respective media-specific traits to refer to another medium or medial subgenre” (2014, p. 44). Intermedial references can be useful to analyse the strategies of remediation deployed by the *filone* but also the reference to news media discourses evoked by the use of newspapers as devices. The remediation of the form of the *cinogiornale* in the sequence of *La polizia incrimina: la legge assolve* presented above (Figures 1.15-21) could be also interpreted as an intermedial reference. The form of a *cinogiornale* report becomes a cinematic sequence through the use of a specifically filmic means of expression. Thereby, the funky soundtrack that unifies the different elements of the sequence and provides a clue for interpreting the images on emotional terms substitutes the voice of the television speaker. Moreover, for narrative purposes, more emphasis is given to police operations, and the passers-by are watching the news (Figures 1.19) and not some unspecified video footage (Figures 1.17 and 1.18). At the same time, the imitation of the structure of newspaper front pages connected *poliziotteschi* to the representational patterns of news media, influencing characters’ construction and the possible interpretation of the cinematic action. This operation, in fact, provided the possibility to read the action of the film through the coordinates of news media discourses on political, criminal, and state violence.

Thus, these practices of intermediality, in the form of intermedial references, express the impact of news media discourses on the development of specific representations in the movies. The films will be analysed to explore how they evoked or imitated elements or structures of press news outlets. This imitation was presented by the *poliziottesco* through the rules of cinema, compressing or expanding newspaper structures to stimulate different emotional reactions in the spectator. As stated by Nicholas (2012), “the popular press, and the cinema were all constituent parts of an increasingly sophisticated and integrated mass information and entertainment culture. [...], this included interdependence of style and of content, as well as crossover of language” (p. 387). Representations of civic institutions in newspapers will be used to link discourses of press news media to representations of civic institutions in the *poliziottesco*. This link will be established taking into consideration the transformation of idioms peculiar to news media into the modes of expression that are typical to feature films. The movies attempted to represent the anger of the citizenship towards civic institutions by projecting opposing conceptualisations of law and order through the dialectic between *commissari* and *procuratori*. As stated before in this chapter, the *filone* did not

reproduce actual police performance; it reproduced a set of conflicts and dynamics that emerged from the reporting of police performance.

### Discourse analysis: studying news media for the analysis of film

The use of corpora for discourse analysis of newspapers in relation to film is an original contribution to knowledge from this thesis. Other approaches have used newspapers unsystematically as sources for the analysis of films. Foot (2006) considers newspapers as a valuable source to study conflicting memories of the past. Even if Foot focuses primarily on commemorative monuments, debates originating in newspapers are considered a powerful means to create mythical narrations of the past that resonate in monuments and historical movies. Discourse analysis of newspapers has been mostly used to approach the reception of specific movies. An example is Cragin's article (2017) that analyses the reviews of *Roma città aperta* (Rossellini, 1945) at the time of its release. Cragin considers newspaper reviews a "valuable means to explore what Stuart Hall describes as the decoding of film within a larger discursive form" (p. 203). The reviews that stemmed from different ideological positions "constructed for viewers" different films that attest to the multiplicity of readings and interpretations that can be channelled by the movie<sup>21</sup>.

Considering the analysis of newspapers alone, from a quantitative perspective in history-oriented studies, Tarrow (1989) performed Content Analysis on the articles of *Corriere della Sera* to explore the cycle of protest in Italy between 1965 and 1975. Tarrow used the newspaper to trace acts of protests numerically, evaluate their disruptive qualities, and identify themes and sources of grievance of these acts. On the other hand, qualitative and quantitative studies on contemporary press media seem to focus primarily on the representation of specific categories of people (mostly

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<sup>21</sup> This methodological approach connects with the field of reception studies. Klinger (1989, 1997) and Staiger (1992) contributed to this field, outlining the possibilities offered by film reviews to address the discursive practices related to film reception. Film reviews are also part of Fisher's (forthcoming) analysis of the *poliziottesco*. However, this thesis, although registering the impact of reviews in the definition of this *filone*, is more focused on the mode of addressing audiences by the films and their modes of representation than on their impact on and reception by audiences.

minorities). Critiques of media representation of migrants (Baker et al., 2008; Salahshour, 2016; Soto-Almela and Alcaraz-Mármol, 2017), LGBT communities (Bartley and Hidalgo-Tenorio, 2015), and gender (Caldas-Coulthard and Moon, 2010; Baker and Levon, 2015) use the tools of Critical Discourse Analysis and Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis. These works point at identifying linguistic patterns that may expose semantic prosodies, defined by Stubbs (2001, p. 65) as a “feature [of the text] which extends over more than one unit in a linear string”<sup>22</sup>.

These studies provide relevant examples of methods aiming at connecting media discourses with historical, ideological, and representational issues in a given society. However, this thesis needs a methodological approach able to link media discourses to the form and content of films. Hence, it requires the adoption of an interdisciplinary approach informed by a triangulation of methods. As this chapter has argued, film analysis needs to move in parallel with the analysis of media discourses. O’Leary (2011) focuses on films as artefacts, which establish a symbiotic relationship with their contemporaneity through the act of interpretation itself: a relationship in which “events influence film form just as interpretation is present at the very moment of the event. [...] Film reacts to, and impresses in its turn upon the social and political world and the interpretation of events” (p. 12). Films are conceived as social texts, “the output of a nexus of social relations and productive functions” (Antonello and O’Leary 2009, p. 4). Quoting McGann (1988), Antonello and O’Leary suggest the necessity of pursuing “the text’s entire socio-historical field”, which “stretch[es] across large reaches of time and space” (2009, p. 4). As said before in this chapter, it is not an issue of considering the films as custodians of some sort of historical truth. It is a matter of using movies to dig into the set of discursive practices that participated in providing meaning to the events of the Italian 1970s during that decade. It is in this specific way that the analysis of the *poliziottesco* can contribute to the historical discourse on the Italian 1970s.

Hence, this thesis adopts selected methods of Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis (CADA) (Baker et al., 2008; Hardt-Mautner, 1995; Partington, 2004; Salahshour, 2016)

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<sup>22</sup> Stubbs makes an example with the verb “cause”, which frequently occurs with negative words (e.g. cause a problem, cause for concern) and hence has acquired negative semantic prosody.

to analyse newspapers. As Baker and Levon recall, CADA combines “close qualitative readings”, through the tools of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), with a Corpus Linguistics (CL) approach that “uses computer software to identify frequent and salient linguistic patterns over large amounts of data” (2015, p. 223). The approach advocates “moving back and forth recursively between qualitative and quantitative forms of analysis in order to generate new hypotheses as well as to test existing ones” (p. 223). Baker et al. (2008, p. 273) define CDA as “a way of doing discourse analysis from a critical perspective, which often focuses on theoretical concepts such as power, ideology and domination”. This method provides a “general framework for problem-oriented social research. Every ‘text’ [...] is conceived as a semiotic entity, embedded in an immediate, text-internal co-text as well as intertextual and sociopolitical context” (Baker et al. 2008, p. 279). “Power is signalled not only by grammatical forms within a text, but also by a person’s control of a social occasion, by means of the genre of a text, or by access to certain public spheres” (p. 280). In this respect, news media discourses will be interrogated to trace the ideological struggle over the meaning of violence and between different conceptualisations of law and order in 1970s Italy.

The context in which linguistic utterances occurred will be considered while applying CADA. As Van Dijk (2005) claims, it is necessary to assume context models to understand and interpret subjectively what is said and meant in the interaction. In this respect, Schlesinger’s “violent society” (1981) in the framework of Elliot’s “press performance as political ritual” (1981), outlined above in this chapter, will be the contextual model utilised to interpret the narrative patterns of newspapers.

In this thesis, the overlapping of CDA and CL will be conducted as suggested by Baker et al. (2008). The methods associated with Corpus Linguistics, in fact, “require considerable human input, which often includes qualitative analysis” (2008, p. 275). On the other hand, CL operates to overcome one of the limitations of CDA, which is the focus on a limited number of texts. Critical Discourse Analysis is often criticised “for not analyzing representative texts and for its tendency to ‘cherry pick’ the data or rely too heavily on singular instances which best fit the purposes of the researchers and the possible biases of subjective interpretations” (Salahshour 2016, p. 76). Hence, “[m]ixed methodical studies which incorporate corpus tools to assist with the discourse analysis can aid in counteracting the shortcomings commonly associated with each [...] framework” (p. 76). This mixed methodological approach, for instance, avoids

neglecting the context of discourse, which is a limitation of Corpus Linguistics that registers broader trends of linguistic choices disseminated around large corpora of data. In turn, CL is subservient to qualitative analysis, providing empirical ground to the interpretation of the articles.

An online platform, *Sketch Engine*, will be used to conduct corpora analysis of front-page newspaper articles. Articles from two mainstream newspapers, *Corriere della Sera* and *l'Unità*, will be analysed with the aid of the platform through the creation of two corpora. These corpora will comprise articles from November 1969 to February 1972, selected through the criteria of the focus on actions of Italian civic institutions. Two theoretical notions and their attendant analytical tools will be central to the analysis of the corpora: keyness and collocation. Baker et al. define keyness as the “statistically significantly higher frequency of particular words or clusters in the corpus under analysis in comparison with another corpus, either a general reference corpus, or a comparable specialized corpus” (2008, p. 278). A collocation is “the above-chance frequent co-occurrence of two words within a pre-determined span, usually five words on either side of the word under investigation (the node)” (p. 278). In this thesis, the collocations that will be analysed will emerge from the five words span on either side of the node.

The analysis of the corpora will focus primarily on Italian civic institutions. Tables outlining the outcomes of this analysis are included in Appendix A and explored in detail in the following chapters. As has been said above, front-page articles that commented on the action of Italian civic institutions comprise the corpora. News categorisation follows specific typologies of actions and comments, decided a priori, and refined throughout and after the first analysis of articles and movies. This categorisation applies to the entire time under analysis (1969-1975). It helps the construction of the corpora and the down-sampling for qualitative analysis, providing a first subdivision based on specific themes (for a description of categories and sub-categories see Appendix B).

The choice of focusing on the first page comes from practical and theoretical reasons. Analysing the entire newspapers would have given a more comprehensive account of specific representations of events and public figures. It would have also allowed me to

get more details concerning the representation of specific categories of people that do not often appear on the front page<sup>23</sup>. One of these categories of people are women, who are relegated to a marginal role in the reports of criminal and political violence, and institutional action (See below the explanation for the scarce focus on women in the *poliziottesco*, news media, and this thesis). At the same time, the action of the police or the judiciary could be marginal in the front page but expanded in internal pages. However, without a research team devoted to the task, an issue related to selection arises. The focus on the front page grants the possibility of analysing a relatively broad period (1969-1975). Moreover, even if most of the articles developed in internal pages, first page articles presented a compressed narrative that signalled the topicality of specific information and a synthesis of the political position that oriented the representation of civic institutions. The first page, thus, acts as a filter of unnecessary information that would problematise the identification of the emotional devices used by newspapers to direct the attention of the readership onto specific civic institutions. The prominent presence of the police or the judiciary on the front page can be considered as evidence of the focus on the action of one or the other institution in a particular time, which is more functional to the aims of this thesis.

Nouns like *polizia* (police), *forze dell'ordine* (law enforcement agents), *poliziotto* (policeman), *magistratura* (judiciary), and *procuratore* (investigating judge) will be searched in the corpora. The modifiers of these terms will be grouped depending on their keyness. The adjectives that modify these nouns most often will be analysed to trace recurrent modes of representing actions of Italian civic institutions. The verbs that characterise the actions of civic institutions will also be checked to compare the representation of the judiciary and the police in the two newspapers. This operation will help me to identify the representation of state institutions in the movies regarding hierarchy. This will be done in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 concerning the rank-and-file

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<sup>23</sup> Accordingly, in this thesis, the reference to the omission or inclusion of specific aspects of an event by one of the two newspapers under analysis relates to the omission or inclusion in the front page. Even if this kind of data can be considered incomplete, it is still evidence of the fact that *l'Unità* or *Corriere della Sera* did or did not want to highlight a particular aspect of the event reported. As such, the front page can be considered to be relevant in analysing strategies of representation of the two newspapers.

policeman, the *commissario*, and the judge respectively. Finally, modifiers of specific public figures such as Agent Antonio Annarumma will be analysed to frame differences and similarities in the representations of two Italian newspapers.

The newspapers analysed in this thesis will be *Corriere della Sera* and *l'Unità*. *Corriere della Sera* was the newspaper of the Northern establishment; its primary release was in Lombardy (Lumley 1996, p. 200) even if its ambitions were directed at attracting a national readership politically oriented at the centre. *L'Unità*, on the contrary, was the official news outlet of the Communist Party: “[p]arty members would sell the paper, and its pages formed part of the urban landscape” (Lumley 1996, p. 208). Despite its overt partisanship, the administration board of the Communist newspaper had tried to transform the paper from one of opinion – usually bought as a second newspaper - to one of information (Forno 2012, Chapter 5). Additionally, *l'Unità* and *Corriere della Sera* were chosen to narrow down the large amount of speculation on conspiracy theories coming from minor publications. The newspaper of the leftist group *Lotta Continua* and the journalist Camilla Cederna were exceptions to this decision. They will be explored for their relevance in the Calabresi affair, explored in Chapter 4. The choice, however, limited the representativeness of the sample, omitting the publications of the right. The analysis of discourses around civic institutions, attempted coups and neo-fascist terrorism stemming from the right would have given a more comprehensive account of the struggle over the meaning of political violence in the 1970s. Moreover, it would have provided this thesis with more evidence of the involvement of the left in conspiracy theories that fuelled the narratives of *poliziotteschi*. The publications of the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary right would have also been relevant to get a better understanding of the interpretation of the *poliziottesco* as a reactionary genre. The

lack of engagement with these publications represents a methodological limitation of this thesis but can also be seen as an opportunity for further research on the topic<sup>24</sup>.

The period analysed by this thesis starts in November 1969 with the death of Police Agent Antonio Annarumma in the general strike of Milan (November 18) and concludes in December 1975. The end of the period under analysis was chosen conventionally to focus on the first half of the 1970s. Moreover, after the selection of movies adhering to the conspiracy mode of the *poliziottesco*, it was evident that this specific sub-strand characterised mostly the first half of the decade with three films in the season 1976-1977 - *Poliziotti violenti* (Tarantini, 1976), *Mark colpisce ancora* (Massi, 1976) and *Italia ultimo atto?* (Pirri, 1977). Concerning the *strategia della tensione*, the methodology was devised to understand to what extent changes in the interpretation of the conspiracy theory impacted the selection of topics and the representation of institutional characters in the *poliziottesco*. Within the timeframe, the period between November 1969 and February 1972 is the focus of quantitative analysis. The selection of this timeframe connects with the definition of *filone* cinema provided in this chapter. *Filoni* have been described as cycles of low budget and fast-produced movies, exploiting successful formulas that are replicated in successive films. *La polizia ringrazia* (Stefano Vanzina) was released on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February 1972 and was the first successful movie in the milieu of *filone* cinema that had the police at the centre of the narrative (Olesen 2017, p. 264). The quantitative analysis aims at identifying the discursive construction of civic institutions as media figures and how this construction impacted *La polizia ringrazia*. The figures emerged from this analysis will be used to understand the meaning of subsequent changes in the representation of civic institutions in other *poliziotteschi*. Moreover, quantitative analysis will allow me to trace the

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<sup>24</sup> A possible avenue for further research could also be the exploration of sensationalistic magazines like *Cronaca Vera*. *Cronaca Vera* presented sensationalistic news based on a mix of crime and erotic content, characterised by shallow anti-bourgeois rhetoric that pointed at attracting lower class readership. It would be interesting to trace possible narrative and representational patterns shared by this kind of publications and the *poliziottesco*, as it could illuminate about shared exploitative practices within the Italian cultural production. In turn, these shared patterns could provide more evidence to frame the dialogue between “high” and “low” culture that impacted the form and content of a serial product like the *poliziottesco*.

different patterns of representation between opposing mainstream news outlets. The identification of the points of greatest interpretive divergence will allow a more critical engagement with the moment in which these interpretations collide into a single framework.

This thesis adopts Kenix's (2011) perspective on mainstream media constructed on the opposition with alternative media: "they are situated completely within (and concomitantly co-creating) the ideological norms of society, enjoy a widespread scale of influence, rely on professionalised reporters and are heavily connected with other corporate or governmental entities" (p. 3). Mainstream press addressed the general public, it was supported by a broad readership, and was disseminated nationally. *Corriere* and *l'Unità* expressed those features differently. They proposed conflicting ideological visions that were, nonetheless, inscribed in the same framework of the democratic system. Rightfully contextualised and deconstructed accordingly, the idioms and representations of the two newspapers could be compared and included in the category of "mainstream press". As Partington recalls, "[s]pecialized (or *monogeneric*) corpora make discourse study feasible since, in a collection of texts of similar type, the interactional processes and the contexts they take place in remain reasonably constant, or at least alter in relatively predictable ways" (2004, p. 11, emphasis in the original). The genre – newspaper article – the topic – articles on actions of civic institutions – and the time frame – 1969-1972 – contribute to the consistency of the corpora in this thesis.

The definition of general public in Italy is problematic due to the intense political investment of each paper. The difference between party press and generalist newspapers, in fact, becomes blurred in the Italian context. *Corriere della Sera* was naturally more generalist than a party paper like *l'Unità*. Undoubtedly, the latter was tied to the interests of a precise political party. However, *Corriere* was not alien to these dynamics. Piero Ottone, director of the Milanese newspaper from 1972 to 1977, declared that even general-interest newspapers were less interested in providing information, or even selling, than in guaranteeing to entrepreneurs or power cartels a political influence (Ottone 1996, p. 135).

Similar to the general public, the analysis of readership presents some challenges. In 1975, the totality of Italian newspapers sold between four and five million copies per year for a population of 55 million residents and that figure remained stable until 1980 (Forgacs 1990, p. 33; Forno 2012, Chapter 5). The circulation of newspapers compared

with other industrialised countries placed Italy in 1972 in the 26th position with 142 copies for every 1,000 inhabitants (UNESCO, 1975). Considering the most influential newspapers, in 1975, *Corriere della Sera* sold 600,000 copies per day, *La Stampa* 500,000, *l'Unità* 450,000, and *Il Messaggero* 300,000 (Grandinetti 1976, pp. 513-582). A study commissioned by Italian newspapers in 1974 and performed by Doxa, Demoscopea, and Makrotest allows me to dig more into the readership. The study registered the selling of 6.5 million newspaper copies in an average day and a readership of 31 million Italians<sup>25</sup> with higher percentage of readership in the Centre-North of Italy (See Figure 1.30).

REGIONI	Adulti Italiani		Lettori di quotidiani						Non lettori quotidiani	
	N. (000)	%	abituati		in un giorno medio		occasionali		N. (000)	%
			N. (000)	%	N. (000)	%	N. (000)	%		
Piemonte - Val d'Aosta	3643	100	2487	68	1668	46	585	16	571	16
Liguria	1520	100	1155	76	804	53	211	14	154	10
Lombardia	6623	100	4666	71	3359	51	931	14	1026	15
<b>NORD - OVEST</b>	<b>11786</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>8308</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>5831</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>1727</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1751</b>	<b>15</b>
Trentino - Alto Adige	625	100	440	70	291	47	129	21	57	9
Veneto	3110	100	1942	62	1274	41	599	19	568	18
Friuli	980	100	726	74	530	54	117	12	137	14
Emilia	3107	100	2109	68	1479	48	509	16	490	16
<b>NORD - EST</b>	<b>7822</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5217</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>3574</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>1354</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1252</b>	<b>16</b>
Toscana	2813	100	1752	62	1174	42	493	18	568	20
Marche	1085	100	393	37	254	23	239	22	448	41
Umbria	625	100	275	44	189	30	131	21	220	35
Lazio	3550	100	2283	64	1612	45	538	15	729	21
<b>CENTRO</b>	<b>8073</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4703</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>3229</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>1401</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1965</b>	<b>25</b>
Abruzzi	1160	100	421	36	237	20	249	22	491	42
Campania	3558	100	1496	42	893	25	622	18	1440	40
Puglia	2543	100	1009	40	673	27	382	15	1152	45
Basilicata	441	100	111	25	73	17	53	12	277	63
Calabria	1409	100	525	37	387	28	212	15	672	48
Sicilia	3431	100	1440	42	939	27	556	16	1436	42
Sardegna	1060	100	584	55	370	35	180	17	296	28
<b>SUD - ISOLE</b>	<b>13602</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5586</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>3572</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>2254</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>5764</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>ITALIA</b>	<b>41.285</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>23819</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>16207</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>6735</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>10730</b>	<b>26</b>

Figure 1.30: a summary of the study on newspaper readership published on *Corriere della Sera* (Colussi 1974, p. 6) based on geographical areas.

The readership is composed of a majority of men, as within the sample of people reading newspapers in an average day 37% are women (42% concerning habitual readers, 62% concerning occasional readers). Moreover, within the sample, 68% of

<sup>25</sup> The study is based on a poll submitted to a sample of 26.397 people. The readership on an average day counts 16 million people. It becomes 24 million if we consider habitual readers and 31 million if we add also occasional readers (people that read a newspaper less than once per week).

women did not read a newspaper at all compared to 32% of men (See Figure 1.31). If we consider one of the newspapers under analysis, *Corriere della Sera*, it is clear that women read much less the newspaper than men (34% against 66%) (See Figure 1.32). The gender gap in *L'Unità* was even higher than *Corriere della Sera*, with 74.6% of men reading the Communist newspaper against 25.4% of women (Anon. 1974h, p. 2; *L'Unità* 14/09/1974).

CARATTERISTICHE	Adulti italiani		Lettori di quotidiani						Non lettori quotidiani	
	N. (000)	%	abituati		In un giorno medio		occasionali		N. (000)	%
			N. (000)	%	N. (000)	%	N. (000)	%		
<b>Sesso</b>										
Uomini . . . . .	19.876	48	13.931	59	10.257	63	2548	38	3397	32
Donne . . . . .	21.409	52	9888	42	5951	37	4188	62	7333	68
<b>Età</b>										
15-24 anni . . . . .	8054	19	5662	24	3730	23	1425	21	966	9
25-34 anni . . . . .	7059	17	4632	19	3137	19	1194	18	1233	11
35-44 anni . . . . .	7341	18	4230	18	2863	18	1247	18	1814	17
45-54 anni . . . . .	7146	17	4034	17	2792	17	1203	18	1909	18
55-64 anni . . . . .	5705	14	2757	12	1954	12	877	13	2071	19
65 anni e oltre . . . . .	5960	15	2453	10	1732	11	789	12	2737	26
<b>Condizione socio-economica</b>										
Sup./Medio Superiore	2926	7	2591	11	2210	14	243	4	92	1
Media	16.108	39	11.513	48	8180	50	2434	36	2161	20
Medio Inferiore	17.749	43	8571	36	5187	32	3354	50	5824	54
Inferiore	4503	11	1144	5	630	4	705	10	2563	25
<b>Titolo di Studio</b>										
Laurea	912	2	880	3	747	5	39	(*)	13	(*)
Medio Superiore	3939	10	3503	15	2834	17	367	5	70	1
Medio Inferiore	8197	20	6641	28	4875	30	1127	18	429	4
Elementare o nessuna	28.235	68	12.815	54	7841	48	5202	77	10.218	95
<b>Condizione professionale</b>										
Imprenditore, libero, professionista, dirigente	716	2	677	3	594	4	25	(*)	14	(*)
Impiegato	4215	10	3752	16	3020	19	348	5	416	1
Negoziante artigiano	3841	9	2666	11	1943	12	570	9	605	6
Operaio	8213	20	5356	23	3360	21	1432	21	1424	13
Agricoltore in proprio	2322	6	725	3	405	2	479	7	1118	10
Agricoltore dipendente	895	2	144	(*)	78	(*)	159	2	592	6
Casalinga . . . . .	11.066	27	4628	19	2680	16	2236	34	4222	39
Pensionato . . . . .	5649	14	2473	10	1748	11	800	12	2422	23
Studente . . . . .	3630	9	2934	12	2082	13	548	8	129	1
Altro . . . . .	673	1	445	2	297	2	140	2	86	1
<b>TOTALE</b>	<b>41.285</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>23.819</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>16.207</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6736</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10.730</b>	<b>100</b>

(\*) Inferiore allo 0,5%

Figure 1.31: a summary of the study on newspaper readership published on *Corriere della Sera* (Colussi 1974, p. 6) based on sex, age, socio-economic conditions, education, and profession.

LETTORI CORRIERE DELLA SERA IN UN GIORNO MEDIO					
CARATTERISTICHE	N. in (000)	%	CARATTERISTICHE	N. in (000)	%
<b>Sesso</b>			<b>Titolo di studio</b>		
Uomini . . . . .	1.531	66	Laurea . . . . .	224	10
Donne . . . . .	784	34	Media Superiore . . . . .	567	26
<b>Età</b>			Media Inferiore . . . . .	695	30
15-24 anni . . . . .	440	19	Elementare o nessuno . . . . .	829	36
25-34 anni . . . . .	518	22	<b>Condizione professionale</b>		
35-44 anni . . . . .	402	17	Imprenditore, professionista, dirigente . . . . .	212	9
45-54 anni . . . . .	387	17	Impiegato . . . . .	556	24
55-64 anni . . . . .	264	13	Negoziante, artigiano . . . . .	279	12
65 anni e oltre . . . . .	273	12	Operaio . . . . .	371	16
<b>Classe Socio-economica</b>			Agricoltore . . . . .	22	1
Superiore e Medio Sup	564	24	Casalanga . . . . .	320	14
Media	1.214	52	Pensionato . . . . .	264	11
Media inferiore	499	22	Studente . . . . .	245	11
Inferiore	37	2	Altro . . . . .	45	2
<b>TOTALE</b>	<b>2.314</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>TOTALE</b>	<b>2.314</b>	<b>100</b>

Figure 1.32: a summary of the study on the readership of *Corriere della Sera* (Colussi 1974, p. 6) based on sex, age, socio-economic conditions, education, and profession.

The underrepresentation of women in the readership affected the content of the newspapers. Accordingly, it is important to reflect about it if representational patterns of news media are considered to have had an impact on the representations of the *poliziottesco*. In the 1970s, Italian cultural production was dominated by men and was directed at men predominantly. Similarly, the institutional discourse was predominantly masculine. Not only politicians, police officers, and judges were always men in the reports of newspapers, but, as Glynn (2013) documents, in the first half of the 1970s, the action of female militants and terrorists was obscured in favour of male counterparts. When Mara Cagol, one of the leaders of the *Brigate Rosse*, was killed in a confrontation with *carabinieri*, *Corriere della Sera* gave the news with the headline “The women killed is the wife of the boss of the *Brigate Rosse*” (Giuliani 1975, p. 1). Newspapers used women as emotional triggers to move the male readership, identifying them mostly as wives and mothers. As we will see in Chapter 2, the death of policemen was often accompanied by photos of crying mothers and desperate wives or fiancées. This thesis argues that the *poliziottesco* can be considered to share representational patterns with news media and the approach of the press outlined above may be used to explain the role of women in the *filone* and the consequent marginal presence in this thesis. As is explained in Chapter 5, women in the *poliziottesco*, with an extremely limited number of exceptions, are relegated to the same role accorded to them in news

media. They are the lovers of the *commissario* (*La polizia ringrazia*, Vanzina 1972; *La Polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide*, Martino 1975; *Poliziotti violenti*, Tarantini 1976; *La polizia interviene: ordine di uccidere*, Rosati 1975), mothers (*Squadra volante*, Massi 1974), or prostitutes (*Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia*, Martino 1973; *La mala ordina*, Di Leo 1972). If a woman is threatening or dangerous, she is a foreigner, like the Austrian terrorist in *Mark colpisce ancora* (Massi, 1975).

Therefore, the analysis of newspapers presents some limitations in terms of representativeness. I consider the data obtained from the newspapers more valid to analyse media discourses than to identify their diffusion within the whole Italian population or within specific sectors of the citizenship. In line with this approach, I decided to retract from an analysis of readerships, to focus primarily on texts, their circulation and the contextual dynamics that affected their production. Accordingly, I oriented the selection of news media towards the most widely read and most oppositional newspapers of the time<sup>26</sup>. In this respect, television news would have helped me to analyse a much more widespread product, overcoming the limitation of a small newspaper readership in Italy. In the 1970s, television news had a viewership of millions of people and had relegated newspapers to a complementary role in the media habits of Italian people (Forno 2012, Chapter 5). The analysis of television news would have helped me to grasp the information available to the general public, which ties with Kenix's (2011) conceptualisation of mainstream media. However, this thesis aims at addressing the information available to Italian people as a discursive construction, which allows me to address silences, omissions, exaggerations, differences and similarities in representation within the Italian cultural production. The Italian broadcasting system (RAI) counted two channels until the liberalisation of private televisions in 1976. RAI was a stronghold of governmental parties, and the *telegiornale* of the first channel remained a feud of the DC until the 1990s (Forno 2012, Chapter 6), causing harsh criticism by leftist parties like the PCI for the lack of pluralism and

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<sup>26</sup> The study performed by Doxa, Demoscopea and Makrotest placed *Corriere della Sera* at the first place with 2.314.000 readers and *l'Unità* at the third place with 1.363.000 readers. At the second place there is *La Stampa* (1.639.000 readers) (Anon. 1974, p. 2; *l'Unità* 14/09/1974), which was owned by the Agnelli family, the proprietors of the car company FIAT, and can be considered to be close to the political orientation of *Corriere della Sera*.

governmental orientation. The choice of *Corriere della Sera* and *l'Unità*, despite the minor representativeness if looked at in terms of readership, allows me to address competing voices in the Italian media environment. Moreover, an issue of availability of sources impacted my decision. The historical archive of *l'Unità* is available online for free, while the historical archive of *Corriere della Sera* is available through a subscription to the paper. The archives of both papers, moreover, are available at the British Library, which helped to avoid expansive and time-consuming trips to Italy. On the contrary, the historical archive of RAI *Telegiornale* is not available online, orienting my decision to focus on newspapers<sup>27</sup>.

Hence, once the corpora of *Corriere della Sera* and *l'Unità* were formed, I interrogated them in relation to the relevant search-words and linguistic properties. The collocations that emerged will be explored qualitatively using concordances in the rest of this thesis. Concordances are “tables which show all of the occurrences of a word, phrase or related pair of words in the immediate context that they occur in” (Baker and Levon 2015, p. 226). This tool is particularly relevant as “[w]ords [...] can only take meaning [...] by the context they occur in” (Baker 2006, p. 96). The relatively limited size of each corpus gives the possibility of analysing all concordance lines that the collocations identified as statistically significant.

The corpus of *Corriere della Sera* is composed of 258,507 words and the corpus of *l'Unità* is composed of 247,675 words. This selection narrows the scope of the investigation as the analyses conducted through Corpus Linguistics usually comprehend corpora composed of millions of words. Nonetheless, this strategy is supported by Baker, who recognises that “using corpora for discourse analysis, it *is* possible to carry out corpus-based analyses on much smaller amounts of data [...] especially if the genre is linguistically restricted in some way” (2006, p. 28, emphasis in the original).

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<sup>27</sup> Complete editions of *cinegiornale*, however, are available for free on the archives of *Istituto Luce* and are used in this thesis to interpret the merging of media idioms in the *poliziottesco*. A limited number of *telegiornale* reportages has been accessed through the website of RAI and related in this thesis to specific dialogues in the films.

“One consideration when building specialised corpus in order to investigate the discursive construction of a particular subject is perhaps not so much the size of the corpus, but how often we would expect to find that subject mentioned within it” (Baker 2006, p. 28).

The focus on civic institutions helped the sampling operation, framing the analysis within a limited set of texts. For qualitative analysis, texts were selected, through down-sampling, with the restriction that they reported on specific events. In the period comprehended in the quantitative analysis, these events are the death of Agent Annarumma (November 18, 1969), the massacre of Piazza Fontana (December 12, 1969), the riots of Reggio Calabria (July 1970-February 1971) and the attempted coup d'état of the fascist Junio Valerio Borghese (first reported in March 1971). After 1972, the selected events are the revelation of the investigation against neo-fascists for Piazza Fontana (March 1972), the death of the Communist publisher Giangiacomo Feltrinelli (March 14, 1972), the assassination of *Commissario* Calabresi (May 17, 1972), the death of Agent Antonio Marino (April 12, 1973), the arson of Primavalle (April 16, 1973), the bombing in Brescia (May 28, 1974), the bombing on the Italicus train (August 4, 1974), the investigation on the so-called *trame nere*<sup>28</sup> (black plots) in 1974, and the kidnapping of Judge Sossi (April 1974) and Di Gennaro (May 1975). The qualitative analysis permits the isolation of linguistic constructions that evidenced specific positions concerning the responsibility of individual institutions in the framework of the *strategia della tensione*. Qualitative analysis is centred on transitivity. Transitivity focuses on “how language users construe versions of reality in discourse. Simply put, human beings can convey experience differently through employing a wide range of syntactic structures and specific vocabulary choices, thereby ensuring information is arranged in a way that can indicate their ideological positioning” (Bartley and Hidalgo-Tenorio 2015, p. 18).

Finally, articles between 1972 and 1975 were selected with the additional restriction of their focus on the role and function of Italian institutions. These articles addressing specific controversies related to the judiciary and the police will be connected to

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<sup>28</sup> In the framework of the *trame nere* there is the conspiracy against the state plotted by the organisation *La Rosa Dei Venti* (first reported in November 1973) and the investigation against the Italian secret service (SID), which expanded into 1975.

dialogues in selected *poliziotteschi* that address, explicitly or implicitly, the same controversial issues. The relation between dialogues and news media discourses will be used to interpret serial repetitions of specific representations in the *filone*, moving back and forward from discourse to film analysis. In this way, it is possible to connect dialogues to the state of the debate on civic institutions in a precise moment in the decade.

In this respect, another limitation of this methodological approach is constituted by the scarce availability of archival material concerning the production schedule and negotiation for public funding that characterised the *poliziottesco*<sup>29</sup>. Production schedules would have provided a higher degree of precision to argue for the responsiveness of the films to specific events and media discourses. The short pace of production of the *poliziottesco* has been documented, but it would have been relevant to grasp more information on the changes that occurred from conception to distribution. Such information would have provided me with more evidence of the impact of news media discourses on the development of the films under scrutiny in this thesis. Archival material that documents the negotiation for public funding would have been relevant to reflect on the impact of the economic system of Italian cinema on the representation of civic institutions. As has been said above, the *poliziottesco* has been vaguely accused of being part of a strategy of the government to orient the citizenship towards the right, also considering the wide availability of the Ministry of Interior to allow the filming in

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<sup>29</sup> The *Archivio di Stato* (State Archive) in Italy has some of these documents, even if not always easily reachable. The documents concerning production schedules are equally difficult to reach due to the dispersed nature of the Italian film business. The films of *filone* cinema were often produced by small production houses. The crisis of Italian cinema that reached its peak in the late 1970s brought to the restructuring, failure, or change of property of many of these companies that did not favour the conservation of these documents. At this point in my research, I could not find a centralised archive that can be consulted to do systematic research into production schedules of the *poliziottesco*. Some information can be reached through *Il Giornale dello Spettacolo*, the magazine of the *Associazione Generale Italiana dello Spettacolo* (Italian General Association for Entertainment), on which producers and distributors publicised upcoming movies to attract exhibitors. The most reachable data is the censorship seal. The seal, however, was usually granted days before the release of the movies. Accordingly, it does not add much information concerning the development of the films.

actual police headquarters (Fedeli 1980, p. 122). More information concerning this negotiation would have ideally contributed to a more comprehensive analysis of the external factors that contributed to the development of specific representations in the *poliziottesco*.

The lack of this archival material in this thesis, however, does not undermine the intended outcomes of this thesis. If the analysis remains focused firmly on the interaction of media and media discourses in the form and content of the *poliziottesco*, it is still possible to trace and interpret the evolution of institutional characters according to the coordinates of the socio-historical context. The theoretical frameworks addressed in this chapter will be used to interpret this media interaction as a source of historical understanding. As has been said before, the *poliziottesco* evolved in a non-linear way, advancing and retreating to more secure formula depending on marketing and contextual circumstances, responding to the interpretative framework set by 1970s Italian media environment. The tracing of the socio-historical field of the movies will be partial, but the focus of this thesis on serial texts permits me to isolate the analysis from issues of authorship and audiences' reception concerning individual movies. This thesis aims at providing evidence of filmmakers' intentions, but the approach set in this chapter makes it clear that the object of analysis is conceptualised more like an assembly line typical of an industrial product than as the product of the craftsmanship of a single director. The professionals involved in this *filone* are considered themselves a target of the emotional cues employed by news media. The exploitative nature of the re-working of these emotional devices in the *poliziottesco*, opposed to the political nature of other productions of the 1970s, allowed the films to register various and often conflicting conceptualisations of violence, law and order. Therefore, as the Conclusions will show, filmmakers' intentions inferred from the analysis of film plots, narratives, and characters' actions and reactions contribute to illuminate about the inextricable link between the *poliziottesco* and news media discourses.

## Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the concept of seriality is useful for reading the *poliziottesco* as a historical document. Television studies have furnished the means to identify the impact of production factors in the construction of a popular product. Moreover, Wagstaff's and Kelleter's approaches helped to explore the formal language of the *filone*, making it available to adaptations that responded to shifts in media

discourses and market trends. Comic book seriality, on the other hand, helped me to identify the strategies employed to construct institutional characters that could adapt to the evolving debate on the responsibility of the state for the inefficient struggle against political and criminal violence. Moreover, it has furnished a theoretical framework to explore the complex intersection of different plans of representation, to be explored in Chapter 2.

The cultural practice approach of television genre studies proved to be a useful theoretical tool to understand the interdependency of historical, cultural, and market influences on the definition of the *poliziottesco* – affecting its themes and reception. The impact of cultural hierarchies on the reception of the *filone* was relevant to understand the creation of the *poliziottesco* as a generic label. It will be also useful in Chapter 2 to explain the adoption of cinematic tropes associated with cinema *di consumo impegnato*. Conceptualising the *filone* as a discursive construction has helped to understand how issues of political value influenced the context of production and reception. The aim was to highlight to what extent extra-textual elements participated in the definition and evolution of the *filone*. The nihilistic approach of the movies, unable to provide a definitive closure, can be related to the confusion concerning the interpretation of the *strategia della tensione* arising from the historical context. The analysis of the socio-political context will prove to be central for the study, conducted in detail in Chapters 3, 4, and 5, of the cultural and political discourses in news media that affected the reworking of actual institutional figures and historical events in the movies. It becomes clear that elements of seriality – in terms of conscious marketing and formal strategies – contributed decisively to the definition of the *poliziottesco* as a genre. Moreover, it contributed to the creation of a set of references to the socio-political conditions that contributes to the historical significance of the *filone*.

The necessity of presenting an ideological position and its opposite at the same time makes the *poliziottesco*, especially the conspiracy subset, a source of historical understanding of the discursive struggle over the meaning of violence that characterised the decade. The *filone* exploited the same struggle happening in the pages of mainstream newspapers by translating it in the form of popular entertainment. The state was often if not always a negative character in the cinematic conspiracies. The relationship between Italians and the state was seldom represented outside the coordinates of conflict. This conflict reached its peak in the 1970s, expressed in

different forms of Italian culture, public demonstrations, and armed struggle. The *poliziottesco* represented another dimension of the articulation of this conflict, which, deprived of an intentional political intervention, expressed itself through a complex set of social, cultural, and political practices related to media production. Thereby, the chapter aimed at stressing the relevance of media discourses, from critics' reviews to news media, in the development of the modes of expression and content of the *poliziottesco*. The identification of shared elements of seriality of newspapers and *poliziotteschi* will be helpful throughout the thesis. Elliot's "press performance as a political ritual" and Schlesinger's interpretative framework of the "violent society" will help to link the ritualistic catharsis and emotional release related to the *poliziottesco* (O'Leary, 2011; Fisher, 2014) to media practices that characterised the early 1970s. In such a way, the release of emotional tension that characterised the cinematic experience can be situated within the public debate on state and political violence in which the country was involved.

The focus on seriality of this thesis affected the interdisciplinary and hybrid methodological approach to the object of analysis. Quantitative and qualitative methods are used together to move between the broader and narrower context of media representations. They are used in alternation also to minimise the impact of bias in discourse analysis of selected texts. The risk is to be influenced by the same modes of representation that are here under analysis, due to the fact that I grew up and studied in Italy in a left-oriented environment. Taking films as case studies, moreover, can lead to misleading preconceptions in the study of a national production that invested significantly in the representation and analysis of conflict. As O'Leary (2011) documented, cinema was a protagonist in the articulation of conspiracy theories, feeding the mythology on the 1970s with representations often based on the potential for scandal more than on rigorous socio-political analyses. The 1970s and their conspiracy theories are often connoted by a mythological narration of the struggle between repressive state apparatuses, workers and students. Conversely, this thesis aims at exposing the presence of a "cartel" of moral panic that, from opposing ideological perspectives, addressed the average Italian citizen in similar manners.

The interaction of film, newspapers, and television in the *poliziottesco* is considered to offer a relevant perspective to observe and interpret the representation of Italian civic institutions and societal conflicts. Methods of Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis have

been explored to support the identification of patterns of representation of Italian civic institutions in news media and to link them to characters' construction and development in the *poliziottesco*. Qualitative methods of Discourse Analysis will be employed to connect media discourses on civic institutions to specific dialogues that addressed the same issues. Additionally, the methodology proposed in this chapter is considered helpful to read the framing of the socio-political context that derived from these representations. The mixed methods outlined in this chapter will work in this direction. The concept of remediation will highlight the contribution of each repurposed media feature to the blurring of the boundaries between different media idioms in the *poliziottesco*. Intermediality will support the analysis of frames containing newspapers and television screens. Intermedial references will be explored to trace the bending of the structure and narrative of newspaper news into the rules of cinema. Accordingly, the analysis of the concepts has stressed the impact of uses of media as devices on the film language and concerning the mode of addressing the present by the *filone*. Both concepts are useful to interpret the blurring of fiction and non-fiction in the *poliziottesco*.

As has been mentioned above, this methodology has been developed to explore the socio-historical field that surrounded the production of *poliziotteschi*. All the methods will participate in the analysis of movies as social texts originating from the interaction of diverse cultural and social practices. Films and newspapers are both practices of interpretation and sites of mutually influenced construction of meaning. If conceptualised as cultural and social practices, both *poliziotteschi* and newspapers can be read as participants, with the affordances of their means of expression, in a public debate on the meaning of violence and the legitimacy of state violence in 1970s Italy. In the films, these affordances were remediated, repurposing determinate features from one medium to another and constructing an original cinematic language that revolved around media. In turn, the obsession with media that characterises the *poliziottesco* will highlight the impact of media interaction in the cultural production of 1970s Italy.

The next chapter employs elements of seriality to connect the use of media in the *poliziottesco* to the cultural production of the early 1970s. It starts by analysing forms of press ritual and relates these forms to two movies that are positioned in a liminal space between entertainment and political commitment: *Banditi a Milano* (Lizzani, 1968) and *Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina* (Bellocchio, 1972). These movies exemplify the impact

of tropes coming from political cinema on the *poliziottesco*, especially related to the interaction of different media in the film space. Accordingly, the use of television and newspapers in the two movies is connected to the *filone*, highlighting similarities and differences. Finally, the operation permits me to reflect on the different impact of these intermedial techniques in the framework of the complex socio-political analysis of political cinema, and action films.



## Chapter 2 - News media as sources of formal continuity between cinema *di consumo impegnato* and the *poliziottesco*

### Introduction

Bizanti: “Who is our reader? He’s a quiet and honest man who loves order. He’s a man who works, produces, creates wealth. But he’s also a tired man, Roveda. He’s pissed-off. His sons wage guerrilla war in the streets of Milan instead of going to school and his workers are more and more aggressive. The government is absent, and the country is in chaos. He opens the newspaper to read placid and moderate words”.

*Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina* (Bellocchio, 1972).

This chapter explores the cross-over of idioms from news media and television to the *poliziottesco*. It argues for the necessity of analysing the formal continuity between the so-called cinema *di consumo impegnato* (cinema of committed entertainment), which has been defined in Chapter 1, and the *filone*. Moreover, this chapter argues that news media are central to read both similarities and differences between the two forms of cultural production. The mode of addressing news media discourses is pivotal to understand how the *poliziottesco* avoided complex socio-political analysis. Maintaining modes of representation that were peculiar to *consumo impegnato*, which experimented in the use of news media as devices, the *poliziottesco* exploited the “aura” of social criticism of other cinematic trends. As such, further layers of meaning could be associated with *poliziotteschi*, depending on audiences’ “prior knowledge” (Fisher, 2014), while preserving the primary focus on action sequences.

The dialogue presented above comes from *Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina* (Bellocchio, 1972), a movie that centres on the manipulation of the news by Bizanti, the editor of the fictional newspaper *Il Giornale*. The movie expressed the critique of conservative news outlets by the leftist cultural milieu. It is part of the films *di consumo impegnato*, a movement defined by De Vincenti in contrast with “militant cinema” (1997, p. 270). Unlike the latter, *consumo impegnato* worked less on the experimentation of the film language and more on “subjects more connected with the average level of the new political awareness of the masses” (p. 270). The media were often identified by these

movies as the primary place of the ideological struggle over power. The dialogue stresses the effects of protest on the quiet life of the middle- and upper-class readers of the newspaper<sup>30</sup>. This “quiet” but “pissed-off” reader (a male) is framed as a father and an honest worker. Protesters are identified as a threat to what he cares about most: his children and his property. Two years before, another film *di consumo impegnato*, Petri’s *Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto* (1970), had furnished a model for movies critiquing the “dysfunctions of the res publica” (Micciché 1989, p. 5), embodied by civic institutions. The *filone* re-appropriated and elaborated the formal strategies of these products. This chapter aims at demonstrating that the *poliziottesco* used these forms not to convey complex social commentary but as a strategy to address an already mediated context.

These serial products used emotional triggers to merge the private and the public aspects of news. By public aspect of news, I mean the approach of news reporting that stresses the significance of a particular event for the managing of public interest. By private aspect of news, I mean the focus of news reporting on the personal, often morbid side of a particular event. This chapter argues that the overlapping of the public and the private as a narrative model constitutes a form of remediation of films *di consumo impegnato*. The analysis provided here is significant to understand the use of civic institutions as political symbols by news media and the *poliziottesco* alike. As has been argued in previous chapters, the *filone* tended to integrate a broader range of political discourses. *Poliziotteschi* expressed a synthesis of opposing conceptions of law and order organised around an emotional trip into the consequences of violence. The interpretation of news media strategies to frame the socio-political context and the critical elaboration of this framing by the leftist milieu is pivotal to undertake the analysis of representations of civic institutions in the *poliziottesco*. As this chapter explains, the merging of the private and the public was central to make victims political symbols. The same representational strategy will be used to analyse the framing of policemen as victims and the negotiation of the blame for state inefficiency against violence in Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

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<sup>30</sup> The director, Marco Bellocchio, declared that the inspiration for the fictional newspaper was *Corriere della Sera* (Film&Clips, 2014).

The chapter starts with the analysis of forms of news reporting and the discourses conveyed by these forms. The framing of radicals as inhuman and acts of political violence as crimes are read according to Elliot's (1981) press performance as political ritual. The press ritual of news media is then compared with the narrative and formal traits of the *filone*. Additionally, the same press ritual is used to interpret the critiques of news media expressed by Bellocchio's *Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina* (1972). The focus on human-interest elements of newspaper and television reportages is connected with Lizzani's *Banditi a Milano* (1968). This movie uses conventions of press and television news to comment on the impact of emotional cues on Italian citizens' perception of and reaction to violence. Finally, the use of television in the *filone* concludes the chapter, identifying elements of formal continuity with cinema *di consumo impegnato* and exploring its impact on the modes of expression of the *poliziottesco*. The serial use of television and newspapers as devices blurred the boundaries between the use of actual and fictionalised news media in the *poliziottesco*. As this chapter explains, a similar operation had already been performed in cinema *di consumo impegnato*: real newspapers had been used to dramatise actual events and fictionalised and archive footage had been merged to construct political explanations for acts of protest. In turn, this use of newspapers as devices, remediating the indexical use of previous cultural productions, reinforced the relationship between the *poliziottesco* and the socio-political conditions of 1970s Italy.

### The construction of victims, criminals, and radicals in Italian newspapers

To analyse the formal continuity between the *poliziottesco* and cinema *di consumo impegnato*, it is important to investigate how both forms attempted to comment on the impact of news media on the perception of social reality by Italian citizens. This thesis uses newspapers as the primary source to explore media discourses on political violence and Italian civic institutions. Considering the two news outlets analysed in this thesis, were *l'Unità* and *Corriere della Sera* more interested in the emotional or factual side of political violence? Were the articles more focused on the public, political, aspect of news, or on the "private", human-interest elements? How did the *poliziottesco* elaborate this mode of addressing the socio-political context by news media? Elliot's (1981) press performance as political ritual will be used to interpret this elaboration (for a reminder of Elliot's political ritual read Chapter 1, p. 46).

Often, newspapers did not have the possibility of presenting many facts because there were many uncertainties, especially concerning acts related to the *strategia della tensione*. Thereby, they filled these gaps focusing on stories of human interest, highly involved in the physical and emotional consequences, and reactions to violence. First page articles of both *l'Unità* and *Corriere della Sera* blurred the distinction between emotions and facts, and between the private and the public. The criminal and political domains often merged into a single style of storytelling, which focused on victimhood. A further emotional cue was provided by the historicisation of each event. The two newspapers “constructed” the events through a historical narrative, elaborating the points of contact with the past, be they recent or remote. The concept of “liveness” identified by White (1999) concerning television, can be applied to the idioms of Italian newspapers: events were historicised to add meaning and political value. *L'Unità* focused more on the recent past to stress its denunciation of the reactionary plot identified with the *strategia della tensione* (Extract U.33, Appendix E<sup>31</sup>). *Corriere della Sera* used to appeal to the period of social turmoil that predated the Fascist or Soviet regimes in order to foster the theory of the *opposti estremismi*<sup>32</sup> (opposite extremes) (Piazzesi 1973, p.1; Pieroni 1973b, p. 1).

The bombing of Piazza Fontana (December 12, 1969) is a primary example for both newspapers. *L'Unità* gave details of the suffering of innocent people:

“The first people who rushed into the bank saw a shocking picture: dozens of **bleeding bodies, some literally reduced to shreds**<sup>33</sup>, overturned chairs and tables, documents scattered everywhere.” (Strambaci 1969, p. 1; *l'Unità* 13/12/1969<sup>34</sup>)

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<sup>31</sup> Appendix E works to provide further evidence of the discourses outlined in this thesis. It presents representative extracts from articles of *l'Unità* and *Corriere della Sera* between November 1969 and December 1975. Accordingly, it allows the reader to trace the specific ways in which these discourses were expressed by news media.

<sup>32</sup> The theory of the opposite extremes was developed by the Christian Democracy party (DC) in the late 1960s. It theorised the existence of opposing extremes, the extreme left and right, framed as a menace to democracy that only the DC, placed in the centre of the political spectrum, was able to stop or contain (Satta 2016, Chapter 4).

<sup>33</sup> In this thesis, all emphases in the extracts of newspaper articles are mine.

The attack was immediately qualified as “criminal” (Extract U.2, Appendix D). Articles identified the executioners as vague entities:

“Italy, born from the Resistance, will testify its will to move forward on the path of democracy and civil and democratic progress, **against fascist provocations and reactionary manoeuvres.**” (Anon. 1969k, p. 1; *l’Unità* 14/12/1969)

Furthermore, the event was historicised. It was associated with previous incidents, becoming a rhetorical means to frame the readership as victims:

“Who benefits from the attack? Only **the relentless enemies of the workers**, as the trade unions said; only to the rabid enemies of **freedom and democracy** [...]. **The facts of the last months** prove it. [...] a campaign and action by organised groups of the reactionary and fascist right intervened to prevent the struggles of the workers from reaching a positive outcome [...].” (Natta 1969, p. 1; *l’Unità* 14/12/1969)

The working class, depicted as united and supportive, became the primary victim of a strategy aiming at stopping the economic and political conquests of the previous months. Through rhetorical means, the enemies of the working class were framed as the enemies of democracy.

Similarly, *Corriere della Sera* focused on sympathetic descriptions of the victims of the bombing:

“[...] the hour of greatest overcrowding of account holders: the **small and middle bourgeoisie**, and **lower-class farmers** who at the weekend deliver their savings or withdraw their deposits.” (Anon. 1969h, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 13/12/1969)

*Corriere* “constructed” the victims as symbols of democratic values to stimulate an emotional reaction in the readership (Extract C.2, Appendix D). First page articles historicised the attack connecting it to previous events (“the last link in a tragic chain of terrorist acts”; Anon. 1969i, p. 1) and made the attack the result of wild and irrational

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<sup>34</sup> In this thesis, references for newspaper articles will be accompanied by the precise dates of publication, to help the reader situate the articles historically.

people (Extract C.2, Appendix D). Immediately, *Corriere* identified the perpetrators as belonging to the radical right and left, which targeted the stability of democracy.

**“The sponsors and executors of the monstrous massacre - to whatever group they belong, of whatever fanaticism they are followers - have operated conscious of their murderous intents, in the will to destroy the values of our social life, [...].”**

(Anon. 1969h, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 13/12/1969)

Thereby, the two newspapers represented the attack as an act of criminality, depicting the attackers as “crazy” savages, aiming at random chaos. In both newspapers, victims were at the centre of the narrative. The press ritual served to make the private drama of 17 dead and 88 wounded citizens a symbol of the struggle of a community.

The focus on the victims of the bombing as political symbols was also instrumental to express the call for a more resolute institutional action. This approach remained stable over time. Moving to 1974, the aftermath of the massacre in Brescia (Figure 2.1) further exposes these emotional devices. The attack hit a worker demonstration (8 deaths and 102 wounded), allowing *l'Unità* to address its primary readership in emotional terms: victims and the working class were emotional triggers for political action against fascism.



Figure 2.1: the first page of *l'Unità* two days after the massacre in Brescia (30 May 1974).

The headline covered one-third of the first page:

“A total strike and huge unitary demonstrations have expressed the condemnation of Italian people for the horrendous massacre of Brescia. POWERFUL ADMONITION - CHANGE THE ROUTE AND CRUSH THE INFAMOUS FASCIST PLOT. Millions of workers in all Italian squares – In Brescia assemblies in factories and a tribute to the victims by all people.” (Anon. 1974e, p. 1; Extract U.32, Appendix E)

It fostered a sense of togetherness of the working class, equated with the entire Italian population, which reacted with grief and indignation and honoured the victims. As usual, grassroots and institutionally driven acts of protest were rhetorically conflated into a single grand narrative to give the impression of the unity of the left (Extract U.24,

Appendix E). A second third of the first page presented the photo of a demonstration in Rome under the headline “[t]he PCI asks for a general and immediate action plan” (Anon. 1974c, p. 1). Similar to Piazza Fontana, strong action was required from Italian institutions to stop “the fascist plot”. Two articles below the photo commented on the massacre. In the first (Anon. 1974d, p. 1), the secretary of the PCI, Enrico Berlinguer, immediately connected the attack to Piazza Fontana and asked the government to find and punish the perpetrators and their sponsors. The second article (Anon. 1974e, p. 1) presented the photos of five of the eight victims of the massacre. Two paragraphs described acts of solidarity in the country. The last paragraph reported reactions in Brescia and gave some details of the investigation. Events were immediately historicised, connecting to previous episodes of a serial narrative that focused on victims. As has been outlined above, the limited availability of facts complicated the elaboration by news outlets of concrete accusations. Newspapers could only point to abstract entities as the government, fascism or deviant state apparatuses (Extract U.33, Appendix E).

The modes of representation of *Corriere della Sera* did not differ significantly, again centring on victims. However, in *Corriere della Sera*, the emotional side revolved more around piety. The approach was slightly paternalistic<sup>35</sup> and lacked the pathos of the Communist rhetoric. In the so-called *giovedì nero* (black Thursday), Agent Antonio Marino was killed in Milan during an unauthorised neo-fascist rally. Two days later, the first page was still entirely dedicated to the event (Figure 2.2). The public and the private merged inextricably, especially after the death of a law enforcement agent.

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<sup>35</sup> One of the journalists that left after Piero Ottone took the direction of *Corriere della Sera*, Indro Montanelli, described the new course of the publication as “a sort of ministry of civic education” (Bettiza 1982, pp. 133-134).

**NEL PAESE UN'ECO DOLOROSA E SDEGNATA DOPO LA TRAGICA MARCIA DELLE "SQUADRE NERE,"**

# Andreotti oggi a Milano per i funerali dell'agente ucciso negli scontri con i missini

## Il pianto della madre

Alle solenni esequie assisteranno col presidente del Consiglio, il ministro Rumer e il capo della polizia - Il presidente della Repubblica Leone ha indicato nel sacrificio di Antonio Marino lo spirito di abnegazione dei lutti dell'ordine pubblico: «A questi giovani affidiamo con fiducia la difesa della libertà contro la violenza e la sopraffazione di esigue minoranze e le velleità di un fascismo che non deve rinascere» - Undici arresti, sessantaquattro denunce: la magistratura procede per reato di stropio



CASERTA - Agnese Marino piange la morte del figlio Antonio, l'agente ucciso a Milano. La povera donna, nell'attesa della tragica notizia, ha avuto una crisi cardiaca. Attende il figlio a casa per Pasqua - In alto - Il pianto della madre, con una lettera del presidente della Repubblica

### I fascisti smascherati LA SITUAZIONE Obiettivi della spedizione

Il ministro di Stato, il presidente del Consiglio, il ministro Rumer e il capo della polizia - Il presidente della Repubblica Leone ha indicato nel sacrificio di Antonio Marino lo spirito di abnegazione dei lutti dell'ordine pubblico: «A questi giovani affidiamo con fiducia la difesa della libertà contro la violenza e la sopraffazione di esigue minoranze e le velleità di un fascismo che non deve rinascere» - Undici arresti, sessantaquattro denunce: la magistratura procede per reato di stropio

### SUL LUOGO DELLA TRAGEDIA I FIORI DELLA PIETA'



Stadi di Bari vengono disposti dai mani piatte in via Bellini, nel punto dove è stato ucciso l'agente Marino.

### COME TRARRE UN INSEGNAMENTO DAI TRAGICI INCIDENTI

## Una strategia dell'ordine contro gli eversori

Una strategia dell'ordine contro gli eversori. Il ministro di Stato, il presidente del Consiglio, il ministro Rumer e il capo della polizia - Il presidente della Repubblica Leone ha indicato nel sacrificio di Antonio Marino lo spirito di abnegazione dei lutti dell'ordine pubblico: «A questi giovani affidiamo con fiducia la difesa della libertà contro la violenza e la sopraffazione di esigue minoranze e le velleità di un fascismo che non deve rinascere» - Undici arresti, sessantaquattro denunce: la magistratura procede per reato di stropio

### Il MSI sotto accusa alla Camera Pertini colto da lieve malore

Rumer: «La responsabilità degli incidenti non è contestabile e noi fatti» - La situazione di Milano appare «intollerabile» - Le stitiche sono insorte quando il presidente ha dato la parola all'oratore missino - Durata per diversi minuti

### Nelle pagine interne

Montepulciano: La situazione è grave. Le stitiche sono insorte quando il presidente ha dato la parola all'oratore missino - Durata per diversi minuti

Figure 2.2: the front page of *Corriere della Sera* two days after the death of Agent Marino (14 April 1973).

Five articles and two photos commented on the event, focusing on stories of human interest. The main headline (“Andreotti today in Milan for the funeral of the agent killed in the clashes with MSI militants”; Anon., 1973e, p. 1; Extract C.27, Appendix E) summarised various points of Elliot’s (1981) political ritual: state institutions sympathised with the victims; the *Presidente della Repubblica* (head of the state) condemned the “violence of small minorities” (Anon. 1973f, p. 1); law and order activities were reported (Anon. 1973e, p. 1). One article described the aims of the neo-fascist demonstration and provided a brief history of the organisers (Zicari 1973c, p. 1). The rest of the first page developed the press ritual further. The human-interest aspect

was mobilised through the photo of Marino's mother with the headline: "The cry of the mother" (Telefoto Pressphoto, p. 1). Another photo showed a woman laying flowers on the crime scene with the title: "On the place of tragedy the flowers of piety" (Anon. 1973h, p. 1). Sympathy from state institutions was replicated reporting the collapse of Sandro Pertini (head of the lower Chamber of the Italian Parliament) during the debate in Parliament about the event (Melani 1973, p. 1). Finally, two articles commented on "the political and law enforcement issues raised by the incident to be pursued and debated by parliamentary politicians" (Elliot 1981, p. 149): one discussed the "unmasking of fascists" comparing the Italian situation to the period that preceded the Bolshevik revolution (Piazzesi 1973, p. 1); the other focused on the strategy to stop fascists (Pieroni 1973b, p. 1), comparing Almirante<sup>36</sup> to Mussolini.

Another link to Elliot's (1981) press performance as political ritual is the denial of rationality to the perpetrators of acts of terror. The newspapers denied any political motivation, equalising political and criminal violence. Concerning qualitative analysis, in Appendix D there are different examples of this mode of representation concerning subsequent acts of political violence. The parts of the extracts highlighted in bold show this equation, describing "men who declare to be carriers of ideology but in facts prove to be only criminals" (Pieroni 1973a, p. 1; Extract C.7, Appendix C). From a quantitative perspective, the lemma<sup>37</sup> *teppista* (hooligan or thug) occurs 76 times in the corpus of *l'Unità* (see Appendix A, Table A.A.1 for the complete list of concordances) and it is always associated with neo-fascist militants. The same search in the corpus of *Corriere della Sera* presents fewer occurrences (14), which appear in relation to both right- and left-wing militants, and criminals alike (see Appendix A, Table A.A.2 for the complete list of concordances). The adjectives that recurred more often in the corpus of *l'Unità* concerning acts of political violence (expressed through the noun *attentato*/attack, 198 occurrences) were *criminale* (criminal, 21 occurrences), *dinamitardo* (dynamite attack, 17) and *fascista* (14). In *Corriere della Sera*, the noun

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<sup>36</sup> Giorgio Almirante was the secretary of the neo-fascist party *Movimento Sociale Italiano* (MSI), present in Parliament since 1948.

<sup>37</sup> "Lemma is the basic form of a word, typically the form found in dictionaries. Searching for lemma will also include all forms of a word in the result, e.g. searching for the lemma *go* will find *go, goes, went, going, gone*" (Sketch Engine).

*attentato* occurred 217 times, accompanied more often by descriptive<sup>38</sup> terms as *dinamitardo* (dynamite attack, 33), *terroristico* (terroristic, 8), *tragico* (tragic, 6). However, when judgments were produced, *attentato* was followed by the adjective *criminale* (3), *orrendo* (horrendous, 2), and *vile* (coward, 2).

*L'Unità* framed both neo-fascists and the groups at its left (described as provocateurs) as criminals (Extract U.30, Appendix E). *Corriere della Sera*, working in the same direction, equated the two extremes of the political spectrum. The fusion between the political and the criminal domain was instrumental to belittle the political demands of extra-parliamentary groups, left and right, and increase the perception of their danger to society. This effort continued throughout the period under analysis. The more organised groups, such as *Brigate Rosse* (left) NAP (*Nuclei Armati Proletari*, left), MAR (*Movimento di Azione Rivoluzionaria*, right) or SAM (*Squadre di Azione Mussolini*, right), emerged in the political arena, the more newspapers reinforced the link between criminality and terrorist groups. Kidnappings in particular became occasions to stress this link (Extracts C.33 and U.35, Appendix E).

As Elliot (1981) stated, “[d]iscussion of terror as a rational strategy adopted by a political movement to achieve political ends is rare. It is not considered in those terms but taken to be irrational because it is immoral. [...] secular and religious sanctions still overlap in the contemporary responses to criminality” (p. 162). The struggle of the state against violence was represented as a sacred war, and sacred wars need the definition of a powerful enemy with destructive force and a metaphysical dimension (Elliot, 1981). Blood and violence defined the enemies. Their destructive power was addressed by

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<sup>38</sup> I am aware that the noun “terroristic”, like “terrorism”, is not descriptive. As O’Leary writes, “The description ‘terrorist’ always implies a negative judgement of the means, and by extension the ends, of the individuals or groups so described, and so the word inevitably carries a rhetorical ballast of moral outrage” (2011, p. 2). However, I labelled the term as “descriptive” to stress the fact that both newspapers, despite their different political orientation, used the term uncritically. In *Corriere della Sera* and *l’Unità*, it was a label that was used to describe almost every act of politically motivated violence. In a context in which political violence could count on the support of large strata of the Italian population, an adjective like “criminal” in relation to political violence was considered to be more effective in order to alienate the readership from the perpetrators.

appealing to elements of monstrosity and irrationality. In the context of the press ritual, terrorism becomes “another criminal-sin partly because it involves homicide and theft, crimes which are sacrilegious under capitalism because they threaten the basic assumptions of social order” (Elliot 1981, p. 163). In this framework, the challenge of terrorism to the social cohesion becomes a challenge “to civilisation” (Extract C.2, Appendix D). The *Presidente della Repubblica*, Giuseppe Saragat, in the aftermath of the bombing of Piazza Fontana used words that clearly distanced terrorists from the national community (Extract C.19, Appendix E). “Monstrous enormity”, “bestial irresponsibility”, and “to safeguard the life and freedom of citizens” (Anon. 1969i, p. 1) instantly polarised the struggle between an irrational evil and a rational good. Similarly, Anarchist Valpreda, suspected for the act, was described in *Corriere d’Informazione* and *Il Messaggero* as a “human beast”, in *La Nazione* as an “inhuman beast” and in *Il Tempo* as a “bloody fool” (Crainz 2003, p. 366). The attackers were unintelligible monsters. They threatened Italy not only practically (the life of citizens) but also on an abstract level (their freedom). The accusation was against “those extremist and irrational groups – followers of violence for the sake of violence, theorists of oppression for the joy of oppressing” (Anon. 1969h, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 13/12/1969). The grievances expressed by these groups, against which there was not any concrete evidence, were denied by appealing to an irrationality that contrasted with the rationality of the defenders of democracy<sup>39</sup>.

The narratives employed by the two newspapers to frame radicals did not differ significantly, even if they pursued different political goals. They both pointed at compacting the respective political constituencies around democratic values and alienating the readership from “those not following the example of the leaders” (Elliot 1981, p. 150). Both newspapers, in fact, equated the extreme left and the extreme right. *Corriere della Sera* followed the scheme of the *opposti estremismi*, which at the time of the bombing of Piazza Fontana aimed at alienating the readership also from the Communist Party. The same representational strategy by *l’Unità* aimed at “reabsorbing” that part of the leftist constituency that had been attracted by the radical claims of extra-parliamentary groups. In the pages of the Communist newspaper, the focus was on the

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<sup>39</sup> *Corriere della sera* talked about the “logic without logic” of terrorism (Sensini 1969, p. 1; 15/12/1969).

concept of provocation<sup>40</sup>. The word *provocazione* (provocation) stood in the half-title of the headline reporting Piazza Fontana (Strambaci 1969, p. 1). The paper soon denounced the infiltration of fascists in the Anarchist group *22 Marzo*, suspected of the bombing, with the sponsorship of the Greek dictatorship (Anon. 1969n; Extract U.21, Appendix E). Nonetheless, these provocateurs seldom had names. The noun *provocatori* was employed to evoke an unfair struggle between the working class and an abstract enemy, “fascism”. Fascism, more than fascists, was the threat to democracy identified by *l’Unità*<sup>41</sup>. In such a way, the menace could be identified beyond nostalgic people parading with the trinkets of Mussolini’s regime. It could also involve nebulous entities like deviant apparatuses of the state, plotting against democracy and the working class. Additionally, this framing of political extremists was central to the representation of news media in films *di consumo impegnato*. As such, this mode of representing radicals will be relevant to address audiences’ “prior knowledge” assumed by *poliziotteschi* filmmakers to avoid complex socio-political analyses.

### Sharing representational strategies: the *poliziottesco* and the press ritual

All six points of Elliot’s (1981) press performance as political ritual were identified in the report of Agent Marino’s death. This ritual was typical of many reports of terrorism

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<sup>40</sup> By provocation, *l’Unità* meant both actions intended to provoke a violent reaction from the political opponent and the infiltration of neo-fascist militants into leftist groups to foment violent reactions (Anon. 1972h, p. 1; *l’Unità* 12/03/1972; Extract U.29, Appendix E; Anon. 1972i, p. 1; Extract U.30, Appendix E). Both meanings contributed to elide the agency of protesters. As we will see in Chapter 4, in 1975, these two meanings associated with the noun *provocazione* started to be used also by *Corriere della Sera* to describe the violence of the extra-parliamentary left. This approach signalled the coalescing of the two newspapers in the condemnation of neo-fascist violence.

<sup>41</sup> In the Communist newspaper the adjective *fascista* (fascist) was used more to denote abstract entities and emanations of fascism than it was to denote individuals. The adjective occurred in the corpus (November 1969-February 1972) 445 times and is associated more often with the nouns *provocazione/provocatore* (provocation/provocateur, 27 occurrences), *teppismo/teppa/teppaglia* (hooliganism/hooligans, 23), *violenza* (violence, 21), *organizzazione* (organisation, 21), *attentato* (attack, 14). See the list of nouns modified by the adjective *fascista* in Appendix A, Table A.A.4.

and criminal violence in Italy, dispersed throughout the period under analysis. Firstly, “reports of messages of sympathy and acts of solidarity by civic, political and religious leaders”, and “statements of condemnation by such leaders” (p. 149) were expressed by messages of the *Presidente della Repubblica* in the aftermath of terrorist acts (Extract C.31, Appendix E), and by pleas to unity and solidarity expressed by Communist leaders (Extract U.31, Appendix E). Secondly, the “[r]eference of [*sic*] political and law enforcement issues raised by the incident to be pursued and debated by parliamentary politicians” (Elliot 1981, p. 149) was expressed by the parliamentary debate to approve the new law on public order (Legge Reale, approved on May 22, 1975). Thirdly, “reports of subsequent law and order activity, in particular the police hunt for those responsible” recurred with any act of political violence. In the Italian press, the contribution of the judiciary was always prominent (Extracts C.33, U.36, Appendix E). Additionally, “[c]ondemnatory reports of those not following the example of the leaders” (Elliot 1981, p. 150) took the form of reciprocal accusations between the two papers. *L’Unità* blamed so-called “bourgeois newspapers” of underestimating fascism to pursue a blind anti-Communist campaign (Extract C.22, Appendix E); *Corriere della Sera* accused *l’Unità* and the PCI of being lenient toward leftist violence (Extract C.20, Appendix E). Finally, the examples provided above (Figures 2.1 and 2.2) exemplify the human-interest approach of the Italian press.

These features repeated over and over, especially concerning police fatalities, massacres, and attempted coups. As will be argued in Chapter 3, the *poliziottesco* devoted particular attention to attempted coups and to massacres because they were especially susceptible to a symbolic translation. These events were easily recognisable because they were already inscribed in standardised (ritualised) media narratives. The enemies (the conspirators) had been already objectified as evil, faceless forces. When newspapers pointed at an actual person, “mysterious” errors at an institutional level fuelled a conspiracy theory. The agency behind these errors was always hidden in favour of vague accusations against civic institutions (Extract U.27, Appendix E). In turn, these institutional misconducts resulted in media discourses that the *poliziottesco* exploited to construct appealing conspiracy plots.

The *poliziottesco* was a direct result of this climate and engaged with narrative strategies similar to news media as a way to address different political constituencies. The replication of the press ritual can be traced in the serial repetition of specific formal

and narrative elements. Firstly, as has been explored in Chapter 1, such movies as *Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia* replicate messages of condolence from state institutions, even if with the aim of critiquing the hypocrisy of these rituals. Other times, these messages are delivered by television in the movies (*La polizia ha le mani legate*). Secondly, “statement of condemnation by [...] policemen and others responsible for enforcing the law” (Elliot 1981, p. 149) is a common trope of the *poliziottesco*. These statements are usually expressed in press-conferences (*La polizia sta a guardare*, Infascelli 1973), when the *commissario* interrogates a suspect<sup>42</sup> (*La polizia ringrazia*, *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide*), or during a confrontation with the *procuratore* (*Roma violenta*, *La polizia ha le mani legate*). Concerning the third point of the ritual, in many different *poliziotteschi* (*La polizia ringrazia*; *La polizia sta a guardare*; *La polizia interviene: ordine di uccidere*, Rosati 1975), showing ruthless criminals and the effects of their actions leads to the critique of the new measures approved by politicians to fight violence in the country<sup>43</sup>. Alternatively, dialogues lament the economic treatment of policemen. Hence, police operations in the aftermath of terrorist or criminal acts are a primary content of all *poliziotteschi*, relating to the fourth point of the press ritual. Similar to newspapers, where the activities of judges, authorising arrests or emitting a warrant, were regularly reported (an example of this practice can be found in Appendix E, Extract C.29), the judiciary is a constant presence in the films. Additionally, the movies replicate the typical manhunt (Extract C.21, Appendix E) with the aid of police dogs (*La polizia sta a guardare*; *La polizia chiede aiuto*, Dallamano 1974) and helicopters (*Squadra volante*, *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide*, *Italia a mano armata*, Girolami 1976; *Un poliziotto scomodo*, Massi 1978).

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<sup>42</sup> *Commissario* Bertone: “No, he doesn’t shoot policemen; he shoots old ladies, defenceless fathers; he throws girls under cars. Listen to me, bastard: I can still understand a criminal that kills a policeman, it’s his job, but a bastard like you who slaughters innocent people is not even worthy to be part of mankind!” (*La polizia ringrazia*, Vanzina 1972).

<sup>43</sup> *Ex-questore* Iovine: “You know better than me the new laws that have been approved to protect citizens especially with regard to the arrest, not to mention the police custody. Ninety-nine percent of criminals are better protected than metalworkers. Good people, on the other hand, are not protected from criminals” (*La polizia sta a guardare*).

Briefings in the police headquarters discussing measures to fight violence are also typical in the films and are often used to provide statistics about the rate of criminality (*La polizia ringrazia*, *La polizia è sconfitta*, Paoletta 1977). In these briefings, photos and video footage of protesters and criminals are shown, contributing to nuancing the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction. In *La polizia chiede aiuto*, for instance, *Sostituto Procuratore Stori* (Giovanna Ralli) watches a video of a protest to trace the last movements of a victim. The footage alternates between fictionalised and archive footage of the so-called *Battaglia di Valle Giulia*<sup>44</sup> (Figures 2.3 and 2.4).



Figure 2.3: archive footage of the *Battaglia di Valle Giulia* (Archivio Audiovisivo del Movimento Operaio e Democratico).



Figure 2.4: archive footage edited as part of a fictional protest in *La polizia chiede aiuto*.

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<sup>44</sup> The so-called *Battaglia di Valle Giulia* (March 1968) was one of the first violent confrontations between students and the police in the faculty of Architecture of the Roman university *La Sapienza* (Crainz 2003, p. 261-262).

On other occasions, the photos used in the police briefings are taken directly from recent episodes of criminal and political violence (Figures 2.5 and 2.6). It was not uncommon that pictures related to actual acts of terrorism were used by the filmmakers of the *poliziottesco* to comment on fictionalised criminality. Additionally, television (*La polizia incrimina: la legge assolve; Mark il poliziotto spara per primo; La polizia ha le mani legate; La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide; Paura in città*, Rosati 1976) and radio (*No, il caso è felicemente risolto*, Salerno 1973; *Ordine firmato in bianco*, Manera 1974; *La polizia ha le mani legate*) in the movies often summarise or directly showed police operations.



Figure 2.5: a photo showed by *Commissario Grifi* (Marcel Bozzuffi) in *La polizia è sconfitta*.



Figure 2.6: policemen on the crime scene of the murder of *Commissario Luigi Calabresi* (D'Avanzo, 2002).

Finally, concerning the sixth point of the press ritual, the human-interest side of violent acts that “showed them to be horrid and senseless” (Elliot 1981, p. 150) is achieved in the films by focusing on the suffering of innocent people, usually children (*Milano odia: la polizia non può sparare; Roma violenta; Poliziotti violenti*) or women (*La polizia ringrazia; Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia*). Dialogues often intervene to stress the ruthlessness of the criminals, framing their psychopathic tendencies with delusional speeches:

Bandit 1: “You didn’t have to! You shot her in the stomach! You saw that she was pregnant!”

Bandit 2: “You know we don’t want only the money; we also have to scare people; we have to convince them that things need to change!”

This speech from *Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia* qualifies not only the individual act of violence but also contributes to render horrid and senseless the plot of terror organised by the conspirators in the movies.

Hence, elements of Elliot’s (1981) political ritual are clearly present in the *poliziottesco*. At times, all of them manifest in a single film, at times they are dispersed in different movies. In Chapter 3, it will be explained how features of the press ritual present in *La polizia ringrazia* position the judiciary as a source of blame for police inefficiency against crime. This positioning aims at reversing the source of blame in the final scenes that sanction the request of the police to have more power. In Chapter 5, it will be explored how the press ritual in *La polizia sta a guardare* helps to position the police as a source of blame in the framework of kidnappings. Similar to *La polizia ringrazia*, this positioning is reversed in the finale in favour of police methods and against the judiciary.

Structural features of news media impacted the formal characteristics of the *filone* as forms of intermedial references. As such, they influenced the relationship between the movies and the perception of the social reality constructed by news media. These forms, however, did not originate in the *poliziottesco*, nor in the Hollywood milieu that provided much inspiration to the *filone*. The use of representational patterns of newspapers and the combination of different media (archive footage, newspaper front pages, and television) in the cinematic image had significant precedents in cinema *di consumo impegnato*. The *poliziottesco* re-worked a mode of representation that was

used in Italian cinema to comment on media “constructing” and manipulating the perception of reality. The *filone* exploited only the potential of this mode of representation linking its form to an already established cinematic trend. Removing the social critique, the *filone* was able to keep the focus of the movies only on the emotional tension that originated from the replication of news media emotional triggers.

### The public and the private in cinema *di consumo impegnato*: *Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina* and *Banditi a Milano*

This thesis argues that the narrative that framed socio-political conflicts of the 1970s has been thematically and visually affected by a limited range of actors and symbols, channelled by media. Visually, cinema participated in this process, reinforced by the economic success of specific trends of films. Accordingly, *filone* cinema contributed to the visual repertoire available to represent the decade by 21<sup>st</sup> century Italian cultural productions. The primary object of analysis is the *poliziottesco*, with a specific focus on the conspiracy subset. However, other films are analysed to identify shared patterns of representation between contemporaneous cultural forms. Selected movies of the so-called cinema *di consumo impegnato* are examined to explore the dialogue between entertainment and politically committed films.

As has been established here and in the previous chapter, the *poliziottesco* organised its emotional triggers around modes of representation of news media. *Poliziotteschi* were “required to work with images and ideological themes that [were] most familiar and endorsed by the widest range of potential viewers” (Elliot et al. 1983, p. 163). In political terms, this was the most significant difference from films *di consumo impegnato*. Directors like Bellocchio, Damiani, Rosi, and Petri used to provoke audiences, taking precise political perspectives that denounced misbehaviours of the citizenship concerning their relationship with power. The *poliziottesco* offered little to their audiences to reflect about, resting on the exploitation of fear and anger to stimulate an emotional response. These feelings were mobilised by merging the private and the public dimension of violence. The threat to society represented by conspiracies had to result as a direct threat to the personal interests of the citizen, being her life, the life of her children, or her property. This approach was the point of departure of the critique of news media in cinema *di consumo impegnato*.

Bizanti: “The Martini case is a symptom. It’s illustrative of the situation. Did you think why the newspaper receives so many letters? Because this murder is the symbol of the collapse of the country for the simple person. And people are scared”.

Roveda: “But this reality must be explained objectively. Instead, you distort it, not caring to damage others; and you make a symbol off a simple case, as you say...”.

Bizanti: “Okay, I, the newspaper, we provoke. We don’t narrate reality objectively. But what is objectivity, Roveda? Do you know who Mario Boni is? He is a dweller who rejects the rules of social coexistence. He takes drugs and assaults the newspaper. He assaults workers who don’t want to strike. He seizes the management. He overthrows cars and sets fire to them. He also hates you, Roveda, with your good feelings and your well-known ideals. You see the journalist as an impartial observer. Well, I feel pity for these impartial observers. We must be protagonists, not observers. We are at war. We also do class struggle, Marx and Lenin did not invent it”.

This dialogue from *Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina* opposes the Chief Editor Bizanti (Gian Maria Volonté) and the newly hired journalist Roveda (Fabio Garriba). It illustrates the tension between two different conceptions of journalism: partisanship and objectivity. Roveda fights for the citizens’ right to be informed objectively. Bizanti, following the orders of the owner of the newspaper *Il Giornale*<sup>45</sup>, advocates for the need to actively orient the public opinion. Their confrontation seems to condemn the partisanship of the conservative paper in favour of the claims of the left. However, as the narrative unfolds, the distinction between “good” and “bad” partisanship becomes blurred<sup>46</sup>. The police, with evidence provided by *Il Giornale*, accuse a member of *Lotta*

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<sup>45</sup> The owner is called Montelli (John Steiner). He is a reactionary entrepreneur accused by leftist media of funding neo-fascist terrorism. The parallel is with the oil magnate Attilio Monti, owner of right-wing newspapers such as *la Nazione* and *Il Resto del Carlino*. Monti was accused in the months that predated the release of the movie (October 19, 1972) of sponsoring neo-fascist groups in the framework of the *strategia della tensione* (Anon. 1972k, p. 1; *l’Unità* 25/03/1972).

<sup>46</sup> Leftist militants and Bizanti act similarly, sacrificing the truth and their ideals for their private interests. Boni did not commit the crime, but a fake alibi is created and diffused through his group’s media. Nobody seems to care for the truth if not Roveda.

*Continua*, Mario Boni, of the rape and killing of a girl, Maria Grazia Martini. *Il Giornale* aims to orient the electoral campaign against the left, whose struggle is associated with the criminal deviance of Boni (see the plot in Appendix C).

The movie exemplifies the crossfire that invested Italian news media in the first half of the 1970s, accused of unfair partisanship (Extracts U.20, U.23, C.20, C.22, Appendix E). The initial sequence replicates the assault on the newsroom of *Corriere della Sera* on March 1972. The overlapping of fiction and documentary through the merging of archive and fictionalised footage provides an “explanation” for the attack. *L’Unità* and *Corriere* had described the events leading up to the assault at the Milanese newspaper (Extract U.29 and C.24, Appendix E). The movie replicated the description: on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March there were two rallies in Milan, one of the so-called *maggioranza silenziosa* (silent majority) (Figure 2.7), an anti-Communist movement sponsored by right-wing formations, and one of the extra-parliamentary left (Figure 2.9). From the *maggioranza silenziosa*, neo-fascist militants attacked two journalists (Figure 2.8). Militants of the extra-parliamentary left started to clash with the police, who responded with violent charges (Figure 2.10).



Figure 2.7: archive footage of the demonstration of the *maggioranza silenziosa* used in the movie *Sbatti il Mostri un Prima Pagina*.



Figure 2.8: archive footage of the assault on journalists at the demonstration used in *Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina*.



Figure 2.9: the ranks of the extra-parliamentary left face the police, who are throwing tear-gas canisters. Archive footage in *Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina*.



Figure 2.10: archive footage showing police charges in *Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina*.

At this point, the movie inserts footage in the editing that merges the clashes with other events of that period. It shows electoral banners in a Milanese road (Figure 2.11) and the funeral of the Communist publisher Giangiacomo Feltrinelli (Figure 2.12). Finally, the movie deploys the assault on the fictional newspaper *Il Giornale*. Even the fictional attack (Figure 2.13) replicates the account provided by *Corriere della Sera*, which reported the assault by “left-wing extra-parliamentary ‘*gruppuscoli*’ [little groups]” (Anon. 1972g, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 12/03/1972). Similar to the initial sequence of the film, *Corriere* described the groups attacking “the headquarters of the newspaper at the hour of the most intense work: an assembly of all the editors was in progress”. Finally, as can be observed in Figure 2.13, the film provides details of the “attack with the use of Molotov cocktails and explosive sticks” (Anon. 1972g, p. 1; Extract C.23, Appendix E).



Figure 2.11: banners of the electoral campaign of 1972 in *Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina*. The general elections were held on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of May 1972.



Figure 2.12: the funeral of Giangiacomo Feltrinelli. Feltrinelli died on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 1972, two days after the events described in the first scene of *Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina*.



Figure 2.13: a Molotov cocktail thrown by leftist demonstrators into the newsroom of the fictional newspaper *Il Giornale* in *Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina*.

Different and unrelated events of the recent past were conflated into a consistent flow that constructed “a historical narrative” (White 1999, p. 45), suggesting a specific reading of the same circumstances. At the funeral of Feltrinelli, the crowd shouts “Comrade Feltrinelli, you’ll be avenged”. Feltrinelli had died mysteriously two days after the events portrayed in the opening scene of the movie. Many commentators, even in *Corriere della Sera*, did not dismiss the hypothesis of a death staged by the police to get rid of a man considered to have sponsored extra-parliamentary leftist groups (Montanelli 1972a, p. 1; Extract C.26, Appendix E). Nonetheless, the death of Feltrinelli renovated the anti-Communist campaign of conservative newspapers, which theorised connections between Feltrinelli, leftist movements, and the recently formed *Brigate Rosse* (Zicari 1972a, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 24/03/1972).

Thereby, the actual assault was “explained” in *Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina* as the reaction of sections of the left to the manipulations of *giornali padronali o borghesi* (bourgeois or bosses’ newspapers). These media and public broadcasting were accused of being “subservient to the government” (Lumley 1996, p. 209) and sponsoring an “anti-worker campaign” (Anon. 1969e, p. 1; Extract U.20, Appendix E). Moreover, at the same time as the events portrayed in the opening sequence, Italian newspapers discovered the investigation against neo-fascists for the massacre of Piazza Fontana. In this context, conservative newspapers were accused of having demonised Anarchists and leftist movements for political reasons (Extract U.23, Appendix E). The sequence “constructs” the event by overlapping different episodes of the recent past. This operation contributes to providing meaning to actual and fictionalised events. Hence,

the assault on the fictional newspaper is justified by a “legitimate” rage of leftist militants, and the sequence suggests an emotional reading to the entire movie that connected with discourses on Italian media.

The film does not hide its political approach and uses archive footage and newspapers within the movie to expose the fallacy of such concepts as immediacy and liveness. Still frames of articles from *Il Giornale* reveal the false immediacy of the medium. They signal the discrepancy between what the spectator knows and what is written in the headlines of the newspaper. Up to the end of the movie, the spectator does not know who killed the girl but knows of the effort of Bizanti to manipulate facts, making the case a symbol of the crumbling of traditional values in Italy.

The adherence to actual events is reinforced by small details. The first still-frame of a newspaper in the movie (Figure 2.14) describes the event of the opening sequence and registers the death of a passer-by, killed by the leftist demonstrators. Actually, a passer-by, Giuseppe Tavecchio, died days after the actual assault as a result of the clashes between leftists and the police. Contrarily to what was reported in *Il Giornale*, however, Tavecchio died after being hit by a tear-gas canister launched by the police<sup>47</sup>. Moreover, the fictional first page shows the “disappearing” of the demonstration of the *maggioranza silenziosa* from the frame, focusing only on the “red guerrilla”. Moreover, besides suggesting an emotional reading of the images of guerrilla war, the opening sequence provides the “evidence” to Bizanti’s paternalistic approach to the readership of the newspaper. The scene gives form to the fears of the reader outlined by Bizanti in the dialogue at the beginning of this chapter.

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<sup>47</sup> On the front page, *Corriere della Sera* did not accuse protesters directly, but omitted to mention that Tavecchio had died after being hit by a tear-gas canister (Passanisi 1972, p. 1), as *l’Unità* had reported (Anon. 1972h, p. 1; *l’Unità* 12/03/1972; Extract U.29, Appendix E). *Corriere della Sera* continued to omit this detail from the first page in the following days (Anon. 1972j, p. 1; 15/03/1972; Extract C.25, Appendix E).



Figure 2.14: the front page of *Il Giornale* describing the incidents of the previous day in *Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina*. The headline states: “Red guerrilla war on the eve of the general elections. Dramatic clashes yesterday in Milan between groups of provocateurs and the police. [...] A passer-by killed by protesters in Piazza della Scala”.

The same fears are projected by Bizanti onto the tragic death of the young Maria Grazia Martini, transformed into the daughter of all Italian parents. In this instance, the movie refers to an actual kidnapping and murder in 1971: the Milena Sutter case. Milena Sutter disappeared after leaving school in Genoa and was found dead after fourteen days. Even before the start of the trial, news media had “condemned” Lorenzo Bozano, a 25-year-old man, who had been seen driving near Milena’s school<sup>48</sup>. This media lynching can be connected to the “construction” of Mario Boni as the “monster” in Bellocchio’s movie<sup>49</sup>. This association is supported by another still-frame of *Il Giornale*: the news on the autopsy of Maria Grazia Martini is placed beside a photo showing a man with a board asking for the death penalty for the murder. The photo comes from a protest outside the prison in Genoa related to the Milena Sutter case. In the movie, “Maria Grazia” substitutes “Milena” on the board (Figures 2.15 and 2.16).

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<sup>48</sup> Bozano was acquitted in 1973 due to lack of evidence. The appeal trial condemned him to a life sentence in 1975 (Curti 2016, p. 216).

<sup>49</sup> In Italian, *Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina* means “slap the monster on page one”, which is the English title of the film.



Figure 2.15: an article from *Il Giornale* in *Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina*. On the right, there is the photo of a man showing a banner with the inscription “Death to the murderer of Maria Grazia”.



Figure 2.16: the photo of the protester showing the banner with the inscription “Death to the murderer of Milena” in *Corriere della Sera* (Migliorino 1971b, p. 1).

Hence, *Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina* manipulates media, merging crime and political news to denounce the same manipulation performed by *Il Giornale*. The sequences focusing on the construction of news in the newsroom of *Il Giornale* expose the fact that, even if there is a manipulation, media representations reach the status of facts. A girl with sexual relationships with other boys in the school and outside becomes the symbol of rectitude (“She was a saint! She was a saint!”, yells the *commissario* interrogating Mario Boni) to “make mothers cry” and add an emotional value to the

news. Bellocchio's movie played consciously with different levels of representation to expose the class struggle conducted through media. What happened recently is re-proposed as a fictional "live" action. The particular representations originating from the manipulation of news is superimposed on the perception of 1970s social reality. Finally, the cinematic fiction becomes a "filter" to interpret the recent past. The critique of press news manipulation and the use of archive footage pointed at deconstructing the mediation. The cinematic gaze was constructed to point to the "now", addressing the concept of "liveness" (White, 1999). Archive footage, alternating with newspaper articles, reminded the spectator of the links to the present<sup>50</sup>. The format employed modes of expression of audio-visual news media, bringing audiences into the midst of the protest.

Carlo Lizzani's *Banditi a Milano* (1968) is another example of the cinematic experimentation with "liveness" through televisual language, and of the relationship between *filone* cinema and more politically engaged films. The fragmented narrative, in this case, is unified by the use of televisual language and forms, which constructs a mediated event around an actual bank robbery (Milan, September 1967). The movie is a collage of film, video, and "live" reporting that recalls a *telegiornale* reportage (see Appendix F for an example of a *telegiornale* reportage). The opening sequence starts with the attempted lynching of one of the bandits. It continues with an interview with *Commissario* Basevi (Tomas Milian) in a helicopter and an interview with an "expert", Gino lo Zoppo, an actual exponent of the *vecchia mala* (old mob). Then, it shows an episode of a protection racket, whose violence is censored in favour of frames from Batman comic books (Figure 2.17), followed by an interview of the victim unwilling to denounce the crime. This narrative scheme is repeated exploring other criminal activities like illegal gambling, prostitution, and the *scippo* (robbing the purse of a woman by running or from a motorbike). This fragmented narration replicates the style of television news and gives formal consistency to the representation of the actual bank robbery at the centre of the plot (see the plot in Appendix C).

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<sup>50</sup> The movie was released on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 1972 and referenced events occurred less than one year before: the general elections were held five months before (7<sup>th</sup> of May 1972); the assault on the newsroom of *Corriere della Sera* and the death of Feltrinelli happened seven months before, on March 1972.



Figure 2.17: A comic-book strip substitutes visually the violence performed on screen in *Banditi a Milano*.

Original articles of the time (Figures 2.18-21) are included to situate the movie historically and problematise further the recognition of the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction. A journalistic voice-over is dramatically superimposed over the sequence showing the victims of the robbery coming out from their houses for the last time. The haunt of the bandits is alternated with still-frames and newspaper photos depicting the constrained faces of the victims' relatives (Figure 2.20), the funerals, and the desperate mother of the younger bandit. All these elements also comment on the predominant focus of Italian news: histories of human interest.





Figures 2.18 and 2.19: headline from *Corriere della Sera* (Giuliani 1967, p. 1) in *Banditi a Milano*. The headline states: “Fire and blood after the attack at a bank yesterday afternoon. Battle between the bandits and the police in Milan. 2 dead and 22 wounded citizens and agents”.



Figures 2.20 and 2.21: headline from *Corriere della Sera* (Anon. 1967, p. 8) in *Banditi a Milano*. The headline states: “600 carabinieri with three helicopters are searching for the fugitives in Brianza”.

The example in Appendix F further supports this point: the *telegiornale* reportage of the arson of Primavalle mobilised pity for the young victims, the sons of Mario Mattei, a neo-fascist official. Together with the labelling of the act as criminal and originating from inhuman fanatics, the focus on the victims obscured the political motivation behind the attack. The personal tragedy of Mario Mattei made him a father more than a militant engaged in political activities for his neighbourhood. His fatherhood and family values were the emotional triggers to move audiences and direct their anger against “political intolerance” (Vespa, 1973). The public and the private merged inextricably in Italian news, and this feature was reflected in the movies employing the modes of expression of news media.

*Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina* illustrated the convergence of economic, political and personal interests behind the construction of news. The film offers a critique of the use of private tragedies by news media to manipulate the public debate about socio-political issues. The killing of a girl is made into a political symbol through the accusation of a radical. However, the murder is nothing more than the result of the perversion of an individual – the janitor of the girl’s school. In *Banditi a Milano*, the protagonist uses politics to embellish the violent crimes committed to elevate his status. The central conflict of the movie is a clash between ideals and personal choices. The leader of the gang, Pietro Cavallero (Gian Maria Volonté), stresses the contrast between a self-proclaimed revolutionary and a childish bandit. The dismissal of the political meaning of Cavallero’s action is communicated by showing the tragic impact of his actions on the lives of innocent people. Cavallero talks about politics but remains a simple criminal driven by private interests.

As has been argued earlier in this chapter, the *poliziottesco* did not differentiate between the private and the public. What starts as a public service – the investigation - gradually becomes a personal matter by the suffering inflicted by the criminals on innocent people. It is a private matter that leads the *commissario* outside the perimeters of the law. Nonetheless, he suffers directly from this choice. His turning of a public affair into a personal matter often leads to the assassination of his beloved (*La polizia incrimina: la legge assolve; La polizia interviene: ordine di uccidere; Poliziotti violenti; Quelli della calibro 38*, Dallamano 1976).

Similar to *Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina* and *Banditi a Milano*, newspapers were used in the *filone* to expose the manipulation of news or to offer an emotional reading of the

fiction. The shared aim between the *poliziottesco* and these examples of cinema *di consumo impegnato* was to erase the contrast between the fiction and contemporaneous socio-political conditions. The latter cinematic trend had already established a mode of representation of the present that reflected on the impact of media on the perception of the socio-political context.

Bellocchio's *Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina* stressed the power of emotions for the manipulation of the public opinion. Lizzani's *Banditi a Milano* commented on the power of media to "construct" an event, made sensationalistic by a mode of narration based on the glamorisation of personal matters like grief. As exposed by the analysis of the rhetoric of newspapers at the beginning of this chapter, the fictional editor Bizanti "constructed" a newspaper as an actual editor of *Corriere della Sera* and *l'Unità* would have done. The obsession with the victims and the strategies adopted by news media to frame them as such echoed in Bellocchio's and Lizzani's movies through the obsession with the private dimension of violence. In these movies, television and newspapers were the places in which fiction merged with the perceived material conditions of Italian society.

Bellocchio "invented" a newspaper and replicated the rhetorical style of actual newspapers. Lizzani used real newspapers in alternation with fictional televisual images. The *poliziottesco* employed these devices as a form of "intermedial reference" (Rajewsky 2005, p. 52). Manipulating the front page, *poliziotteschi* exploited the structure of the newspaper to attach the narrative to the present. Headlines commenting on fictional events were associated with articles referring to actual public figures in the frame of a real newspaper (Figure 2.22). The newspaper as a device, alternating between entirely fake, modified and real papers became part of the modes of visual language of the *filone*. The *poliziottesco* can be considered to remediate the relationship between cinema *di consumo impegnato* and the socio-political context, evoked through the use of real newspapers. In a context in which movies used real newspapers to dramatise actual events, the repetition of these intermedial practices blurred the boundaries between the use of actual and fictionalised press in the *poliziottesco*. In turn, this use of newspapers as devices, representing events directly, reinforced the relationship between the *poliziottesco* and the 1970s socio-political conditions.

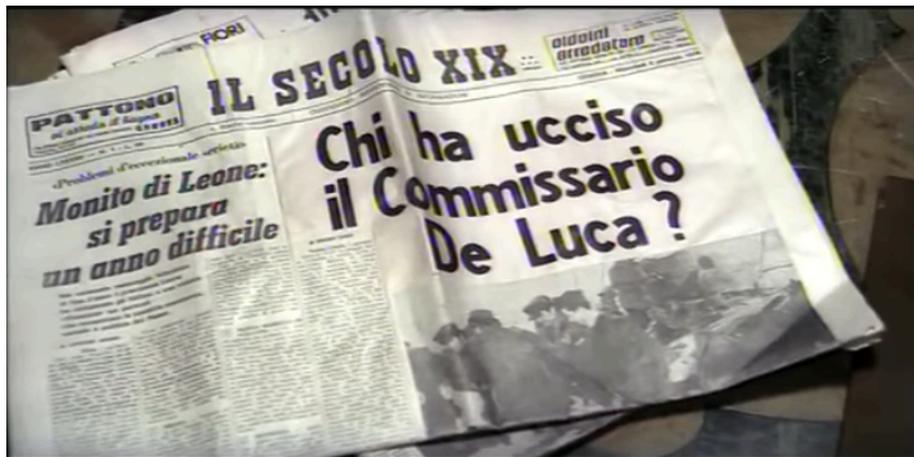


Figure 2.22: the modified *Il Secolo XIX* in *Il testimone deve tacere* (Rosati, 1974). To the left of the fictionalised article there is a comment on a declaration of the *Presidente della Repubblica* Giovanni Leone.

It could be argued that the previous exposure of Italian audiences to this mode of representation also overcame visible defects of fictionalised newspapers like the use of different fonts for real and fake articles. Most of the time, in fact, the movies did use an actual paper, attaching the fictionalised news over the top (Figures 2.23 and 2.24).



Figure 2.23: the modified *Il Messaggero di Roma* in *La polizia interviene: ordine di uccidere* (Rosati, 1975). Below the fake article, there is one commenting on the formation of the new government.



Figure 2.24: the first page of *Il Messaggero di Roma* (10/06/1975), which is modified in *La polizia interviene: ordine di uccidere*.

Where militant and political cinema engaged with specific frameworks of interpretation – the manipulation of media, the corruption of the government, the collusion between economic and political power in Italy – the *poliziottesco* encompassed all of them. However, the *filone* left to audiences’ “levels of prior knowledge” (Fisher, 2014) the task of interpreting this sort of summary of the vices of Italian institutions and citizens. The representation of the 1970s present relied on recognisable visual and narrative patterns that could be traced back to news media and cinema *di consumo impegnato*. Lizzani’s and Bellocchio’s movies used the emotional organisation of news media, based on the superimposition of the public and private dimensions of violence, to present sociological and political critiques of the present. The *poliziottesco* replicated this mode of representation, while withdrawing from political commentary. The

totalising relationship between media representations and the construction of meaning concerning 1970s socio-political conditions was taken as a starting point that did not need elaborate explanations. Using emotional triggers of news media uncritically, every act of criminals, terrorists, and civic institutions was directed at making personal tragedies the symbol of the decay of the country. Elements of social denunciation remained in the *poliziottesco* due to the remediation of features of cinema *di consumo impegnato*. These elements did not contribute to the plot and overall message of the movies. As we will see in the following chapters, they were part of typified representations of journalists and civic institutions. Expressed through brief dialogues disconnected from the overall narrative, these “moments” of social commentary were part of standardised behaviours that characterised the “serial figures” (Denson, 2011) of the *poliziottesco*. As such, they contributed to the internal consistency of a serial product.

#### *In the heat of the moment: television and archive footage constructing a flat present in the poliziottesco.*

As has been argued earlier in this chapter, television was repeatedly used in the *poliziottesco*. Through serial repetition, this device became a contribution to the visual language of the *filone*. Television screens performed different functions. Firstly, they summarised investigations and police operations diegetically through televisual images and the voice of the television speaker. Secondly, they participated in the blurring of the boundaries between films, fictionalised media, and the socio-political context that films and fictionalised media aimed at replicating. Intentionally or not, these devices hid the mediation behind the perception of “liveness” because “[i]deologically, ‘liveness’ encourages us to accept what we see on television as, among other things, accurate – ‘real’ because it is ‘really’ happening – rather than elaborately constructed and mediated” (White 1999, p. 45).

Television journalists and forms of television reporting were used to provide shallow critiques of media sensationalism. Similar to cinema *di consumo impegnato*, the representation of TV journalists commented on the manipulation of the public opinion through emotions. In *Morte sospetta di una minorenne* (Martino, 1975), television participates in constructing an emotional portrayal of the wealthy family of a kidnapped child after his release (Figure 2.25). The spectator, however, already knows that the father is only trying to defraud the insurance company. Television is at the service of

the upper class that manipulates people's emotions for its benefit. Journalists are more interested in exploiting the commercial potential of the scoop than in helping the police or informing the citizenship.



Figure 2.25: television journalists using emotional cues to manipulate the meaning of the kidnapping in *Morte sospetta di una minorenne*.

Similarly, in *La polizia incrimina: la legge assolve*, television journalists interview wealthy entrepreneurs. The comments they make behind their backs signal a dissonance between their real opinions and what is presented to television audiences. As will be explained in Chapter 5, journalists were serial figures of the *poliziottesco* that evolved in relation also to media discourses. They possessed a standardised set of behaviours that repeated with limited variations from one movie to the next. The comments on their manipulative practices connected with widespread feelings towards news media that were expressed by leftist publications and by such movies as *Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina*. However, these representations of television and television journalists were only isolated moments in each film. They can be most meaningfully read as part of the language of the *filone* if analysed in relation to the *poliziottesco* as a whole.

The replication of established patterns of audio-visual news reporting in the movies exploited the potential of the medium to drive immediacy. The *poliziottesco* seemed to aim at “offering the possibility [...], illusory or deferred, of ‘touching the real’” (White 1999, p. 40), building a relationship with the 1970s socio-political conditions through television news. In Sergio Martino's *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide*, television serves to replicate these patterns concerning the *strategia della tensione*. The newscaster in the film pronounces the typical comments: “The police are facing an affair that is spreading like wildfire. Many elements are still unclear”; “Nonetheless,

investigations proceed in different directions”). In Appendix F, we can see the deployment of a similar idiom by actual television reportage, reporting how investigations on the so-called arson of Primavalle “move in different directions” (Vespa, 1973).

As such, these devices participated in reproducing elements of Elliot’s (1981) political ritual. At times, different aspects of the “ritual” were compressed into the speeches of the television speakers:

“Turin: a tremendous explosion destroyed today the ceiling of the central station. A bomb, placed in a box has caused six deaths and dozens of wounded, including three in severe conditions. No one knows yet who committed this horrible crime that upset the population of Turin. Authorities were questioned but were unable to provide an explanation. Everything suggests that they still don’t know whether to direct the investigation to one of the extremist factions that recently have caused many deaths in Italy or whether to attribute the act to a madman.”

This speech accompanies the images of devastation (Figure 2.26) that follow the explosion of a bomb in *Quelli della calibro 38* (Dallamano, 1976). These images, characterising different movies in which bombings occurred (*La polizia ha le mani legate*, *La polizia è sconfitta*) were particularly explicit in the showing of the consequences of the explosions. They visualised the same detailed descriptions that, in Italian newspapers, characterised the report of actual attacks. Similar to the description of the consequences of the bombing in Brescia provided by *Corriere della Sera* (Passanisi 1974, p. 1), the scene deployed “mutilated bodies”, “severely wounded people who begged for help”, and corpses “horribly crumpled up” (Extract C.30, Appendix E).



Figure 2.26: images of devastation that accompany the voice of the television speaker in *Quelli della calibro 38*.

Hence, the sequence replicates the style of television reporting of political violence, superimposing the voice of the speaker over images of devastation. However, the spectator knows that there is nothing political behind the explosion. The movie revolves around the effort of *Commissario Vanni* (Marcel Bozzuffi) to defeat *il Marsigliese* (Ivan Rassimov), a gangster who killed Vanni's wife and threatens Turin with random explosions, aiming at obtaining diamonds and a safe escape from Italy (see the plot in Appendix C). The "television" ritual - providing details of the suffering, exposing the insane character of the act, providing declarations (or lack thereof) of civic authorities - becomes only an empty receptacle. It relied on audiences' exposure to news media to be fully recognised. The emotional capital related to the reporting of massacres committed by political formations was repurposed to increase the emotional charge of movies revolving around criminality. *Poliziotteschi* filmmakers could rely on the replication of typified narrations of violent acts that had already established a connection between politics and criminality, facilitating this repurposing operation of the *poliziottesco*. These typified narrations, explored above, can be considered to be part of the "levels of prior knowledge assumed to be shared by their [the movies] immediate target market" (Fisher 2014, p. 174).

As has been said in Chapter 1, the proximity to the perception of socio-political conditions was achieved by "localising the settings", which, as Bondanella argued, "heightened suspense [...] by emphasizing [the perception of] crimes happening right outside the doorstep of the spectators" (2009, p. 468). The use of television addressed this perception of Italian society and inscribed the *filone* into the flow of discourses

reporting events in the heat of the moment. Savino's *I ragazzi della Roma violenta*, explored in Chapter 1, reworks the opening scene of Lizzani's *Banditi a Milano*, introducing the movie through a television program investigating the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency. The concepts of immediacy and liveness are mobilised to fix the action in the exact present, asking audiences to recognise themselves and their society in the outcries of the interviewees.

In *La polizia chiede aiuto* and *La polizia ha le mani legate*, editing overlaps the cinematic action with television news. As such, ideologically, television images present themselves as an un-mediated representation of the material conditions of 1970s Italy. Additionally, archive footage links fictional television news to media representations of actual events. As has been explained above, Dallamano's *La polizia chiede aiuto* merges archive footage of the *Battaglia di Valle Giulia* with fictional episodes of protest. Ercoli's *La polizia ha le mani legate* uses archive footage of the funerals of the victims of Piazza Fontana as the content of television broadcasting the funerals of the victims of a fictional bombing.

*La polizia chiede aiuto* makes extensive use of different media, commenting on the sensationalism of crime news and intersecting television news with the cinematic action. The scene that follows the attack on *Sostituto Procuratore Stori* shows police operations (policemen with hunting dogs in the countryside, policemen organising checkpoints in the outskirts of the city). The action, unified by the soundtrack, continues on Stori's television screen, where the monotone voice of the speaker describes the operations (Figure 2.27). It is significant that the images that become the content of television news come from another movie of the *filone*, *La polizia sta a guardare* (1973) (Figure 2.28). The two films were produced by Primex Italiana and presented other similarities in the plot<sup>51</sup>. Similar to the strategy adopted by Marvel comics (Denson, 2011), outlined in Chapter 1, the concrete socio-political reality constructed in the diegesis of the film comes from a previous movie. Through the stratagem of the fictional Marvel Comics Group, "aspects of 'our' world, that is, the real and non-

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<sup>51</sup> An example is one of the last scenes, in which *Commissario Silvestri* tries to interrogate a severely injured witness in an ambulance. *La polizia sta a guardare* contains an almost identical scene.

diegetic world in which the reader consumes Marvel's comics, were absorbed into the diegetic world of the Marvel Universe" (Denson 2011, p. 539). Similarly, the diegetic world of *poliziotteschi* was presented as "the real and non-diegetic world" by television news<sup>52</sup>. White's (1999) theorisation of liveness is helpful to interpret this formal choice by relating it to an affective level. The impact of this media interaction can be connected to the ideological organisation of television, which, through liveness, "probably works to intensify our emotional response by countering the distancing effects of fiction" (1999, p. 45).



Figure 2.27: police operations broadcast on television in *La polizia chiede aiuto* (Dallamano, 1974).



Figure 2.28: police operations in *La polizia sta a guardare* (Infascelli, 1973). The same scene is the content of television news in *La polizia ha le mani legate*.

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<sup>52</sup> Dallamano's choice also responded to economic necessities due to the limited budget of the production.

In *La polizia ha le mani legate* a television screen appears after the bombing at the beginning of the movie. Immediately after the television crew enters the lodge where the attack took place, the camera moves to a screen broadcasting the reportage of the crew. The TV is that of the attackers (Figure 2.29). As has been explained above, intentionally or not, through the use of news media as devices the *filone* engaged with discourses around mediation. Hence, newspapers and television in the films also exposed the effects of a hypermediated society. Terrorists and criminals in *poliziotteschi* often use television to understand the development of the investigation and adjust their strategy accordingly. This form of intermedial practice was common to the *poliziottesco* but, as has been explained in Chapter 1, was typical of the gangster genre. *Banditi a Milano* also uses it, showing Cavallero watching the news about the outcome of his last robbery on a television screen in a restaurant.



Figure 2.29: the instigators of the attack watching the news on television in *La polizia ha le mani legate*.

Moreover, television is present in *La polizia ha le mani legate* at the press conference of Judge Di Federico (Arthur Kennedy). Here, editing alternates the cinematic action and television broadcasting the same action (Figures 2.30 and 2.31), fostering the idea of liveness and spatiotemporal presence. The two forms of mediation (cinema and television news) seem to be interchangeable. It could be argued that the presence of news media, especially television, on screen nuanced the structural features of *filone* cinema that usually signal the mediation – clumsy editing, opening and ending credits, disclaimers, questionable acting. Television can be interpreted, relying on the ideology of the medium suggested by White (1999), to contribute to the illusion of “realism” within the *filone*.



Figure 2.30: Judge Di Federico at the press conference in *La polizia ha le mani legate*.



Figure 2.31: the press conference televised in the house of the terrorists in *La polizia ha le mani legate*.

Finally, the other example from *La polizia ha le mani legate* moves in the opposite direction: media representations of actual events merge with the cinematic fiction. *La polizia ha le mani legate* reworked the massacre of Piazza Fontana, organising the plot around a bombing in a hotel hall. In the movie, television broadcasts the funerals of the victims of the attack. The images on television, in this case, do not come from another movie but from the original footage of the funerals of the victims of Piazza Fontana (Uva 2015, p. 78; Curti 2006, p. 151) (Figures 2.32 and 2.33). The representation of actual events overlaps with the fictional action. The voice of the television speaker signals the presence of the fictional Police Chief, Di Marco, and *Procuratore Di Federico* and provides details of an act of solidarity by the *Presidente della Repubblica*.



Figure 2.32: the funerals broadcasted in the police headquarters in *La polizia ha le mani legate*.



Figure 2.33: archive footage of the funerals of the victims of Piazza Fontana (*SetteG*, 1969).

This use of archive footage inscribed the fictional action into a meta-historical narrative that linked the events of the movie to the recent past in the framework of the *strategia della tensione*<sup>53</sup>. Dialogues in the film, in fact, make direct reference to the massacres of Piazza Fontana, Italicus train, and Brescia. As will be explained in Chapter 5, in 1975, the Italian secret service started to be linked to the conspiracy theory, accused of sponsoring and covering up neo-fascist terrorists. This is reflected in the dialogue between *Procuratore Di Federico* and the minister, which links together recent acts of terrorism: “[y]ou continue to propose a collaboration with the secret service. However,

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<sup>53</sup> Catherine O’Rawe (2011) has written on the use of archive footage of the *Years of Lead* focusing on historical dramas (*Pasolini: un delitto italiano*, Giordana 1995; *La prima linea*, De Maria 2009). She did not consider the *poliziottesco*, which, contrary to historical dramas, were using this footage related to recent events as devices to comment on the present.

was this collaboration useful in the cases of Milan, Bologna, and Brescia? It was useful only to muddy the waters more”.

Thereby, the events of the movie connoted by references to the recent past participated in constructing the flat present of the *filone*. As O’Leary recalled “events influence film form just as interpretation is present at the very moment of the event. [...] Film reacts to, and impresses in its turn upon the social and political world and the interpretation of events” (2011, p. 12). References to recent events provided an interpretation for the fictional bombing. In turn, the movie, blaming the secret service for manoeuvring terrorists, seems to suggest an interpretation for the series of terrorist actions that Italy had suffered in the first half of the 1970s. The same interpretation connected with the speculations of newspapers (Extract C.32 and U.34, Appendix E). In other words, elements of intermediality concerning the reworking of news media discourses and the use of media as devices participated in “historicising” the fiction. They linked fictional plots to the “chain of criminal attacks that lasted since 1969” (Anon. 1974d, p. 1) interpreted as the *strategia della tensione*. The movies needed the perpetual renewal of an indefinite threat to society to support the emotional journey of their plots. This flat present, made of conspiracies, bombings, bank robberies, and kidnappings, similar to Italy under the threat of the *strategia della tensione*, did not evolve. Like a form of episodic seriality, news media and the *poliziottesco* only added new episodes of violence to a long list of tragic events that could allow the repetition of a ritualistic performance.

## Conclusion

It is difficult to ascertain to what extent these formal choices, employing television screens and idioms, were consciously adopted to provide interpretation of the recent past. As this thesis has argued, *poliziotteschi*, including *La polizia ha le mani legate*, did not provide comprehensive explanations. The movies launched general accusations that could leave the space open for different interpretations of individual audience members. References to the recent past organised around mediated representations of tragic events supplied only an emotional reading of the fictional action. As the examples provided above aimed at evidencing, these uses of television could rely on similar formal strategies employed by films *di consumo impegnato*. These movies made specific uses of television and newspapers part of the formal toolbox of Italian cinema. As such, the *poliziottesco* could rely on the recognisability of forms of news reporting also derived

from previous cinematic trends. This recognisability also participated in eliding the difference between the relationship of the movies with actual news media and the representation of fictionalised media. This elision contributed to the “experience of the real” supported by the use of news outlets as devices.

Throughout this chapter, the representational patterns of news outlets have been traced through qualitative and quantitative analysis. These patterns exposed the tendency of reporting acts of political violence through the association of criminality and terrorism. The depiction of the perpetrators as “monsters” was instrumental in depriving them of any political motivation and mobilising the readership around “objects of feelings” such as democracy and civilisation. The focus on human-interest aspects of episodes of political violence has been analysed through the theoretical framework of the press ritual (Elliot, 1981). The analysis has exposed the efforts of news media to make individual tragedies symbols for the struggles of a community. Comparing actual victims with the readership participated in constructing a sense of belonging and togetherness that contrasted with the sharp division of the national community.

This division was recognised by such movies as *Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina*. This film comments on the manipulation of news media by economic and political elites although replicating the merging of the public and the private dimensions of violence. The same manipulation is used to “explain” the chaos in the country, overlapping different events related to the recent past. Intentionally or not, the movie exposes the manipulative potential of both film and news media. The analysis of *Banditi a Milano* has reinforced this argument. This movie exposes the capacity of media to “construct” an event through media performances that relied on the deployment of emotional triggers. Real newspapers and forms of television reportage are used by the director in this film to offer a sociological analysis of the impact of media on the perception of reality. The opening scene immediately offers an interpretation of the “effect” of the repeated exposure to violence through media on the social life of the Italian population. This “effect” is epitomised by the attempted lynching of one of the bandits that supposedly demonstrates the tendency of the population to recur to violence. Consequently, the scene outlines the disengagement from the “social contract” that allocate to civic institutions the responsibility of maintaining order.

As exemplified by the analysis of the first page of *Corriere della Sera* commenting on the death of Agent Marino, specific emotional triggers were used by news media to

construct the press ritual. This chapter has identified how the *poliziottesco* replicated the forms of the press ritual, while withdrawing from political or sociological commentary. The investigation conducted here has evidenced the formal continuity between cinema *di consumo impegnato* and the *filone* concerning usages of media as devices. While Hollywood films such as *Dirty Harry* (Siegel, 1971) and *The French Connection* (Friedkin, 1971) provided models for action sequences, Italian cinema provided the formal tools to address the Italian socio-political context. Accordingly, this chapter has provided evidence of the necessity of reading the *filone* in relation to contemporaneous forms of Italian film production that participated in the representation of the 1970s. The conspiracy subset of the *poliziottesco* shall be read with regard to films *di consumo impegnato* that elaborated on the misconduct of Italian power elites. These movies had already presented narrative and formal structures that stressed the impact of mediation on the perception of 1970s material socio-political conditions. Additionally, they had questioned the behaviour of civic institutions also concerning media manipulation. Finally, they had already presented the critique of the merging of the private and the public, which remained as an emotional strategy to drive audiences' identification with the behaviour of the *commissario*. The *filone* remediated the "aura" of social denunciation that was embedded in cinema *di consumo impegnato*, adopting similar formal strategies. It was what the *poliziottesco* needed: a trace of the political struggle conducted around media representations that could contextualise the cinematic action. In this way, references to actual events and media practices could serve the needs of action-oriented plots, furnishing an emotional reading of both the fiction and social reality.

In conclusion, this chapter has highlighted the significant role of media interaction in the relationship between the *poliziottesco* and the socio-political conditions of the 1970s. Narrative patterns of news media reporting and intermedial references participated in the construction of the cinematic language of the *filone*. This relationship with news media structures, idioms, and discourses is central to analyse the representation of Italian civic institutions in the *poliziottesco*. Media representations of acts of political violence were pivotal to provide meaning to the fictional action. They helped "historicise" fiction within the chain of events that characterised the framework of the *strategia della tensione*, constructing a flat present. In similar terms, the reworking of news media representations and discourses on civic institutions helped the

*filone* to connect with the negotiation of the blame for the inefficiency of the state against criminal and political violence.

The next chapter will explore the representation of the police in *La polizia ringrazia* (Stefano Vanzina, 1972). Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis of articles describing the work of rank-and-file policemen will be used to identify strategies adopted by news media to represent law enforcement agents as victims. The analysis will help to interpret the conflict between the *commissario* and the *sostituto procuratore* in Vanzina's movie, who present opposing conceptualisations of law and order originating in news media discourses. Thereby, these characters are used to trace the impact of these discourses on the representation of civic institutions in the *filone*. The analysis is a starting point for the investigation of the evolution of these characters conducted in Chapters 4 and 5.



## Chapter 3 - Negotiating blame through police deaths and police violence in news media and *La polizia ringrazia*.

### Introduction

*La polizia ringrazia* (Vanzina) was released in Italian cinemas on February 25, 1972. The first action sequence presents an emotional cue that suggests an interpretation of the entire movie. Bloodthirsty criminals kill a jeweller and a passer-by during a robbery. The scene portrays an act of criminal violence. The visual repertoire mobilised to construct the scene, however, blends politics and criminality, referencing the killing of Alessandro Floris. Floris, a cash-transport man, had been killed by the leftist group *XXII Ottobre* in March 1971. Newspapers published the photo of the moment of the killing of Floris, which became symbolic of the political climate of the early 1970s (Figures 3.1 and 3.2). The actual murder had the emotional element in the figure of Floris: a young worker died to protect the salary of an organisation of public housing. The first robbery of the movie, over which the title “The police give thanks” is superimposed, happens in a jeweller’s shop in the centre of Rome. Two young men participate: one waits outside on a motorbike, the second kills the jeweller and jumps on the bike afterwards. A working-class man, a bricklayer, tries to stop the bandits but is shot dead (Figures 3.3-5).



Figures 3.1 and 3.2: photos of the killing of Alessandro Floris in March 1971 in Genoa.



Figures 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5: frames of the first robbery in *La polizia ringrazia*.

As has been explained in Chapter 2, the boundaries between criminality and political violence were blurred by mainstream news media in the framework of the press ritual. The merging of criminality and politics was also part of the emotional triggers of *La polizia ringrazia*. The protagonist of the movie, *Commissario Bertone* (Enrico Maria Salerno), begins his investigation to stop the spiral of criminal violence that Italian cities are experiencing. A group of vigilantes intervenes when the justice system fails to condemn criminals to a fair punishment. The vigilantes are supported by a right-wing

organisation, which aims at exploiting the flaws of the democratic system to convince the citizenship of the necessity of an authoritarian government (see the plot in Appendix C). The adoption of criminal methods for political purposes makes criminality and extremists indistinguishable. The outcome of this merging - “the alliance between self-proclaimed political forces violating the rules of the game and ordinary criminals” (Sensini 1973b, p. 1) - is represented as the threat to democracy and this depiction works to attract solidarity towards democratic institutions.

*La polizia ringrazia* can be divided into two halves. Each half dramatises a different approach concerning the solution to the issue of criminal violence in Italy. Elements of Elliot’s (1981) press ritual are mobilised in the first half to direct the blame for state inefficiency against criminality at the judiciary. The police ask for more powers and have to fight with internal “enemies” like journalists and judges, who are accusing Bertone and his men of brutality. This positioning of judges is instrumental in supporting the second half of the movie, which questions the request of the police to have more power. A part of the police, in fact, controls the organisation of vigilantes, and progressive judges are framed as the only hope to save democracy in Italy. However, the sacrifice of *Commissario* Bertone, who is killed by the conspirators, brings back the police into the ranks of public servants who are loyal to democracy. Therefore, *La polizia ringrazia* suggests the necessity of reconciling those parts of the state that fight with different methods for the same goals: protect citizens and safeguarding democracy.

Contrary to the rest of this thesis, this chapter focuses on a single movie. This decision is however related to the seriality of the *filone*. As director Sergio Martino recalled (Olesen 2017, p. 264), *La polizia ringrazia* was the first successful movie of *filone* cinema that centred on the actions of the police and sparked a new cycle of films. As has been explained in Chapter 1, *filone* cinema has been defined as “cycles” (O’Leary 2011, p. 83) of movies released “in the wake of a particular box-office success that indicated a route to the next profitable formula” (Fisher, forthcoming). This formulaic mode of production problematises the identification of a “founding text”. Similar to “serial figures” (Denson, 2011) of a comic-book narrative, the *poliziottesco* is considered “in a state of perpetual and innate intertextuality, through which meanings accumulate across various iterations” (Fisher, forthcoming). Chapter 2 has explored how elements of 1970s cultural production participated in providing formal and

narrative devices to the *filone*. As this chapter and the rest of the thesis aims at demonstrating, *La polizia ringrazia* presents all the elements that constitute the basic content of *poliziotteschi*. Other successful movies like Castellari's *La polizia incrimina: la legge assolve* (1973) added new elements to this basic content, modifying the formula to respond "to political events, cinematic trends and attendant economic opportunities" (Fisher, forthcoming). As such, Vanzina's movie has been chosen as the point of departure to address the accumulation of narrative formulas and emotional triggers that manifest in subsequent movies.

This chapter explores newspaper representations of the police and the judiciary between November 1969 and February 1972. Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis of *l'Unità* and *Corriere della Sera* addresses the seriality of crime news, tracing patterns of representation of Italian civic institutions with the aid of Sketch Engine. Considering also the influence of Hollywood productions like *Dirty Harry* (Siegel, 1971), this chapter investigates the significance of the correlation between the specific depiction of civic institutions in *La polizia ringrazia* and their representation in mainstream newspapers between 1969 and 1972. The analysis traces the framing of the victim status of low-ranking policemen in mainstream news media starting from the representation of Agent Antonio Annarumma's death. Qualitative analysis of specific articles also supports the exploration of this representation, which provides the context to address the evolution of the representation of public figures after 1972 in news media and the *poliziottesco*. This chapter also analyses the claims of policemen concerning working conditions and media discourses that framed the relationship between the lower and the higher ranks of the institution. These discourses are utilised to analyse the "serial figure" of the rank-and-file policeman in *La polizia ringrazia* and the *filone*. Furthermore, the ambivalent representation of the judiciary in news media is explored to connect the tension between policemen and judges in *La polizia ringrazia* to the negotiation of the blame for state inefficiency against violence.

Finally, media coverage of two distinct events, the massacre of Piazza Fontana and Borghese's attempted coup, is analysed to link the plot of Vanzina's movie to the "grand narrative" of the *strategia della tensione*. Elements of the plot are analysed to trace the merging of different acts of political violence into a single narrative. *La polizia ringrazia* privileged action over sociological and political analysis. As has been explained in Chapter 2 concerning the *poliziottesco* as a whole, the references to

political events were emotional triggers that drove the interpretation of the cinematic action. The link of *La polizia ringrazia* to the Italian socio-political conditions became recognisable through visual markers and “didactic” dialogues, which were central to the moral and narrative organisation of the movie. The analysis of discourses stemming from news media allows me to inscribe *La polizia ringrazia* into its context of reception. The operation is pivotal to address the modification and adaptation of the formula of Vanzina’s movie to new tragic events explored in the rest of the thesis, using elements of seriality as the key concept to address the transition between various versions of the *filone*.

### High ranks, low ranks and the instrumental use of class struggle in news media

“It seems certain that the riots were started by a young man, waving a red handkerchief and shouting ‘Viva Mao!’, when the procession was near the church of San Carlo. Neo-fascists and their sympathisers responded: ‘Communist murderers’ and ‘Italy, Italy’. Then they lashed out vehemently on the ‘Chinese’, who was severely beaten and barely taken away by the police from an even more severe beating. The crowd responded with applause, shouting ‘Italy’ to counter the Maoist intervention. Meanwhile, the turmoil had spread to the parade that followed the remains of Antonio Annarumma.” (Ceni 1969, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera*, 22/11/1969)

The article from *Corriere della Sera* comments on the funeral of Police Agent Antonio Annarumma. It exemplifies how the political struggle in Italy in the late 1960s was conducted using civic institutions as powerful political symbols. The funeral was characterised by clashes between neo-fascists and communists, and the event was used to symbolise the struggle between *opposti estremismi* (opposite extremes). The representation of Agent Annarumma exemplifies a media discourse that is central to the rhetoric of policemen in the *poliziottesco*. His death can be used to address the means by which the *poliziottesco* gave a further layer of meaning to the claims of fictional policemen concerning working conditions. The link between these claims in films and news media discourses on the police contributed to connect the *poliziottesco* to Italian socio-political conditions of the early 1970s.

Antonio Annarumma died during the general strike in Milan on November 19, 1969. He was hit and killed by an iron bar while driving a police jeep. Not surprisingly, *Corriere della Sera* and *l’Unità* represented the event differently and used Annarumma to

comment on the political context in Italy. On one side of the political spectrum, it was told that protesters of the extra-parliamentary left had thrown the iron bar towards the jeep, causing Annarumma's death (Anon. 1969b, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera*, 20/11/1969). On the other side, *l'Unità* accused the police of unmotivated charges, which had caused protesters' reactions and the chaos that had led to the death of the policeman<sup>54</sup> (Ferrara 1969, p. 1; *l'Unità*, 22/11/1969). *L'Unità* opened the article commenting on Annarumma's funeral by denouncing the exploitation of the tragedy by the right (c.f. 1969, p. 1; *l'Unità*, 22/11/1969). The blame for the turmoil was attributed to the declared enemies: "fascist violence", "provocateurs", and "the police" (Anon. 1969c, p. 1; *l'Unità* 22/11/1969). Contrarily to the account of *Corriere della Sera*, the "crowd" at the funeral sided with leftists in the report of *l'Unità*, which stated that "the violence" had been "isolated and condemned by Milanese people" (Anon. 1969c, p. 1; *l'Unità* 22/11/1969).

In the previous months, *l'Unità* had conducted harsh battles against the police. The general strike of November was close to the anniversary of what was called *eccidio di Avola* (Avola slaughter, December 1968), in which the police killed two men. The death of Annarumma was framed as another example of the consequences of the irresponsible behaviour of the police. *Corriere della Sera* counteracted this rhetoric, reversing it to undermine the potential of a class struggle. The background of Annarumma allowed *Corriere della Sera* to implement the rhetoric of the policeman as a symbol of the poor public servant, opposed to the spoiled kids of the extra-parliamentary left. Table 3.1 shows the occurrences in the corpus of *Corriere della Sera* of the search-term "Annarumma", highlighting the adjectives that have been used to describe Annarumma. The adjective that prevails is "*povero*" (poor; lines 2, 9, 14-16). *Povero* as an adjective can be associated with the poor condition of the subject ("Annarumma who holds the poor condition of being dead"), also signalled by the use of the adjective "*sventurato*" (wretched, line 12). Nonetheless, as was often specified in the articles, Annarumma also came from an economically poor background of underdeveloped Southern Italy ("born in a family of farmhands", line 8). The newspaper also stressed his "*giovane età*" (young age): Annarumma was "22 years-old" (line 5, 6), or simply "young" (line 7 "*la*

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<sup>54</sup> The judiciary established later on that Annarumma had been killed but could not identify the offenders (Solazzo 1975, p. 17; *Corriere della Sera*, 29/06/1975).

*cui giovane vita*”; line 11 “*il giovane agente*”). Additionally, he was a “*vittima*” (victim, line 9): the victim of “*violenza estremista*” (violence of the radicals, line 9) who gave his life for democracy (line 17). Finally, *Corriere della Sera* focused on the father, a farmer, crying in front of his son’s dead body. In line 13, the visit of the father to the corpse of Annarumma stressed the poor origins of the family highlighting the “*mani callose*” (calloused hands, as a result of hard labour) of Carmine Annarumma, who “*singhiozzava disperato*” (sobbed in despair).

Table 3.1: sample of concordances: Annarumma + adjective (ADJ). *Corriere della Sera* – November 1969 – February 1972 (see the complete list of concordances in Table A.A.3, Appendix A).

Line	Concordance
2	a venti giorni dall’eccidio del <b>povero</b> agente Annarumma. Le misure preannunciate dal governo, e
5	Un agente di pubblica sicurezza – Antonio Annarumma, <b>22 anni</b> – è rimasto ucciso ieri a Milano
6	della Costituzione repubblicana. Antonio Annarumma, caduto a <b>ventidue anni</b> , merita un rimpianto
7	Della guardia di pubblica sicurezza Antonio Annarumma, “la cui <b>giovane vita</b> – ha detto il ministro – [...]”
8	agente di pubblica sicurezza Antonio Annarumma, <b>nato da una famiglia di braccianti</b> , in una
9	alla salma del <b>povero</b> agente di polizia Antonio Annarumma, <b>vittima della violenza estremista</b>
11	<b>giovane</b> agente di pubblica sicurezza Antonio Annarumma. “La violenza irresponsabile di coloro che [...]”
12	posto accanto alle spoglie dello <b>sventurato</b> Annarumma – la seconda è quella del sostituto
13	fra le sue una delle <b>mani callose</b> di Carmine Annarumma, questi <b>singhiozzava disperato</b> , senza poter
14	Turchetto, compagni di plotone del <b>povero</b> Annarumma. I due l’hanno visto abbattersi sul volante del
15	sulla polizia, e magari sul <b>povero</b> agente Annarumma, la colpa dell’eccidio solo perché non si sono

16	La lezione che si leva dalla salma del <b>povero Annarumma</b> è anche e soprattutto questa: il richiamo a
17	SARAGAT: MONITO PER TUTTI IL <b>SACRIFICIO ANNARUMMA</b> . “La legalità democratica deve essere [...]”

The press ritual was mobilised. The narrative focused on aspects of human interest and involved messages from representatives of the State and political parties. Finally, it directed the blame towards the elements that did not participate appropriately in the ritual – leftists disrupting the funeral<sup>55</sup> or provocateurs and members of government fostering an anti-worker climate through their declarations (Ferrara 1969, p. 1; *l'Unità*, 22/11/1969). The origins of the police force could not be denied<sup>56</sup>. *L'Unità* replied to the “appropriation” of the class struggle by *Corriere della Sera* by avoiding attacking policemen individually but condemning the high-ranks of that institution (Extract U.19, Appendix E). Without success, the Communist Party (PCI) was attempting to exploit policemen’s rage about their working and living conditions. By November 22, the Communist newspaper had already inserted Annarumma’s death and subsequent police protests into its political rhetoric. Rank-and-file policemen were framed as victims documenting “an ancient tragedy: that of the poor in uniform that oppresses the poor in overalls, to the advantage of the bosses that oppress both of them” (Ferrara 1969, p. 1). The day after the death of Annarumma, policemen rioted in the headquarters of Milan. Newspapers stressed the rage of the police force against both protesters and higher ranks of the institution (Deaglio 2017, p. 168-169). The Italian police, in fact, was the only force in the European Single Market without a trade union and was still bound to regulations inherited from the Fascist regime (De Stefano 1973, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera*, 12/10/1973). Agents started to make claims about their union rights that continued throughout the decade (Crainz 2003, p. 407). The dichotomy between the higher ranks of the police and the poor policemen following wrong orders was adopted by *l'Unità* and *Corriere della Sera* for different purposes. *Corriere* tried to stimulate empathy towards the lower ranks, disdain against protesters, but avoiding alienating the more progressive section of the readership through a blind defence of the action of the police.

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<sup>55</sup> “Not even the death of Antonio Annarumma sedated the hatreds” (Cervi 1969a, p. 1).

<sup>56</sup> Bernardi registered in 1979 that 64% of Italian policemen came from the South, 21% from the Centre and only 15% from the North (p. 31).

*L'Unità* tried to arouse rage against the government and the remnants of Fascism in sections of the state.

Things started to change from 1973, when the DC and the PCI started the process called *compromesso storico*<sup>57</sup> (historic compromise). *L'Unità* diminished its focus on the struggles within factories (Figure 3.6), marginalising the accounts of police clashes. Even *Corriere* started to question the behaviour of the police, adopting more consistently the perspective of the dualism between higher and lower ranks. On January 1973, a student was shot dead at Bocconi University in Milan. *Corriere* stated that “too many errors” had been committed by the men responsible for public order (Anon. 1973a, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 25/01/1973). The excessive deployment of the police force was considered a useless source of tension. *L'Unità* commented on the article in *Corriere della Sera* to attack the government, agreeing with conservative newspapers that it would be too easy to blame only the agent that shot (Anon. 1973b, p. 1; *l'Unità*, 26/01/1973). The next day, the Chief of Police, Vicari, was accused of focusing the blame on the agent to cover higher functionaries responsible for the clashes (c.f. 1973, p. 1; *l'Unità*, 27/01/1973). Rank-and-file policemen, thus, became not only victims of violent radicals and criminals, but also victims of ruthless superiors and organisational shortcomings: a direct consequence of high-ranking corruption.

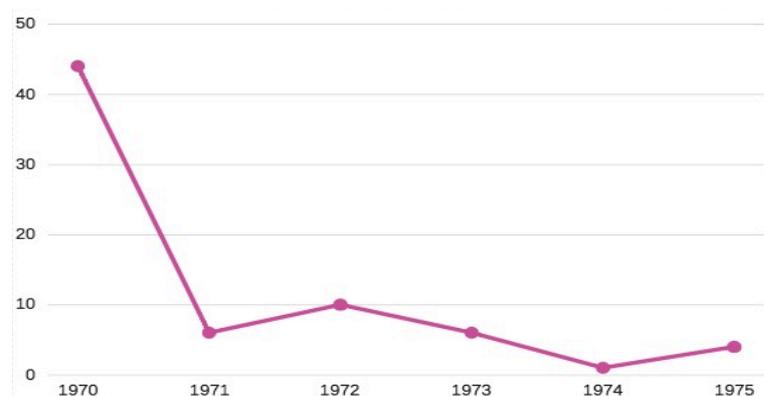


Figure 3.6: *l'Unità* – 1970/1975 – Italian civic institutions: acts of repression against the left (arrests in factories, trials for strikes and demonstrations in factories, crimes of conscience).

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<sup>57</sup> The *compromesso storico*, theorised by PCI leader Enrico Berlinguer, envisaged an alliance between communists, socialists and the Christian Democrats (DC) to contrast the growth of the right in Italy, fight terrorism, and encourage reforms oriented at the left (Gundle 1995, p. 312-313; 334-341).

Rank-and-file policemen continued to be used as symbols of the struggle for democracy and social order for the rest of the period under analysis. Their deaths became the stage for mourning practices performed by both newspapers as much as the rate of police fatalities increased (see the trend of reports of police deaths in Figure 3.7). Deaths in police ranks constantly increased during the time under analysis, reaching a peak in 1972, as a consequence of Calabresi's assassination and Peteano attack (3 *carabinieri* dead), and in 1975, when several policemen and carabinieri were killed on different occasions. In the first years of the 1970s, deaths of policemen fuelled the contrast between Italian newspapers. *L'Unità* used police brutality as an emotional trigger for the mobilisation of PCI militants (Anon. 1971c, p. 1; Extract U.26, Appendix E). This discourse was also used to attack *Corriere della Sera* and the ideas supported by the paper. Another death of a policeman, Agent Bellotti, during the riots of Reggio Calabria in January 1971 was used to attack *Corriere della Sera* and other newspapers, "guilty" of having accused the left of the death of Annarumma (Extract U.25, Appendix E).

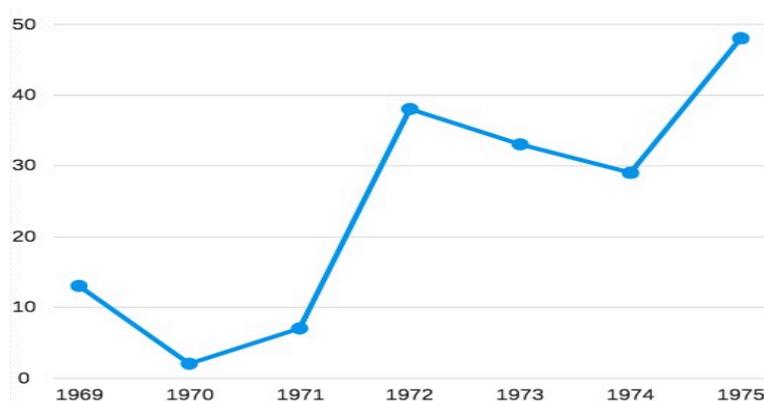


Figure 3.7: *l'Unità* – November 1969-December 1975 - Reports of Police deaths.

However, when the rate of acts of repression against the left reported by newspapers decreased (Figure 3.6), *l'Unità* engaged more consistently with discourses of victimhood around rank-and-file policemen. Agent Marino was represented as "belonging to a poor family of seven children, seeking a job in Milan and finding death instead" (Poma 1973, p. 1; *l'Unità* 15/04/1973). Subsequent tragedies were related to neo-fascist militants (Agent Marino, April 1973), neo-fascist terrorists (killing of two agents in Empoli by Mario Tuti, January 1975), leftist organisations such as *Brigate Rosse* and NAP (Armed Proletarian Nucleus) (Robbiano di Mediglia, 1974; Gancia kidnapping, 1975; Agent Niedda, 1975), and criminals (Novi Ligure, 1971; Agent Cardilli, 1972; Modena, 1974; Briosco (Milan), 1974; Agent Marchisella, 1975;

Viareggio, 1975; Agent Bracci, 1975). The Communist newspaper dedicated several first page articles to the death of Agent Marchisella in 1975. The agent left behind a pregnant wife to whom he got married in secret because of police regulations, which forbade marriage before the age of 28 and required ministerial authorisation (Curti 2006, p. 94). The wife, Carla Calabrese, committed suicide, fomenting debates about the conditions of low-ranking policemen. By 1974, even when protesters had died as a result of police intervention, *l'Unità* highlighted that policemen and protesters were “mostly the same age, the majority of the occupants being young, couples of spouses, poor, and the policemen were just as young and poor” (Baduel 1974, p. 1; 10/09/1974).

Moss's analysis of left-wing violence in Italy between 1969 and 1985 shows the significantly higher number of police fatalities compared to the judiciary, politicians or journalists (1989, p. 12; 38). If we turn to the whole 1970s, we find 69 confrontations involving police or *carabinieri*, causing 57 dead and 12 wounded within their ranks. At the same time, between 1946 and 1977, the reports state 220 civilian deaths and 23 police deaths in political acts of protest. After the killing of three policemen in Modena, *Corriere* registered the outcry of a functionary stating, “We are at war, you have to put it in your head, everyone needs to understand it, especially those who write on the walls: PS=SS” (Monti 1975b, p. 1; 23/10/1975). The police (PS) were equated to the Nazi Protection Squadron (SS). Policemen expressed their anger, directed at citizens and superiors equally. The discontent about the top ranks of the institution is shown by the poll commissioned by the magazine *Ordine Pubblico* (Figure 3.8).

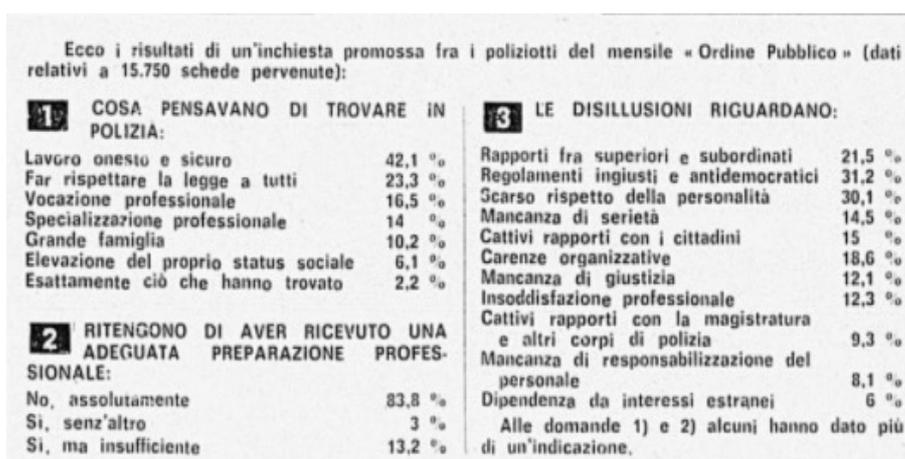


Figure 3.8: summary of the poll about policemen condition (Munzi 1975b, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera*, 18/10/1975), 15.750 respondents, published by *Ordine Pubblico*.

The most evident concerns were directed at the top of the institution: 83,8% declared that they did not receive an adequate professional training; the most disappointing elements of the profession were related to “unfair and anti-democratic regulations” (31,2%), “poor respect for individual personality” (30,1%), “relationship between top ranks and subordinates” (21,5%), and “organisational shortcomings” (18,6%). While police deaths increased, media discourses and politicians focused on a reform of the institution. Measures were requested to overcome organisational shortcomings and the weak technical preparation of the police force (Anon. 1975h, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera*, 23/10/1975). However, *l'Unità* reported the sharp opposition to the reform of the police by the higher ranks and asked the more reactionary sectors of this institution to resign (Pardera 1974, p. 1; 29/12/74).

The *poliziottesco* registered this struggle constantly, repeating the contrast between rank-and-file policemen and *commissari*, and the higher ranks of the police. It also registered complaints about salary, working conditions, and lack of protection of policemen. In *La polizia ringrazia*, the first low-ranking policeman appears in the second scene, where he is escorting a criminal, Bettarini (Franco Fabrizi), to the *questura*. Bettarini asks the policeman about his salary and laughs when he refuses to answer. Moreover, in the *filone*, low-ranking policemen (*Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia*; *Milano odia: la polizia non può sparare*; *Squadra volante*; *Napoli violenta*; *La polizia chiede aiuto*; *Il trucidato e lo sbirro*, Massi 1976), or the closest collaborator with the *commissario* (*La polizia è al servizio del cittadino?*, Guerrieri 1973; *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide*), are often, if not always, brutally killed. The influence of Hollywood tropes is also determinant here. The opening sequence of *Dirty Harry* presents a commemorative plaque for policemen who died on duty in San Francisco. Moreover, Callahan repeatedly complains about his pay. Italian productions took this narrative device to an extreme, placing policemen's bodies in the line of fire. Similar to Hollywood films, the suffering of rank-and-file policemen are the centre of the rhetoric of the movies. Italian films, however, repeatedly show their bodies riddled with machine guns shots and the camera indulges on their corpses.

The suffering of subordinates had a specific narrative and emotional function that exposed a contradiction that was instrumental in addressing audiences. The killing of low-ranking policemen provided a moral justification to the violence of the *commissario* but also a framework to direct the blame towards the state itself.

Policemen lamenting the lack of protection in the movies can be equated with citizens' pleas for radical change in the management of public order reported in news media. Cinematic lower and mid-ranks of the police directed their anger towards a superior order of command. Even if the use of dialect<sup>58</sup> and their physicality marked a difference between the *commissario* and his subordinates, the *commissario* "joined" the side of low-ranking policemen supporting their claims. In the initial sequence of *Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia*, *Commissario* Caneparo talks amicably with a low-ranking policeman who tells him about the difficulties of supporting his wife and three children with his salary. The policeman gets killed in the next scene and this event drives the rage of Caneparo, who kills the bandits. Hence, low-ranking policemen "joined" the side of citizens: lower and mid-ranks of the police were victims of violence like the rest of the Italian population<sup>59</sup>.

This operation was instrumental to grant to the *commissario* a "popular" status. In news media, the leftist milieu connected police violence, the investigations conducted by the judiciary against the left, and governmental action to orient these investigations (Extract U.22, Appendix E). As Lumley noticed, many sectors of the left "did not make distinctions between the good intentions of ministers and the actions of the police in Italy. Rather, the bloodshed [of repression] appeared to confirm analyses of the state, according to which it was an instrument of class rule which was fundamentally repressive" (Lumley 1990, p. 68). Leftist newspapers associated *commissari* with the higher ranks (Extract U.22, Appendix E). *Poliziotteschi* needed to reverse this association while maintaining a critique of the higher ranks. Accordingly, this "popular" status was accorded only to the *commissario*, who was equated with the low-ranking

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<sup>58</sup> Also relying on the association between southerners and policemen, subordinates were often *meridionali* (southerners). In *La polizia ringrazia*, the rank-and-file policeman is played by the recognisable southern actor Gianfranco Barra (also in *Morte sospetta di una minorenne* and *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide*). It was not uncommon to have comedic foils represented by the *commissario*'s subordinates, characterised by a strong Roman or southern accent. The lower ranks of police and *carabinieri*, in fact, were embedded in the tradition of the comedy, from Monicelli's *Guardie e ladri* (1951) to Zampa's *Il vigile* (1960).

<sup>59</sup> Bertone: "Policemen are men like others and when they are in the street, they are scared like anyone else".

policeman. In fact, with the exception of the rank-and-file policeman, conspirators and corrupt officials were present all over the ranks of the police. In *La polizia ringrazia*, *Commissario Bertone* is betrayed by his mentor and former *questore* (provincial chief of police), with the help of the deputy Santalamenti, exposing corruption at mid- and high levels of the police. A shadow of suspicion is cast on the *questore* and the chief of police. In the majority of movies in the *filone*, mid-level functionaries – mostly *vice-commissari* – (*La polizia ringrazia*; *Il poliziotto è marcio*, Di Leo 1974; *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide*) and the superiors (*La polizia ringrazia*; *Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia*) joined in the effort to impede police investigations. The only heroes of the *poliziottesco* are low-ranking policemen, usually because they die or suffer directly for their struggle against violence. The *commissario* shares the same destiny of the rank-and-file policeman. Hence, with limited exceptions (for example, *Il poliziotto è marcio*), the *commissario* is a heroic figure. However, as has been said before in this thesis, the violent methods he uses problematise the recognition of this status.

The same mode of representation can be traced in Italian news media developing a discourse of national solidarity that needed the distinction between instigators and executors of repressive orders. Police fatalities were an occasion to highlight division and conflict in the country while celebrating the efforts of loyal state servants to defend democracy from radicals and criminals. *Commissario Bertone* gets killed at the end of *La polizia ringrazia*. It is clear that the higher ranks of the police are involved in the crime. Death, in *La polizia ringrazia* and subsequent movies, served to redeem the institution from the backlash linked to state violence, in cinemas if not outside them.

### Impeding police investigations: journalists and the judiciary in news media and *La polizia ringrazia*.

Exemplified by the coverage of Annarumma's death, an almost binary opposition characterised *l'Unità* and *Corriere della Sera* concerning the representation of the police before the release of *La polizia ringrazia*. Tables 3.2 and 3.3 show this conflict over the interpretation of police action. *Corriere della Sera* commented on the violence experienced by the police; *l'Unità* insisted on the violence of the police. The

concordance analysis of the preposition *contro* (against) in relation to the noun *poliz*\*<sup>60</sup> (police) exemplifies the situation<sup>61</sup>. On the first pages of *Corriere della Sera* between 1969 and 1972, *poliz*\* occurs 41 times together with *contro* within a distance of 5 words at its left and right (Table A.A.5, Appendix A). As can be observed in Table 3.2, the majority of articles reported violent actions against the police.

Table 3.2: Concordance: preposition *contro* (against) + *poliz*\*. *Corriere della Sera*, November 1969-February 1972.

Type of action	Number of occurrences	Lines (see Table A.A.5, Appendix A)
Violent actions or threats <i>against</i> the police.	24	Lines 1, 3, 4, 7-9, 12-14, 16-19, 22-29, 31, 35, 39.
Statements regarding the efforts of the police <i>against</i> mafia or criminality.	6	Lines 6, 10, 15, 20, 40, 41.
Reporting of declarations of party members or protesters <i>against</i> police violence.	7	Lines 2, 11, 21, 30, 34, 37, 38.
Police actions qualified by <i>Corriere</i> as aggressions <i>against</i> protesters.	3	Lines 32, 33, 36; lines 32 and 33 come from the same article.
Police denying the authorisation for a public demonstration (decision <i>against</i> someone).	1	Line 5.

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<sup>60</sup> The asterisk refers to the lemma. It helps searching for all words starting with *poliz* (*polizia*, *polizie*, *poliziotto*, *poliziotti*, *poliziesco*, *poliziesche*)

<sup>61</sup> The selection excluded the articles commenting on the action of foreign (to Italy) police.

In *l'Unità* this formula occurs 54 times (see Table A.A.6, Appendix A). The majority of occurrences refer to comments on police violence against workers or students (Table 3.3)<sup>62</sup>.

Table 3.3: Concordance: preposition *contro* (against) + *poliz\**. *L'Unità*, November 1969-February 1972.

Type of action	Number of occurrences	Lines (see Table A.A.6, Appendix A)
Police violence <i>against</i> workers or students.	29	Lines 1-4, 6, 7, 9-11, 13, 16, 17, 19-21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 30, 32, 40, 41, 42, 44, 45, 48, 52, 53.
Lack of intervention of the police <i>against</i> neo-fascists.	3	Lines 31, 33, 50.
Reflections about duties and role of the police.	2	Lines 18, 46.
Reports of aggressions <i>against</i> the police.	2	Lines 36, 37.
Trial for the killing of a policemen in Reggio Calabria.	1	Line 8.
Police clashing with neo-fascists in Reggio Calabria.	1	Line 12.
Repression of police protest.	1	Line 49.
Report of a trial for insulting a public official.	1	Line 26.

In the first years of the 1970s, the police were under crossfire of accusations of ruthlessness, incapacity and inefficiency and newspapers participated in the

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<sup>62</sup> On Line 35, the preposition *contro* refers to Reggio Calabria and not to the police. On line 54, the preposition *contro* refers to the “provocateurs” that cause violence during public demonstrations, from whom *l'Unità* wants to distance itself.

exasperation towards an already weak institutional organisation. These discourses fuelled the debate in news media about the social function of that institution. The Communist Party expressed through *l'Unità* the intention to demilitarise the police. This position attracted criticisms as it was perceived by policemen and conservative parties as “an attempt for moral and psychological disarmament” (Curti 2006, p. 93). *Corriere della Sera* complained about the violence of protesters but, albeit to a lesser degree than *l'Unità*, also about the police who failed to protect citizens (including protesters). *La polizia ringrazia* expresses policemen’s frustration about this state of affairs through the fiery speech of *Commissario* Bertone against journalists, judges and politicians:

Bertone: “People don’t feel protected by the police? It’s true, I know. But neither do the police feel protected by those who should watch our back. Everybody is against us, everybody! Judges, newspapers, parties...”.

As we will see in Chapter 5, in the *poliziottesco*, journalist and judges were part of the same line up of forces who worked against the police. However, *La polizia ringrazia* adopted an approach based on contradictions. In this way, it was able to exploit the ambiguities of news media representations around the actions of Italian civic institutions and use them to present sensational twists in the plot. The dialogue cited above happens after the jeweller scene. Before starting the narrative, the movie addresses the issue of police violence. Immediately, Bertone “checks off” sensitive topics: police using guns against protesters, Pinelli, and the inefficiency against criminality.

Bertone: “My men don’t feel comfortable at shooting anymore. Every time they, unfortunately [sarcastic], shoot at a criminal, there are some problems, and the first people to create problems are journalists.”

Journalist (Sandra): “But they were murderous robbers. Nobody would have had anything to object in that case. We criticise you when you break a student’s head or when you fire at workers...”

Journalist 2: “...or when you throw anarchists out of the window.”

Bertone: “The Pinelli case is still open, and if somebody has to pay, he will pay for it.”

Journalist (Sandra): “I doubt it...”.

The reference to discourses on police brutality is explicit. Anarchist Giuseppe Pinelli is evoked in the dialogue providing a link to actual events. Pinelli died after the massacre of Piazza Fontana, falling from the window of the office of *Commissario* Calabresi. The police declared that he was a suspect for the massacre, but his death made him a symbol of leftist struggle against state repression. Conversely, Calabresi became the symbol of a repressive state willing to kill its citizens to stop the political battle of the left. It seems that the film wanted to get rid as soon as possible of the controversy concerning the violent methods of the police associated with Calabresi. Nonetheless, the dialogue with journalists quoted above allows the *commissario* to position himself, and the movie, inside the controversies regarding the police, and outside at the same time. With his words, Bertone performs an unrequested apology that casts a progressive “aura” on the behaviour of the *commissario*. The political elaboration is precarious, as Bertone uses the case of a police captain who “nearly got into trouble” for shooting a criminal to argue against the media campaign against the police. However, stating the will of the institution to punish policemen’s misconducts makes him a believable character in the quest against the ultraconservative organisation that provides the twist of the plot in the second half of the movie.

The ambiguous representation of the police in the movie echoed conflicting interpretations of its role and function in news media. Commenting on the revelations of Borghese’s coup, Tortorella (1971, p. 1) wrote in *l’Unità*:

“What some bourgeois newspapers write is a shameful lie: that communists attack the whole police, the whole army, and the whole judiciary. The opposite is true. We attack what is rotten. Among magistrates, within the army and even within the police there are democratic forces, and it is time to bring them into the light and value them. What happens is, instead, that the elements of connivance with the right have a determining function.” (19/03/1971)

Journalists’ outcry at Bertone is in line with the approach of *l’Unità* towards Italian civic institutions. The journalist Sandra (Mariangela Melato) reproaches the *commissario* for those policemen breaking students’ head and firing on students stating at the same time that nobody would have complained if they had to shoot “murderous robbers”. The attack of the journalists, in the movies and news media, was against these policemen who had committed acts of indiscriminate violence against protesters.

Hence, the relationship between the police and journalists is based on contradictions. Bertone laments the unfair treatment accorded to the police by journalists, but he has an affair with Sandra, a leftist journalist. Melato's character could be read as a transposition of Camilla Cederna, a journalist working for *l'Espresso*, active in the media campaign against *Commissario* Calabresi. Sandra, in fact, holds a copy of *l'Espresso* (Figure 3.9) in one of the scenes that shows the collaboration between the journalist and the *commissario*<sup>63</sup>. However, the role of Cederna in the campaign against Calabresi is reversed in the movie, making the cinematic character a sidekick of Bertone.



Figure 3.9: Mariangela Melato's character holding a copy of *l'Espresso* in *La polizia ringrazia*.

The same ambivalent representation characterises the judiciary in *La polizia ringrazia* and news media alike. *Sostituto Procuratore* Ricciuti (Mario Adorf) is not a negative character, but a character who is not easy to trust until the final scene. As with other representatives of the judiciary in the *poliziottesco*, Ricciuti is an emanation of state law in both negative and positive terms. He represents the quibbles of the law that impede police investigations as well as the ethical principles of the democratic order, demanding respect for civil rights by law enforcement agents. This representation exemplifies the tension that characterised the approach towards the work of the

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<sup>63</sup> The reference is brief and almost unnoticeable. The newspaper is just a device that links the fictional action to the actual present and the recent past. The interpretation of this reference is left to audiences' prior knowledge. Cederna, as a leftist journalist involved in the struggle against state repression of dissent, was a recognisable media figure in the early 1970s.

judiciary in news media. Especially in the pages of *l'Unità*, this approach moved between praise for an institution that was opening to progressive political positions and complaints about a higher caste sponsoring class injustice against workers and leftist movements.

The character of Ricciuti can be linked to media representations of the judiciary before 1972. *Commissario Bertone*, in fact, acts under the supervision of Ricciuti, who participates with him in the action. Representations in both *l'Unità* and *Corriere della Sera* provided the framework to position judges as part of the “superior order of command” that was used to divert the blame for state inefficiency against violence from policemen to the judiciary. The judiciary was the civic institution that had the directive role. It took decisions, gave orders, evaluated and led police investigations. I have explored the corpora of *l'Unità* and *Corriere della Sera* to identify the verbs that were used most with the noun *magistratura* (judiciary) as subject. Both newspapers used verbs that exemplified a supervisory and decisional role in describing the actions of the judiciary (Table 3.4)<sup>64</sup>.

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<sup>64</sup> The two corpora presented a collocation of *magistratura* involving two negative verbs: to neglect (*l'Unità*) and to cover up (*Corriere della Sera*). They related to February 1972, when the accusations against Anarchists for Piazza Fontana collapsed with the introduction of the *pista nera* (black lead). The *pista nera* revolutionised the investigation into the massacre. The investigation turned on neo-fascist organisations and led to harsh criticism by both newspapers against the judges who had conducted the investigation against Anarchists.

Table 3.4: Verbs with *magistratura* (judiciary) as subject in *l'Unità* (November 1969-February 1972) and *Corriere della Sera* (November 1969-February 1972) (see complete figures in Tables A.A.7 and A.A.8, Appendix A).

<b><i>L'Unità</i>: verbs with <i>magistratura</i> as subject</b>	<b><i>Corriere della Sera</i>: verbs with <i>magistratura</i> as subject</b>
<i>aprire</i> (to open/to start [an investigation])	<i>procedere</i> (to proceed)
<i>chiedere</i> (to ask [more evidence to the police])	<i>adoperare/si adopereranno</i> (will endeavour)
<i>formalizzare</i> (to formalise [an investigation])	<i>ritenere</i> (to consider)
<i>disporre</i> (to dispose [a motion for dismissal])	<i>autorizzare</i> (to authorise [a wiretapping])
<i>spiccare</i> (to emit [a warrant])	<i>emettere</i> (to emit [a warrant])
<i>condurre</i> (to guide [an investigation])	<i>condurre</i> (to guide [an investigation])
<i>applicare</i> (to apply [the law])	<i>controllare</i> (to control)
<i>trascurare</i> (to neglect)	<i>coprire</i> (to cover up)

The different role accorded to the judiciary is evident when analysing the most recurrent verbs that have the noun *polizia* (police) as subject (Table 3.5). These verbs expressed direct actions in the field in both corpora. Tables 3.4 and 3.5 highlight similarities in the representation of the judiciary and the police between opposing news outlets. Comparing these representations to the ones in the *poliziottesco* shows how the representations of civic institutions in the *filone* were grounded more in Italian news media discourses on law and order than in Hollywood cinematic tropes.

Table 3.5: Verbs with *polizia* as subject in *l'Unità* (November 1969-February 1972) and *Corriere della Sera* (November 1969-February 1972) (See complete figures in Tables A.A.9 and A.A.10, Appendix A).

<i>L'Unità</i> : verbs with <i>polizia</i> as subject	<i>Corriere della Sera</i> : verbs with <i>polizia</i> as subject
<i>arrestare</i> (to arrest)	<i>seguire</i> (to follow [a lead])
<i>caricare</i> (to charge at)	<i>fronteggiare</i> (to confront physically)
<i>fermare</i> (to take into custody)	<i>cercare</i> (to seek)
<i>invadere</i> (to invade)	<i>trovare</i> (to find)
<i>muovere</i> (to move)	<i>operare</i> (to make [arrests])
<i>fare</i> (to do)	<i>intensificare</i> (to intensify [vigilance; research])

Hence, in articles between November 1969 and February 1972, the tendency was to differentiate the role of the two institutions through a defined hierarchy, especially concerning the opening and closing of investigations, reflecting legal dispositions. The similarities in the representation of the judiciary in the two newspapers, however, responded to different political motivations. *Corriere della Sera* praised the work of the judiciary for the investigation into Piazza Fontana. The paper did not wait long before uncritically accepting the official version<sup>65</sup>. *L'Unità* celebrated the actions of the progressive branch of the *Associazione Nazionale Magistrati* (National Judiciary Association), *Magistratura Democratica* (Democratic Judiciary), made mostly by young judges. The Communist newspaper constructed a narrative that associated a part of the judiciary with the struggle of the party against the “reactionary manoeuvres and the wave of repression” (Ghiara 1970, p. 1; *l'Unità* 26/03/1970). The judges of *Magistratura Democratica* intervened especially in relation to the numerous acts of repression related to factories strikes and crimes of conscience at the end of 1969 and in

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<sup>65</sup> The day after the arrest of Anarchist Pietro Valpreda for the bombing, Mario Cervi wrote, “After four days, the grievous mystery that surrounded the massacre of Piazza Fontana and the other attacks of last Friday has been solved” (1969, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 17/12/1969).

1970 (Figure 3.6). In the words of *l'Unità*, they were the ones who “refuse[d] to be only judges and d[id] not want to forget their role as citizens of the anti-fascist Republic born from the Resistance” (Ghiara 1970, p. 1; *l'Unità* 26/03/1970). This narrative also opposed the inequality of the actual system ruled by the higher ranks of the judiciary, considered to be part of a fascist elite (Extract U.28, Appendix E), to those magistrates acting to modernise the institution. The administration of justice, therefore, was employed by *l'Unità* to fight the ideological battle of the PCI. Fascism was the main enemy, but the “abstract” characterisation of the fascist threat contributed to the approach of *l'Unità* over faceless “sections”, “parts” or “groups” of the state (Extract U.28, Appendix E). The subdivision into good and evil public servant was instrumental to this ideological operation. On the other hand, before 1972, *Corriere della Sera* did not bother to express concerns regarding a judiciary acting to repress the working class or students.

The press ritual of the two newspapers for acts of political violence was conducted around the bodies of public figures and, by 1972, these bodies came from the ranks of the police. If protests against the police reverberated throughout the country, involving different strata of the population (people upset about violence in the street; people protesting against suffering from the violence of the police), protests concerning the judiciary were limited to the leftist milieu. The police were physically in the middle of socio-political conflicts. Despite the problems at different levels of the administration of justice, the police attracted the blame for the violence in the country, especially by left-wing newspapers.

The struggle against criminality was another field in which the operational role of the police had cast a shadow over the judiciary. Similar to other western countries, the 1970s saw an increase of criminal violence in Italy (Tarrow 1989, p. 298-299). Figure 3.10 shows how newspapers focused more and more on the violent outcomes of criminality. Criminal violence became a central topic in news media discourses and offered an opportunity to develop film narratives centred on the exploitation of fears and neuroses related to the perception of an increasingly violent country. 1971, the year before the release of *La polizia ringrazia*, was characterised by a peak of reports of

criminal action, especially related to mafia, kidnappings and murders<sup>66</sup>. Not casually, the first part of the movie focuses primarily on police struggle against criminality and critiques the limited means of the police to fight it.

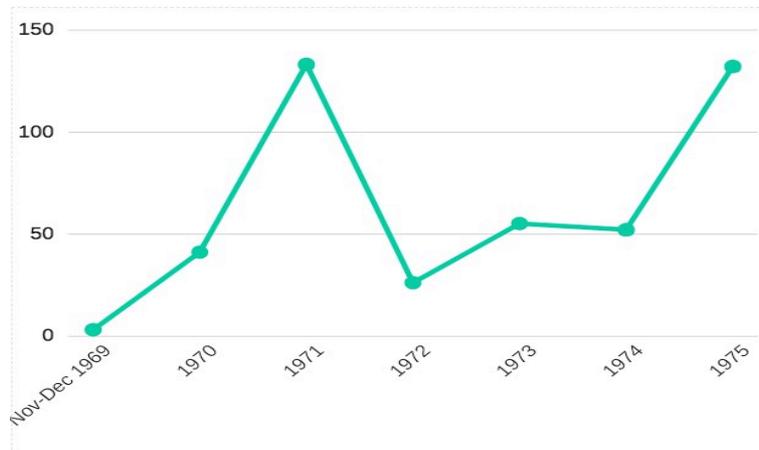


Figure 3.10: *Corriere della Sera* – 1969/1972 – Reports of actions of Italian institutions directed at criminality.

After a bank robbery in the south of Italy, Pajetta wrote, “If the police don’t work, as they should, this doesn’t mean that they are left inactive. On the contrary, it is clear that they are addressed, and used, as they should not be” (1971, p. 1; *l’Unità* 07/07/1971). It is not surprising, thus, that *La polizia ringrazia* registered the frustration of the police towards the accusations of inefficiency against criminality coming from the Italian press. Moreover, it does not surprise that the rhetorical mechanism mobilised to justify that frustration became the conflict between the police and the judiciary. *Corriere*, registering the complaints of the police after the killing of Agent Marino, expressed this tension (Extract C.28, Appendix E). Policemen complained about “current regulations” and the inexperience of young *sostituti procuratori* who lacked the “knowledge of police procedure” (Anon. 1973i, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 16/04/1973). The same concerns emerge from the words of *Commissario* Bertone. In *La polizia ringrazia*,

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<sup>66</sup> The kidnapping and murder of 13 years old Milena Sutter and, similarly, the kidnapping and murder of three girls (7, 9 and 11 years old) in Sicily were particularly brutal crimes of the year, capturing the headlines of Italian newspapers for several months. Another relevant case of criminality is the so-called *Strage di Polistena*, in which four people died during a bank robbery. Finally, *Cosa Nostra*, the Sicilian mafia, killed the *Procuratore Generale* of Palermo, Pietro Scaglione, and Agent Lorusso.

similarly to Hollywood movies like *Dirty Harry*, the rhetoric of the film opposed policemen, risking and losing their own lives, and the judiciary, releasing criminals whom the police had worked so hard to arrest. Talking about the killing of prostitutes, Bertone says: “The pimp is protected by the new dispositions of the law on public order. Only the judge can decide whether to send him to prison or not, but the judge doesn’t decide or, at least, he cannot decide”. During the interrogation of a suspect who has been severely beaten by the organisation of vigilantes, *Commissario Bertone* and *Sostituto Procuratore Ricciuti* discuss animatedly. Bertone is trying to get information about the location of a kidnapped girl, Ricciuti continues to ask to the suspect if he has been beaten by the police:

Bertone [screaming]: “Dr Ricciuti, I’m investigating a double murder and a kidnapping. There is a girl in the hands of a ruthless murder, can you make me do my job, yes or no?”

Ricciuti: “Go on, Dr Bertone, but I warn you that I’ll investigate the violence inflicted on this man!”.

*Sostituto Procuratore Ricciuti* in *La polizia ringrazia* is young, as are many of his cinematic colleagues (*Confessione di un commissario di polizia al procuratore della repubblica*; *La polizia sta a guardare*; *La polizia chiede aiuto*). This characteristic immediately connects him with the more progressive branch of the institution and is central to the reversal of his positioning at the end of the movie. In the first half of the movie, he fights continuously with Bertone. The policeman accuses him of not understanding police dynamics and methods, which are required to overcome the criminals defended by ambiguous lawyers who exploit the quibbles of the law.

Bertone [to journalists]: “To ensure each of these criminals are brought to justice the police had to work hard. Well, how many of these ‘good people’ do you think will be prosecuted? More or less 10 per cent. Because the judges, in agreement with the lawyers, drag this out, waiting for the next amnesty that sooner or later will suddenly give us back 2000 criminals [...]”.

There is lack a of communication between the two because they speak a different language and hold a different conception of justice. If the magistrate, Ricciuti, is concerned with the civil rights of suspects, Bertone, the *commissario*, is frustrated by the same concerns, which expose the police to the critiques of the press.

A comment on the amnesty, evoked in the dialogue above, opens the first sequence of the movie. The former *Questore*, Stolfi, explains in a television interview that Italy is witnessing a wave of criminality. He does it using the novel *Pinocchio* (Collodi, 1881). Specifically, Stolfi polemicises with the recent amnesty approved by the government citing Pinocchio's release from Catchfools prison by admitting to being a rogue. If the reference to the judiciary is yet ambiguous it becomes evident in the subsequent scene. A criminal, Bettarini, who the movie frames immediately as guilty, is led to the local *questura* to sign his release. Bertone had arrested him for the murder of the guard of a factory, but judges had acquitted him for lack of evidence.

Journalist: "*Commissario*, do you want to make a declaration on the verdict that acquitted Bettarini?"

Bertone: "Yes, you can write that the guardian of the photomechanics had four sons and today he has been killed a second time."

Sandra: "Don't write this [to another journalist]. Bertone already has enough troubles..."

The dialogue above introduces the title of the movie: *La polizia ringrazia*, which means "the police give thanks". It seems to suggest the police sarcastically thanking the judiciary for impeding the execution of their duties. The thesis is overturned in the final part of the film, but the contrast between the police and the judiciary is the rhetorical mechanism that justifies police frustration. The scene can be connected once again to *Dirty Harry*. However, Siegel's movie provides the "evidence" of the immoral behaviour of the District Attorney. The spectator has already witnessed the crimes of the serial killer, Scorpio, before the first encounter of Callahan with the judiciary. In *La polizia ringrazia*, the immoral behaviour of judges is the starting point of the narrative that does not need any "evidence". The director, Stefano Vanzina, could rely on a conflicting dialectic between the police and the judiciary that had already been established by Hollywood films. This dialectic, however, had to be adapted to the Italian context. In this respect, audiences' "prior knowledge" (Fisher 2014, p. 174) assumed by filmmakers participated in filling the gaps left by the shallow introduction of the characters. As is explained below, the reference to news media discourses sufficed to introduce the contrast between public figures in the Italian film. From this point of view, I argue that the *commissario* and the *sostituto procuratore* in the film are representatives of two distinct conceptualisations of law and order that can be traced in

the discourses originating in *l'Unità* and *Corriere della Sera*. They are not an emanation of the debate concerning the actual conflict between the police and the judiciary, which strongly emerged only in 1973.

Conflicts between the judiciary and the police had emerged occasionally, but actual disciplinary measures established by the judiciary against the police were extremely limited between 1969 and 1972. A significant difference between the two newspapers is represented by the coverage of the Pinelli affair, which culminated with the trial Calabresi-Lotta Continua in 1971. As can be observed in Figure 3.11, the reports of investigations directed at law enforcement agents in *l'Unità* reached a peak in 1971, while in *Corriere della Sera* the same trend is absent (Figure 3.12). Therefore, it can be argued that the character of *Sostituto Procuratore Ricciuti* was used more to address media discourses on the police by the leftist milieu than the actual behaviour of the judiciary. The contrast between the police and the judiciary, in fact, moves around the issue of police violence, and the issue was central especially in media discourses about police action during leftist demonstrations and in relation to the death of Giuseppe Pinelli.

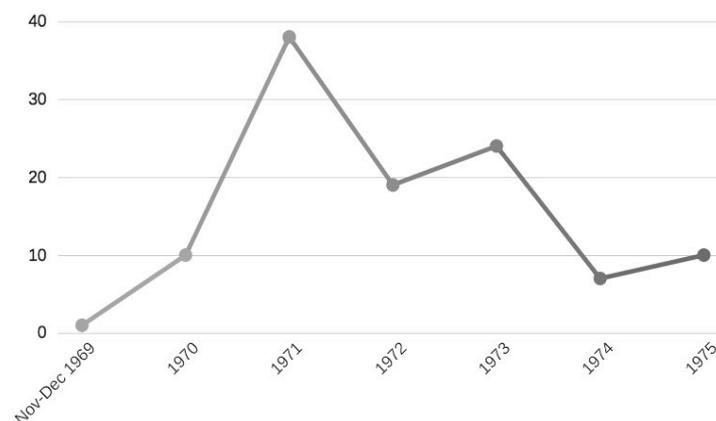


Figure 3.11: *L'Unità* – 1969/1975 - Reports of investigations directed at law enforcement agents.



Figure 3.12: *Corriere della Sera* – 1969/1975 – Reports of investigations directed at law enforcement agents.

A subsequent scene, in which the police arrest Bettarini again, is controversial if looked at through the lens of the Pinelli affair. Bettarini is left with Bertone’s men while he is speaking with Santalamenti in his office, authorising the suspect to call his lawyer. Bettarini provokes the policemen to the point of punching one of them. The reaction of the policeman is immediate, hitting him hard. At the moment Bertone enters the office, Bettarini’s lawyer is on the phone and laughs knowing that they now have enough evidence to accuse the police of brutality. The reference to Pinelli can be interpreted in different ways. On the one hand, the centre of the defensive strategy of Calabresi concerning the accusation of murdering Pinelli had been based on the fact that Calabresi was not present in the room when Pinelli fell from the window of the fourth floor of the *questura*. Secondly, the sequence put a negative shadow on the many different claims of police brutality surrounding the Pinelli affair and other cases denounced by the left. At the same time, the scene recalled a narrative device of *Dirty Harry*<sup>67</sup>, providing a significant example of the further layer of meaning that could emerge from the adaptation of international cinematic tropes to the Italian socio-political context.

All that happens in the first half of the movie is there to signal criminals exploiting what seems to be a “fake” problem. Controversial police methods seem necessary to fight the trickeries of criminals and their violence. The approach of the judiciary to police

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<sup>67</sup> In Siegel’s movie, Scorpio pays a man to beat him up. He does it to accuse Callahan of brutality and get rid of the policeman.

brutality participates in the “political ritual” that positions *Sostituto Procuratore Ricciuti* as a negative character. The initial robbery visualises the source of suffering of the Italian population. The first dialogue of Bertone with the journalists verbalises the blaming of judges “not [...] showing the appropriate solidarity and sympathy” (Elliot 1981, p. 149). The issue of police brutality is framed as a trick of a new generation of criminals helped by lawyers and, indirectly, by judges. Bertone and the police act to protect an “object of thought” represented by the life of innocent people. The violence unfolding in front of the spectator, therefore, becomes so excessive that it justifies Bertone’s violent methods and his fury against Ricciuti. The reversing of Ricciuti’s position happens when the “object of thought” is moved towards the safeguarding of democracy. The promise made by Ricciuti to bring forward Bertone’s investigation at the end of the movie can be read in line with the new hopes that the revelation of the *pista nera* and the investigation into Borghese’s attempted coup had brought into the leftist milieu. The final scene of the movie brings Ricciuti closer to the position of the police, suggesting an attempt at reconciliation between the two institutions. As is explained below, this reconciliation was represented through the opposition of Ricciuti with the higher ranks of the judiciary, who are involved in the reactionary plot.

This dynamic seems to suggest that *La polizia ringrazia* was directed to different political constituencies. The deployment of different ideological features aimed at attracting mass audiences while references to conflicting representations of civic institutions in news media was instrumental to reverse the positioning of the cinematic characters. The depiction of civic institutions in the first half of the movie relied more on the representations of conservative news outlets such as *Corriere della Sera*. Policemen were represented as victims and sponsored the necessity of stronger measures to fight crime. Narrative devices that can be associated with the press ritual cast a negative light on the claims of characters like leftist journalists and progressive judges. The second half of the movie aimed at re-enrolling the police into the set of democratic institutions fighting against reactionary manoeuvres. The movie adopted the perspective of leftist publications like *l’Unità* because this perspective was more apt to develop a discourse on deviant state apparatuses, which was central to conspiracy plots. However, the fascist plot was defeated by that part of state that was loyal to the democratic regime, countering the misconduct of isolated “rotten apples”. The final aim of the movie was to stress the necessity of bringing back the struggle against violence into the track of democratic legality. As we will see in Chapters 4 and 5, and in the

Conclusion, the same approach characterised, more or less consistently, most of the conspiracy mode of the *poliziottesco*.

### Quoting the past, constructing the present: Piazza Fontana and Borghese's attempted coup in *La polizia ringrazia*

The construction of and the relationship between institutional characters in the *poliziottesco* was not the only form of exploitation of news media discourses. *La polizia ringrazia* was a success at the box office – 2 billion 700 million lire in the season 1971-1972 (Luperto 2010, p. 74). Its plot, explicitly referencing recent events like Piazza Fontana and Borghese's attempted coup, could be considered a contribution to its success. These events had returned on the first pages of the two newspapers in the months that predated the release of this movie. Moreover, the same events had sensational evolutions in the months that followed the release of the film.

Piazza Fontana is relevant to understand the climate of suspicion towards Italian civic institutions. References to the massacre and the events that surrounded it (the death of Pinelli; the arrest and prolonged detention of anarchist Pietro Valpreda; and the assassination of chief inspector Luigi Calabresi in May 1972) regularly appeared in the conspiracy mode of the *filone*. The bombing spread the idea of the Italian state “conspiring against its citizens, arresting innocents, providing false leads, and manipulating evidence” (Foot 2009, p. 426). The result was the deterioration of the credibility of Italian institutions, “which had been a central element of post-war Italy after the defeat of fascism” (Foot 2009, p. 426). News media participated actively in the proliferation of different interpretations concerning Piazza Fontana, contributing to this sense of alienation. During the two years from December 1969 to the release of *La polizia ringrazia*, the understanding of Piazza Fontana in *l'Unità* and *Corriere della Sera* differed considerably. The first supported conspiracy theories. The second supported the action of the police and the judiciary. *Corriere* believed the official version supporting the action of civic institutions against the extra-parliamentary left. *L'Unità* attempted to delegitimise the investigation of the police, focusing on the “fascist plot” sponsored by sectors of the state.

The “fascist plot” was the starting point of any political analysis on current affairs by the Communist newspaper. This framework of interpretation allowed the fascist matrix of Piazza Fontana to be established immediately, without any evidence. Conspiracy

theories received a boost in credibility thanks to the inability of the Italian state to provide a judicial truth on Piazza Fontana. Between December 1971 and March 1972, the thesis supporting the actions of Italian civic institutions crumbled. From December 1971, *l'Unità* published a series of articles describing the investigation against the so-called *gruppo Ventura*. This was a group of neo-fascists from northern Italy who were accused of terrorist attacks, initially attributed to anarchists, in Milan and on various trains in the summer of 1969. The Communist newspaper linked the operations of this group to Piazza Fontana. In March 1972, newspapers confirmed this link, revealing the investigation against the neo-fascist group for the massacre. This historical context increased the possibility of acceptance from part of Italian audiences of the conspiracy plot deployed by *La polizia ringrazia*. Piazza Fontana, as the main stage of state conspiracy in media discourses, had created the climate to play cinematically with the “fascist plot” and with the distrust of Italian citizens towards civic authorities.

In 1971, the revelation of Borghese’s attempted coup added a further element to support the theory of “reactionary manoeuvres”, accompanied by new evidence of institutional misconduct. The coup, *golpe* in Italian, helped to connect the Italian context to the narrative concerning international power relations and Cold-war equilibrium<sup>68</sup>. Moreover, the Italian public had already witnessed an attempt to replicate the Greek model in the recent past: in 1967, the magazine *L'Espresso* published details of the attempted coup in 1964 by *Carabinieri* General De Lorenzo. Junio Valerio Borghese, the former commander of the X MAS, a division of the Navy that operated in the fascist *Repubblica Sociale di Salò* (1943-45), was the leader of the *Fronte Nazionale* (National Front). The Front established a compact anti-communist cartel at the right of the parliamentary neo-fascist party (MSI), committing acts of disruption whose responsibility had to fall on the left (Deaglio 2017, p. 216). The group’s plan involved disruptive actions that “would create a widespread climate of distrust, alarm and anxiety, paralysing government and exposing the ruling class’ impotence and

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<sup>68</sup> The word *golpe* was borrowed from Spanish, used to comment on coups in South America in the 1950s and 1960s (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil). The *golpe* narrative helped the left to connect the *strategia della tensione* to the international context, made up of CIA agents plotting to overturn democracies across the world (Anon. 1970i, p. 1; *l'Unità* 28/10/1970; Marzullo 1971, p. 1; *l'Unità* 23/08/1971).

corruption. Moderate public opinion would raise its voice for law and order to be enforced at all costs” (Ferraresi 1995, p. 118). At the same time, citizens committees called *comitati di salute pubblica* (committees of public health) had been formed in Italy to protect citizens from the violence of leftist protesters. The connections of these committees with Borghese’s organisation became public even before the attempted coup, in relation to the Lavorini affair<sup>69</sup>.

Borghese attempted the coup in the night between the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup> of December 1970. Military units had reunited in Rome to attack institutional venues, radio and television stations but, at the last moment, received the order to go back to their barracks. After three months, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 1971, *Paese Sera* reported the attempted coup. Institutional misconducts emerged soon afterwards. Newspapers discovered that the police had not retired Borghese’s passport (Madeo 1971b, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 20/03/1971; Madeo 1971c, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 22/03/1971), allowing him to escape abroad<sup>70</sup>. *Corriere della Sera* did not indulge in this detail and shortly dismissed the news on Borghese’s coup. Italian authorities had discovered the reactionary plot and arrested the main suspects of its organisation. *L’Unità* exploited errors of the Italian investigative machine to attack the police. The Communist newspaper elaborated the coup in terms of police cover-ups, abetment and conflict with the judiciary. An association of ideas linked the police misconduct to the weak action of the government not asking for Borghese’s extradition, suggesting a shared motif between them (Extract U.27, Appendix E).

News about Borghese remained central in the media agenda, especially in *l’Unità* (Anon. 1971d, p. 1; 08/06/1971; Anon. 1971g, p. 1; p. g. 1971, p. 1; 14-15/10/1971; Anon. 1972a, p. 1; 16/01/1972; Anon. 1972b, p. 1; 14/02/1972). At the same time as the release of *La polizia ringrazia*, in February 1972, the Court of Appeal of Rome decided to free the suspects of the attempted coup for lack of evidence (Anon. 1972d, p. 1;

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<sup>69</sup> Ermanno Lavorini, 12 years old, was kidnapped and murdered in 1969. During the investigations, it was discovered that he had been accidentally killed by young adherents to the *Fronte Nazionale Monarchico*. *L’Unità* theorised the murder as a means to get easy money to buy guns and ammunition for the organisation (Del Bosco 1970, p. 1; *l’Unità* 21/08/1970, p. 1). Criminality, political extremism and conspiracy theories merged inextricably in this dynamic.

<sup>70</sup> He died in Spain in 1976.

Gambescia 1972, p. 1; p. g. 1972a, p. 1; 18-20/02/1972; p. g. 1972b, p. 1; Pirandello 1972, p. 1; Anon. 1972f, p. 1; 26-27/02/1972). This event offered the possibility to *l'Unità* of providing the usual ambivalent representation of the judiciary. It praised the magistrates who were trying to investigate neo-fascists, Borghese included. Conversely, it depicted the higher ranks of the judiciary as the most reactionary branch of the institution allowing the release of Borghese for obscure reasons<sup>71</sup>. Nonetheless, if some magistrates represented a hope against fascism for the Communist newspaper, the police were the main obstacle to that struggle, accused of protecting neo-fascists, in the streets and in the investigation against Borghese.

Piazza Fontana overlapped with Borghese's coup in *La polizia ringrazia* providing a first model of the flat present, outlined in Chapter 2, that compressed the historical narrative developed since 1969. Conspiracy theories surrounding the *strategia della tensione* revolved around the possibility of an authoritarian coup d'état. Acts of terrorism like the massacre of Piazza Fontana had to convince citizens to support a stronger government able to stop the chaos in the country. Intentionally or not<sup>72</sup>, Vanzina merged Borghese's attempted coup, represented by the two newspapers as a final attempt of retired fascist officials to seize power, the anti-Communist citizens committees of public health (*comitati di salute pubblica*), and the moral panic that characterised the aftermath of Piazza Fontana. Also connecting with the representation of Borghese's escape as the consequence of police negligence or collusion<sup>73</sup>, the result was a story based on a coup strategy organised by top rank and retired police officials.

Even before *Commissario* Bertone discovers the existence of the organisation, he immediately recognises the execution of a criminal as an act of political fanaticism. He recognises the style of the “[fascist] old times”, vaguely connecting the crime to groups sponsoring the necessity to re-establish the death penalty. In fact, the organisation of

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<sup>71</sup> On February 20, 1972, the news about the release of the suspects of the Borghese coup was framed as a consequence of pressures on the higher ranks of the judiciary (p. g. 1972a, p. 1; *l'Unità*, 20/02/1972).

<sup>72</sup> Vanzina declared that he took inspiration from the Brazilian Death Squads (Faldini and Fofi 1984, p. 451), even though the allusion to Borghese's organisation is striking, intentional or not.

<sup>73</sup> In 1974 officials of the police and carabinieri were arrested in relation to Borghese's attempted coup (Anon. 1974j, p. 2; *Corriere d'Informazione*, 11/10/1974).

vigilantes that is killing criminals who managed to escape justice, aims at proving the inefficiency of democratic institutions to tackle the wave of criminality<sup>74</sup>. The group operates through a fake citizens committee called *Roma Pulita* (Clean Rome), which leave the bodies under a banner (Figure 3.13) stating: “Rome is yours as well. Help us to keep it clean”. Below the inscription, there is a photo of a vigilante holding a truncheon. *Roma Pulita* can be connected with the *comitati di salute pubblica* related to Borghese’s *Fronte Nazionale*.



Figure 3.13: the banner of the fake citizen committee “Roma Pulita” in *La polizia ringrazia*.

The introduction of the higher ranks of the police in *La polizia ringrazia* is an occasion to reference the climate of emergency that had characterised the aftermath of Piazza Fontana. The day after the bombing, *Corriere della Sera* had to remind its readers:

“Democracy must defend itself: with democratic laws, respecting the democratic order, the last and non-replaceable shelter against violence and madness. It is not the moment of emergency law; it is not the moment of martial law. In republican legislation, there are all the tools to isolate the terrorists and punish the criminals.”

(Anon. 1969h, p. 1; 13/12/1969)

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<sup>74</sup> Bertone: “If anyone had an interest in showing that our democratic methods are not effective against criminality, and decided to make a kind of “cleaning” on his own, what do you think he would do first? Precisely this. He would take the first two scoundrels who have appeared in crime news and kill them to give an example and shake the public opinion”.

The reminder responded to the claims of the right to establish special laws to fight terrorists – the anti-social Nazi-Maoists<sup>75</sup> and anarchists identified by *Corriere* as the source of subversion in Italy (Anon. 1969j, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 14/12/1969). Emergency laws were seen as the prerequisite for the establishment of a reactionary government, supported by outraged citizens tired of “red” violence. In *La polizia ringrazia*, the chief of police is introduced only at the moment Bertone reveals to journalists that the murders of criminals claimed by *Roma Pulita* is part of a plot to take power in Italy. The chief of police is particularly angry with Bertone for his revelation to the press. If the *questore* is worried about how to explain the plot to the chief of police, the chief of police is worried about how to tell it to the minister. This sequence immediately gives the impression of the higher ranks more concerned about answering to their superiors than about finding the truth about the crimes. The dialogue between the chief of police, the *questore*, Bertone, and the minister casts a negative light on the top functionaries of the police:

Police Chief: “Minister, you know how things are, and you know that the police have their hands tied. Try untying them, and you’ll see.”

Minister: “What do you mean?”

Police Chief: “We are facing an emergency situation; we need to adopt emergency measures.”

Minister: “What measures?”

*Questore*: “For instance, we could start suspending some rights accorded by the law concerning arrests and interrogations. I can guarantee results in 24 hours.”

The minister refuses, but the request makes clear the position of the higher ranks of the police. They want to suspend constitutional rights to be able to use violence and get results. At this moment of the movie, the constitutional rights are the same that Ricciuti is asking Bertone to respect, provoking the rage of the policeman.

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<sup>75</sup> This term was used in the aftermath of Piazza Fontana to express the theory of the joint venture between opposite extremes.

The scene starts the reversal of the positioning of the police and the judiciary, established in the first half of the movie. *Commissario* Bertone discovers that there are policemen at the top of the organisation of vigilantes. The same organisation is described as being composed of “former policemen known as tough, who had had problems concerning brutality, power abuse and manipulation of evidence”. What was presented as a marginal problem in the first half of the movie, police brutality, becomes the central characteristic of undemocratic policemen. Ricciuti’s concerns become legitimate also in the framework of the movie. Facing his death, Bertone declares his aversion to the same methods he used before. Bertone, in fact, declares:

“I asked for more stringent laws because I thought they could help me to be a better policeman. I acted in good faith. Now, however, I realise that those laws could be used not only against crime. Consequently, I risk becoming a Bourbon copper<sup>76</sup>.”

The finale demonstrates that there are also civic servants who are willing to pay with their lives to take down the political and moral corruption within the Italian state. Moreover, it presents the redemption of the protagonist that seems like an unasked-for absolution of the institution. Bertone’s death nuances the controversy concerning his methods. Similar to what was happening in the discourses on police violence in *l’Unità*, the deaths of policemen moved the discourse from the brutality of the executioners to the responsibility of the top ranks of the institution and the government. Few doubts are left about the complicity of the higher ranks of the police through the composition of the last scene. The *questore*, the chief of police, and the former *questore* Stolfi gather at the place where Bertone’s body has been found. One frame is particularly eloquent (Figure 3.14).

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<sup>76</sup> The expression Bourbon copper refers to the negative characterisation of the police in the *Regno delle Due Sicilie* (Kingdom of the Two Sicilies), the kingdom that ruled the south of Italy before the unification. As Dickie writes, referring to the final years of the kingdom, “[f]or years, the police were feared and despised because they were considered a corrupt means of repression” (2014, Section 1, Chapter 3).



Figure 3.14: Stolfi (right), the chief of police (centre) and the *questore* (left) look suspiciously at Ricciuti in the final scene of *La polizia ringrazia*.

The frame appears when *Sostituto Procuratore* Ricciuti concludes his conversation with a man left faceless through the *mise-en-scène*. The man has been addressed by Ricciuti through the title of *Eccellenza*, which, in Italian tradition, was accorded to the first president or the *procuratore generale* of the court of Cassation and to the presidents of the courts of Appeal<sup>77</sup>. This element could lead to the inference of Ricciuti talking to a representative of the higher ranks of the judiciary<sup>78</sup>, who discourages Ricciuti to risk his career continuing *Commissario* Bertone's investigation. Ricciuti refuses to surrender, finally convinced by the death of the *commissario* and by the suspicious attitude of the man in the car. The last frame sees Ricciuti crossing the line of sight of the journalist Sandra, who looks at him hopefully. A young *sostituto procuratore* is the only hope left to fight corrupt state apparatuses that, in the police and the judiciary, are plotting to return Italy to dictatorship. The initial thesis of the movie, considering the judiciary the plague of Italian justice, is reversed, even though not even that institution can be regarded immune from the reactionary virus.

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<sup>77</sup> The R.D. n. 2210 art. 4, dated 1927 accorded the title to these roles. It was abolished in 1945 but continued to be used in Italian courts.

<sup>78</sup> In other movies, the *procuratore generale* is addressed through the title of “*eccellenza*” (*Confessione di un commissario di polizia al procuratore della repubblica*; *La polizia ha le mani legate*).

## Conclusion

Focusing on the period between 1969 and 1972, this chapter has identified the links between newspaper representations of the actions of Italian civic institutions, events of the recent past, and the characters and plot of *La polizia ringrazia*. The death of Agent Annarumma has been identified as the starting point for the creation of the “serial figure” of the rank-and-file policemen. In news media, the image of the poor southern peasant emigrating to the north only to lose his life was replicated for successive deaths of policemen and became a shared representation between opposing news outlets. Even though the low-ranking policeman does not die in *La polizia ringrazia*, it has been identified how this emotional portrait of public servants characterised subsequent representations. Vanzina’s movie, however, similarly to newspapers’ narratives, engaged with the rhetoric of the underpaid policemen oppressed by the higher ranks and sharing a similar condition with lower-class people to stimulate empathy or commiseration. The chapter has also explored differences and similarities in the representation of the judiciary by *l’Unità* and *Corriere della Sera*. Similar to the police, the reports of the actions of the judiciary expressed a conflict between higher and lower ranks, reflected by a generational gap. Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis has highlighted a clear differentiation between roles and functions of judges and policemen, positioning the judiciary at the top of institutional hierarchies, which is reflected in the relationship between *Commissario Bertone* and *Sostituto Procuratore Ricciuti*. However, the analysis has emphasised how the conflict between policemen and judges in *La polizia ringrazia* connects with media discourses by the leftist milieu on the judiciary and the police, more than replicating news media representations of the actions of Italian judges. *Sostituto Procuratore Ricciuti* moves as *l’Unità* would have expected the judiciary to move against police brutality, connecting with the discourses surrounding the progressive branch of the judiciary, *Magistratura Democratica*.

This chapter, moreover, has identified how the conspiracy sub-strand of the *poliziottesco* that originated with *La polizia ringrazia* elaborated references to two significant events, charged by political meanings, of the early 1970s: Piazza Fontana and Borghese’s attempted coup. The representation of the two events and the role undertaken by the police was analysed to identify how *La polizia ringrazia* merged the events and created a flat present instrumental to the plot. Vanzina and the screenwriter Lucio De Caro merged Piazza Fontana and Borghese, as the narrative of the two events

developed by the press offered that possibility. As will be explained in the next chapters, the operation of merging different events into a “grand narrative” was peculiar to the *filone*. The argument of this thesis, in fact, identifies in this element one of the contributions of the *filone* to the historical discourse on the Italian 1970s. The same grand narrative can be recognised in Italian newspapers in their effort to find connections and attribute order to the different tragedies of the decade. *Poliziotteschi* seem to connect with these news media narratives developing at the same time of their release. This connection makes them a product of mainstream culture, involved in the same contradictions, more than a marginal manifestation of right-wing culture. The “serialisation” of crime news that characterised the 1970s provided the element to construct a shared narrative with cinematic serial products. Accordingly, *La polizia ringrazia* and subsequent *poliziotteschi* depicted the *strategia della tensione* as an effort of a single reactionary organisation with ramifications in the Italian state.

The return of Borghese in news media, concerning the release from police custody of his accomplices, at the same time as the first screening of *La polizia ringrazia*, made the reference to the recent past more resonant. It helped audiences to make an association between the recent past, the present and the cinematic action. The formula of Vanzina’s film was replicated in subsequent years. It was adapted to different historical contexts and to further developments on the investigation about Piazza Fontana, *Commissario Calabresi* and the coup strategy. It gave producers and directors the confidence about the profitability of a serial production of movies centred on the police. The historical context provided the interpretational conflicts that had the potential to be exploited to attract audiences.

This conflict related mostly to the issue of police violence, around which *La polizia ringrazia* organised the positioning of judges as negative characters in the first half of the movie, and the reversing of that positioning in the second half. The press performance as political ritual was addressed to argue about the narrative devices mobilised to frame the judiciary in negative terms. Together with journalists, judges did not provide the appropriate solidarity towards the victims of ruthless crimes and the police attempting to protect innocent victims. In this framework, the violent methods of *Commissario Bertone* seem to be a minor issue compared to the violence and trickeries of criminals. What has emerged has been an attempt at disavowal of police brutality performed by Bertone through an unrequested apology for the death of Giuseppe Pinelli

in police custody, and through a clumsy elaboration of the issue with the expedient of Bettarini's fraud. The operation can be read in line with the necessity of legitimising the prominent role of Italian police in Italian cinema, which, in the words of Sergio Martino, were not considered credible by distributors in action movies in the early 1970s (Olesen 2017, p. 264). It could be argued that the same necessity responded to the need to counter the delegitimisation of the police in a moment of profound crisis both in terms of institutional organisation and in the relationship with the citizenship.

However, when the threat posed by the reactionary organisation becomes the democratic system, the film makes police brutality central to the framing of conspirators. The respect of democratic laws and values becomes the precondition for the re-enrolment of the police into the parties involved in the defence of the state. Connecting to the rhetoric that surrounded the reports of police fatalities in news media, the death of Bertone redeems the institution from the backlash related to police misconduct. The narrative dramatised by the *poliziottesco* arose from the broken promises of Italian institutions. The *filone* allegorised the search for truth in a society in which it seemed that authorities struggled to prevent this task, providing an emotional release instead of analysis.

The analysis of *La polizia ringrazia* serves to address the seriality of the *filone* in the following chapters, identifying the basic formula of the conspiracy mode of the *poliziottesco*. The analysis of the representation of the judiciary in news media prior to 1972 provides the basis for addressing the evolution of media discourses on judges in Chapter 5. The exploration of this evolution will help to engage with the accumulation of political meanings over the action of *poliziotteschi*'s judges in other movies of the conspiracy mode. The analysis of the rank-and-file policeman as a "serial figure" was relevant to address the issue of policemen's deaths. It helped to connect the narrative function of these deaths to the killing of *Commissario* Bertone, identified as a means to make the *commissario* a "popular" character and drive audiences' sympathy towards him. This narrative device was reinforced through the accumulation of formulaic tropes presented in subsequent movies, which included other tragic events in the set of references to the 1970s socio-political conditions. Accordingly, Chapter 4 takes *Commissario* Luigi Calabresi as a case study to understand to what extent the re-elaboration of his death in the *poliziottesco* can be linked to the evolving media discourse on this public figure. The chapter analyses the representation of Calabresi

made by Italian cinema and news media before and after his death, with a specific focus on the role of *Lotta Continua* in the construction of the media figure of the *Commisario*. The seriality of the *filone* is addressed to understand how Calabresi “travelled” throughout the *filone*, responding to the evolving framework of interpretation of his figure and death.



## Chapter 4 - Death of a *Commissario*: constructing the Italian *commissario* through the figure of Luigi Calabresi

### Introduction

Having established the link between representations of Italian civic institutions, criminality, political violence, and *La polizia ringrazia*, this chapter explores the evolution of the character of the *commissario*. After highlighting how the *filone* negotiated its relationship with international models, the chapter will explore the event that, from the Italian context, influenced the development of *commissari* in this *filone*: the assassination of *Commissario* Luigi Calabresi. The construction of Calabresi's media persona before his assassination will be explored to understand how the *filone* participated in the negotiation of the meaning of his death in the early 1970s. The analysis also aims to identify how Calabresi-like characters were used to link different events of the *strategia della tensione*, documenting the confusion concerning the interpretation of the 1970s present and recent past. Moving forward from the formula proposed by *La polizia ringrazia*, this chapter analyses how the media figure of Luigi Calabresi was used by the *poliziottesco* to negotiate the issue of police brutality. The publications of the extra-parliamentary leftist group *Lotta Continua*, cinema, and forms of popular culture will be explored to frame the construction of Calabresi as the "torturing commissario", the embodiment of police brutality.

The figure of *Commissario* Calabresi is still quite controversial in Italy. There is a gap in the scholarship on Italian cinema concerning the representation of Calabresi's figure. As O'Leary noticed, "the victims of the *anni di piombo* tended to be [...] represented by Aldo Moro" (O'Leary 2011, p. 74), the president of the Christian Democrat party, who was kidnapped and killed by the *Brigate Rosse* in 1978. O'Leary continues:

"To some extent, memory and history have been the victims of the adept self-promotion of the *Brigate Rosse* (BR), as well as of the mysterious nature of the large-scale bombings by the right known as *stragismo*." (O'Leary 2011, p. 80)

Similarly, the memory of Calabresi's death, and of the resulting climate, has been a "hostage" of the media campaign sponsored by the press-organ of the extra-parliamentary leftist group *Lotta Continua* against the policeman. With the help of tropes of popular and mainstream culture, the militant group linked Calabresi to a

negative mythology that brought him to the centre of leftist protest and conspiracy theories. Accordingly, this press campaign became the primary vehicle to represent his journey towards death (*Romanzo di una strage*, Giordana 2012; *Gli anni spezzati: il commissario*, Diana 2014). This reading gains support from the final verdict against former leaders of *Lotta Continua* Sofri, Bompreschi and Pietrostefani, accused in 1988 by Leonardo Marino, a former militant of the same group. The reading, unconsciously or not, limits the narration of Calabresi to the press campaign and neglects how the legacy of this public figure was negotiated in the aftermath of the assassination.

Sergio Martino's *Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia* (1973) and *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide* (1975), and Enzo G. Castellari's *La polizia incrimina: la legge assolve* (1973) are considered for the reworking of Calabresi's assassination (though the plot of the latter film, contrary to Martino's movies, takes place outside the framework of what Fisher defines as the "conspiracy mode" of the *poliziottesco* (2014, p. 174)). Newspaper descriptions of the murder and the investigation are used to explore the information available to contemporary Italian audiences to attribute meaning to the killing and the cinematic reworking of the *Commissario*. This chapter questions the "ghost" paradigm, analysing the conceptualisation of Curti (2006), Uva (2007), and O'Leary (2011). These scholars reflect on the supposed feeling of guilt from the sector of Italian cinema that had invested its creative efforts in the demonisation of Calabresi. This chapter, however, challenges this interpretation, highlighting the possibility of a sector of Italian culture not invested by specific responsibilities concerning the construction of Calabresi's negative figure. Moreover, news media analysis, especially concerning reports of the investigation into his death, emphasises the interpretation of the event as the result of neo-fascist terrorism in the early 1970s. The specificity of the context of release of the movies, therefore, is addressed to avoid the possible bias of retrospective readings, affected by the verdict condemning former leaders of *Lotta Continua* for the murder.

Finally, the movies comprehending Calabresi-like characters are analysed to frame the merging of different events to fit fictional plots based on the *strategia della tensione*. This operation participates in the construction of the flat present of the *poliziottesco*, allowing these serial products to return to the point of departure through the presentation of undefeatable conspirators. Moreover, this flat present connected with news media narrations of the conspiracy theory as the result of the machinations of a

single reactionary organisation. The final aim is to identify how the *poliziottesco* exploited media representations of Italian civic institutions to qualify the action of cinematic policemen nationally and attach their narrative to contemporary events. The operation performed by *poliziottesco* filmmakers, more or less aware of what they were doing, makes the *filone* a document of the confusion that characterised media representations of the present and, therefore, a historical document of the conflict occurring between Italians and their state.

### Transnational elements in the definition of the cinematic figure of the Italian *commissario*

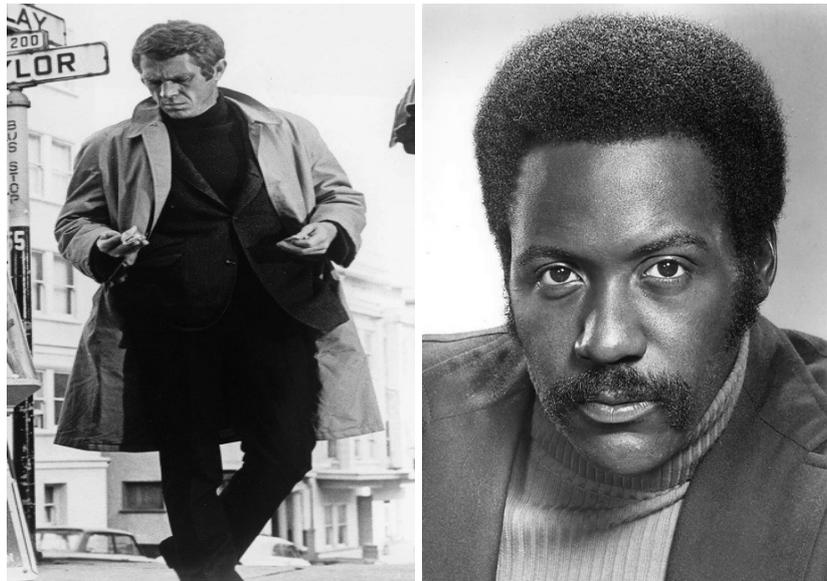
The *poliziottesco* presents elements of transnational cinema, conceptualised as “the dissolution of any stable connection between a film’s place of production and/or setting and the nationality of its makers and performers” (Ezra and Rowden 2006, p. 1). However, as Fisher (forthcoming) recognises, “the majority of these films [...] were made solely by Italian production companies [...] with a focus on domestic profits”. Producers, directors, and screenwriters were Italian, operating within a cultural context in which Italian identities were negotiated in an on-going relationship with American and European cultural inputs. The movies, therefore, can be interpreted as a sign of the internalisation of an American narrative and iconographic repertoire, in which cultural references “were instantly recognisable” (Fisher, forthcoming). As has been said in Chapter 3, this repertoire was charged by ulterior layers of meaning through references to the Italian socio-political conditions.

In fact, while the “police procedural” paradigm had been developed and brought to success by Hollywood, in the 1970s Italian directors succeeded at winning their audiences through the adaptation of specific tropes of trans-Atlantic models, which were incorporated in new and original productions. In fact, Hollywood and French films provided tropes concerning characters’ behaviour and physical appearance, themes, and narrative devices. As Curti observes:

“There is a red ribbon that ties the [French] *polar* [a term derived by the fusion of police procedural and noir] of the 1970s-1980s to the Italian *poliziesco*, and it can be seen in movies that show violent cops with unorthodox methods in a degraded urban context” (2006, p. 238).

Directors such as Melville and Verneuil “drew on the American thriller tradition of the 1940s and 1950s, [...] to develop a range of new and specifically French textual elements [...] while also reflecting cynically on the cultural relationship between Europe and America” (Palmer 2002, p. 138). The *poliziottesco* also originated from the negotiation of these international influences, themselves inscribed within a web of cinematic references that constitute crime films. This responsiveness to diverse international trends contributed to the non-linear evolution of the *poliziottesco* as a genre, providing the *filone* with a range of formal and thematic tropes that allowed filmmakers to innovate the standard formula provided by *La polizia ringrazia*.

Confirming established practices of exchange in Europe, different French “*commissari*” like the experienced Marcel Bozzuffi, and the young Luc Merenda acted in the *poliziottesco*. The casting of declining Hollywood stars (in age, if not in popularity) participated in the construction of this transnational web of references. This had been a common practice of the Spaghetti Western (Lee Van Cleef; Henry Fonda; Jack Palance) and the *poliziottesco* continued this practice with the employment of actors such as Henry Silva, Cyril Cusack, Richard Conte, Chris Avram, Martin Balsam, and James Withmore. Moreover, as has been seen in Chapter 3, elements of the *mise-en-scène* and allusions to the plots of Hollywood blockbusters such as *Dirty Harry* played a determinant role in constructing the visual grammar of *La polizia ringrazia*. A specific marker of the *poliziottesco* was the crew neck sweater of the protagonist. The sweater became a fashion item of the 1970s, repeatedly employed in the outfits of policemen and private detectives such as Frank Bullit, John Shaft (Figures 4.1 and 4.2), and Buddy “Cloudy” Russo, Roy Scheider’s character in *The French Connection* (Friedkin 1971).



Figures 4.1 and 4.2: Steve McQueen as Frank Bullitt in *Bullitt* (Yates, 1968); Richard Roundtree as John Shaft in *Shaft* (Parks, 1971).

Not surprisingly, Italian cinematic *commissari* all wear crew neck sweaters that inscribe them in the wave of 1970s police commissioners. Other details participated in creating specific links with certain international stars, like the hairstyle. The hairstyle of Franco Gasparri's Mark (Figure 4.4) highlights the visual impact of *Dirty Harry* (Figure 4.3) on the representation of Italian *commissari*. Interestingly, the comparison of *commissari* in the *poliziottesco* with the media persona of Calabresi shows the twofold source of inspiration of the Italian policemen. As is explained below, Calabresi's dress style caught the attention of popular cultural productions. The photos of the *Commissario*, primarily disseminated during the trial between him and *Lotta Continua*, can be interpreted to have affected Merenda's Caneparo in *Milano trema* and other subsequent movies. Figures 4.5 and 4.6 highlight how Calabresi's hairstyle finds similarities with Caneparo's, while the construction of the poster of the movie links the film also to *Dirty Harry*, creating a complex set of intertextual references.



Figures 4.3 and 4.4: Italian posters of *Dirty Harry* (*Ispettore Callaghan: il caso Scorpion è tuo*) and *Mark il poliziotto*.



Figures 4.5 and 4.6: Police *Commissario* Luigi Calabresi at the trial Calabresi-Lotta Continua; Luc Merenda as *Commissario* Caneparo in *Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia*.

Thereby, as explored in Chapter 1, production factors and market trends can help to trace the direction of creative efforts in the Italian film industry. Contextual factors also contributed to changes in the formula of the *poliziottesco* outlined by *La polizia ringrazia*. Layers of meaning accumulated through the merging of international cinematic tropes and references to media discourses concerning the Italian socio-political conditions, especially in the framework of the *strategia della tensione*. The analysis of the Italian mediascape and, specifically, the representation of particular

public figures, can help to identify what events, figures, and media discourses influenced changes in the serial features of the *poliziottesco*. If, as Bondanella argues, “many of its [the *poliziottesco*] plots and its most popular themes could easily have been lifted from the pages of the *cronaca nera* (crime news) of any urban newspapers from the 1960s to the early 1980s” (2009, p. 456), what events contributed to affect the change in the representation of the Italian *commissario*? How did media representation of specific public figures affect their use in movies that predated and followed the rise of the *poliziottesco*? The rest of this chapter analyses the construction of the media persona of *Commissario* Luigi Calabresi to identify to what extent this representation of the real *commissario* contributed to a shift in the impact of police brutality in the *filone*.

### A moral condemnation: the construction of Calabresi as a negative character

Giorgio Boatti questions the simplistic conception of the *strategia della tensione* that has been handed down to us today. He writes that the idea of a single reactionary mind driving the plot of attempted coup-d'état, provocations and massacres is fascinating but risks diminishing the responsibility of the institutions designed to fight such plots and ensure the loyalty of state functionaries (Boatti 2007, p. 473). As Cento Bull (2007, p. 45-46) explains, the *strategia della tensione* can hardly be considered as a single operation, but rather one that developed through different stages and involved many different sectors of the Italian state, civil society, and international organisations. However, the idea of a single organisation, also sponsored by newspapers (Tortorella 1974, p. 1; Extract U.14, Appendix D) finds confirmation in the elaborations of different *poliziotteschi* (*La polizia ringrazia*, *La polizia sta a guardare*, *Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia*, *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide*, *La polizia ha le mani legate*, *Poliziotti violenti*), which adopt the perspective unproblematically, also influenced by the needs of narrative simplicity: to the point that Mark, in the 1976 *Mark colpisce ancora*, does not react at all to the communication that an organisation also composed of members of European secret services manoeuvres terrorists to spread chaos in the continent. The recurrence of supranational organisations, moreover, allowed *poliziotteschi* filmmakers to diminish further the political motivation of terrorists.

The perception of the *strategia della tensione* in the first half of the 1970s is central to comprehend why the *poliziottesco* employed Calabresi-like characters as a recognisable historical marker to increase the emotional impact of the movies. *Commissario*

Calabresi had been inscribed within the framework of the conspiracy theory at different levels: before his death as a sponsor of what was believed to be an international anti-Communist plot; after his death, as a victim of the strategy of reactionary provocations. The latter interpretation endured until the end of the decade. In this respect, the “ghost” paradigm, a retrospective reading focused on the guilt (Curti 2006, p. 97) and disavowal (O’Leary 2011, p. 102) of leftist filmmakers, seems to monopolise scholarly interpretations of the re-working of Calabresi in the *poliziottesco*. Curti interpreted the transformation of Calabresi into an exemplary figure as “if cinema felt to owe something to the *commissario* and wanted to be forgiven” (2006, p. 97). On the other hand, O’Leary, recognising the lack of political sophistication of the filmmakers, analysed the shift of blame from left to right as a signal of “a mechanism of disavowal yet again at work. The murder of Calabresi was the fulfilment of a widespread desire and so becomes the emblem of a sense of communal guilt” (2011, p. 102).

Contrary to O’Leary and Curti, I argue that the references to Calabresi in these movies – and not in any other of that time - denote the presence of a significant part of Italian cinema that felt entitled to use his controversial figure without the need for political complexity. It signals the conscious effort to exploit the tragedy in a context in which leftist filmmakers withdrew from the theme. *Poliziotteschi*, as O’Leary argues, were not meant to be believed but worked as a “fantasy projection” - part anxiety about the uncertainty and the lack of justice, and part wish-fulfilment of a resolution of the menaces of political and criminal violence (O’Leary 2011, p. 95). As the rest of the chapter aims at demonstrating, Calabresi embodied this tension between anxiety and wish-fulfilment.

Luigi Calabresi was born in Rome in 1937 and moved to Milan at the beginning of his career. Before the Piazza Fontana bombing, he had been at the centre of investigations against leftist militants. *Corriere della Sera* signalled him as one of the functionaries who rescued the leftist militant who had been attacked at the funeral of agent Annarumma (Anon. 1969d, p. 9; *Corriere della Sera* 22/11/1969). Some months before, he had testified in the trial against seven leftist radicals for violence against the police in the protest that had followed the so-called *eccidio di Battipaglia* (in which two people were killed by the police) (Anon. 1969a, p. 4; *Corriere d’Informazione* 16-17/06/1969). His presence was also registered on other occasions of clashes with leftist students (Anon. 1969f, p. 4; *Corriere della Sera* 08/12/1969). Nonetheless, the event that

changed Calabresi's life was the death of Giuseppe Pinelli in the aftermath of Piazza Fontana. At the press conference, *questore* Guida, former director of the Fascist prison of Ventotene, told journalists that the anarchist had jumped from the window in Calabresi's office because his alibi had collapsed, and the police had conclusive evidence of his guilt. These events, Piazza Fontana and Pinelli's death, concluded a season of disputes between unions and bosses – the so-called *Autunno Caldo* (“Hot Autumn”) - during which the left had been denouncing the deliberate strategy of provocation and repression against protesters by the government, the judiciary, and the police (Lumley 1990, p. 2). The witch-hunt against anarchists that characterised the aftermath of Piazza Fontana made Guida and Calabresi symbols of the strategy of repression of leftist dissent. As Foot documents (2009, p. 408), the Pinelli affair was consistent with the mythology and history of the left, and indeed many associated it with the death of other anarchists of the past in Italy and the United States<sup>79</sup>.

As Bioni notes, “the case of Calabresi fuelled the climate of violence of the early 1970s, being also a primary vector of this climate” (2011, p. 41). Calabresi became the *Commissario Defenestra* (literally, push-out-of-the-window *commissario*), named as such by Dario Fo in his stage play, *Morte accidentale di un anarchico*. The actor labelled him also *Commissario girocollo-dolcevita* (crew-neck-turtleneck), mocking his dress-style, while Gian Maria Volonté, in the documentary *Documenti su Giuseppe Pinelli* (N. Risi and Petri, 1970) described him as *Commissario-CIA*. *Lotta Continua*, in fact, had published an article that falsely described Calabresi as a member of the Italian secret service (SID), and claimed that he had participated in a CIA training camp in the United States (Anon. 1970h, p. 13; *Lotta Continua* 01/10/1970). The accusation related to the SID connected with the framework of the *strage di stato* (state massacre), theorising the responsibility of the Italian Secret Service for the bombing of Piazza Fontana. Already in March 1970, *Lotta Continua* published an article asking with few

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<sup>79</sup> Gian Maria Volonté, in the documentary *Documenti su Giuseppe Pinelli* (E. Petri and N. Risi, 1970), tells the story of the anarchist Romeo Frezzi, killed by the police in 1897. Dario Fo sets his *Morte accidentale di un anarchico* in the United States, to protect himself from serious incriminations by the Italian judiciary, and to make a parallel with the story of Andrea Salsedo, an anarchist who fell from the Justice Department's Bureau of Investigation in New York in 1920.

doubts: “Investigators or culprits? The attacks of the SID (ex SIFAR)” (Anon. 1970g, p. 4-5; *Lotta Continua* 24/03/1970). The CIA element brought Calabresi close to other defining issues of the leftist milieu in Italy, such as the war against American imperialism and against the reactionary plot that the American agency was sponsoring around the globe.

Pinelli’s widow, Licia Rognini, collaborated with *Lotta Continua*. As she was denied a trial to establish the causes of her husband’s death, her strategy was to mount a scandal through a press campaign against Calabresi to arrive at a trial for defamation (Roveri 2014). At the trial that followed Calabresi’s suing of *Lotta Continua*, which started in October 1970, policemen gave contradictory declarations. The trial was soon suspended in May 1971 when Calabresi’s lawyer recused the judge, Carlo Biotti<sup>80</sup>. The contradictions of policemen’s behaviour emerged in the trial, and the difficulties encountered to reach a verdict fuelled the climate of distrust and the blame towards Calabresi. Dario Fo premiered *Morte accidentale di un anarchico* at the beginning of the trial, travelling around Italy and adapting it to the news coming from the judgment. *Lotta Continua* successfully linked the policeman to a cinematic character that embodied the controversies about the political repression and the violent means of the police against leftist dissent. Gian Maria Volonté’s *commissario* in *Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto* (1970) kills his mistress and disseminates evidence of his guilt to demonstrate that, from his position, he cannot be incriminated for the murder (see the plot in Appendix C). He eventually confesses his guilt, but the consequences are left unanswered. *Lotta Continua* managed to connect Calabresi to Volonté, even though the shooting of the movie predated Piazza Fontana. In February 1970, *Lotta Continua* published photos of Volonté’s character and Calabresi (Figure 4.7) stating: “Two commissari. The one on the left [...] already confessed” (Anon. 1970c, p. 6; *Lotta Continua* 21/02/1970).

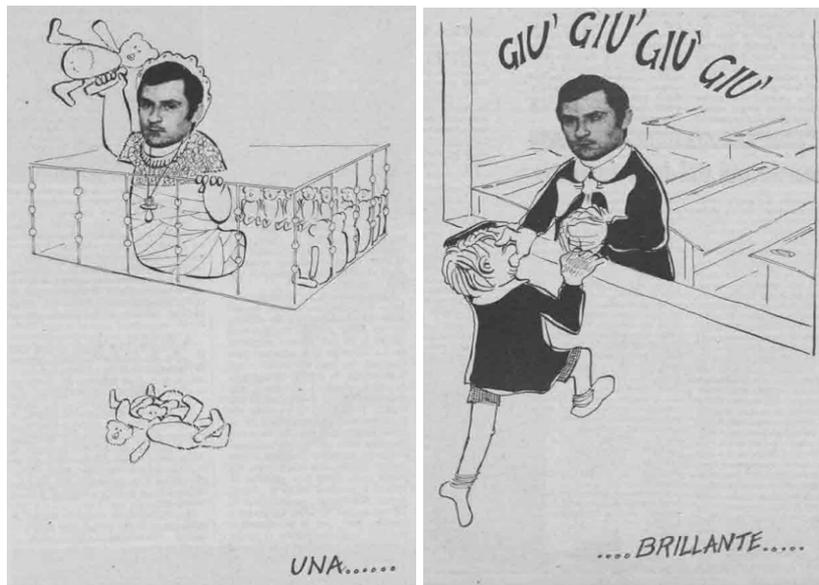
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<sup>80</sup> The trial was definitively abandoned after the assassination of Calabresi.



Figure 4.7: The comparison of Volonté (left) and Calabresi (right) in *Lotta Continua* (Anon. 1970c, p. 6).

In March, the dedicated column in *Lotta Continua*, *L'angolo di Calabresi* (Calabresi's corner), declared, "The discovery of the role of fascists in the Milanese massacre brings back under the spotlight the ineffable Luigi Calabresi, member of the Political Office of the *questura*, well-known for his superb interpretation in the movie 'Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto'" (Anon. 1970f, p. 12; *Lotta Continua* 11/03/1970). This association gave strength to the representation of Calabresi as a violent cop and contributed significantly to "define the social role of Petri's movie" (Bisoni 2011, p. 40). The leftist newspaper, moreover, had inscribed the *commissario* in a satirical seriality: almost daily cartoons, depicting the policeman as a school kid pushing another student from the window (Figure 4.8), or throwing his teddy bear out of his cradle (Figure 4.9).



Figures 4.8 and 4.9: Cartoons on Calabresi in *Lotta Continua* (Anon. 1970d, p. 10; Anon. 1970e, p. 11).

Cinema also invested in these controversies. Besides the already cited documentary *Documenti su Giuseppe Pinelli*, Curti documents how the public figure of Calabresi inspired the *commissario* in Vittorio De Sisti's *L'interrogatorio* (1970), whose violent means are used to force a confession for homicide from an innocent man (Curti 2006, p. 101[n 34]). Similarly, the protagonist of Camillo Bazzoni's *Abuso di potere* (1972; literally "Abuse of Power", released as *Shadows Unseen* in the English-dub version), Fredrick Stafford had been chosen for his resemblance to Calabresi (Curti 2006, p. 91). In that movie, released two months before the murder, the protagonist is killed at the end (see the plot in Appendix C).

On June 13, 1971, the magazine *L'Espresso* published a petition to request the sacking of the official considered responsible for the death of Pinelli (Anon. 1971e, p. 8). It described Calabresi as being responsible for the death and asked for an "objection of conscience – which has no less legitimacy than an objection by law – against torturing *commissari*, persecuting magistrates, and undignified judges" (Cederna 2009, p. 115). 757 intellectuals, artists and politicians signed the plea. Many representatives of Italian cinema gave consent to the plea, from politically committed filmmakers (Bellocchio, Bertolucci, Cavani, Pasolini, Petri) to directors of *filone* cinema (Brass, Corbucci, Tessari). None of the filmmakers related to the *poliziottesco*, however, participated in the campaign, questioning the stereotypical representation of Italian popular culture as a monopoly of the left.

The “ghost paradigm”, as I call it, is an interpretation of the reworking of Calabresi’s death in the *poliziottesco*. The *Espresso* petition is used by Uva (2007, p. 29) to identify the source of collective guilt that characterised the cinematic milieu after the assassination. Introducing the *poliziottesco*, he refers to the interpretation of the “ghost” initially proposed by Curti. However, even if the end of *Abuso di potere* could be considered to a certain extent an example of a wish-fulfilment, the insistence on leftist guilt does not fully match with the murder becoming part of the *strategia della tensione* at the moment of the release of the first *poliziotteschi*. The focus on forms of politically committed filmmaking risks simplifying the level of the debate concerning political violence stemming from the Italian cultural production, overlooking the diversity of views internal to Italian cinema.

In this respect, news media discourses affected not only the negotiation of the blame between opposing political constituencies, but also the elaboration of the theme of political violence in the *poliziottesco*. In the early 1970s the perception of left- and right-wing terrorism benefited from different degrees of “acceptance” and coverage by Italians and the mainstream press<sup>81</sup>. In the days after the murder of Calabresi, *l’Unità* apportioned the blame for the murder on the *strategia della tensione* (Elena 1972, p. 1; *l’Unità* 18/05/1972). *Corriere della Sera* focused on an international organisation, the German Baader-Meinhof group, theorising a joint venture between the group and the newly formed *Brigate Rosse* (Zicari 1972b, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 25/05/1972). The unexpected twist was the detention of three young neo-fascists, Nardi, Stefàno and her female accomplice Kiess, at the end of 1972. The trio, however, was shortly released for lack of connections to the Calabresi affair. The attack at the Milanese police headquarters on the anniversary of the death of Calabresi by the self-proclaimed anarchist Gianfranco Bertoli, moreover, fostered conspiracy theories denouncing subversive actions of groups internal and external to Italy to spread chaos in the country. Immediately, in fact, it became evident that the attacker was connected to international organisations and secret services, and to the far right (Passanisi 1973, p. 1;

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<sup>81</sup> The denial of the possibility of left-wing terrorism was so intense that, in 1978, in the first phase of the Moro kidnapping, there was still the need to remind the readers of *l’Unità* that it was a mistake to continue to frame the *Brigate Rosse* as part of a reactionary or international conspiracy (Ferrara 1978, p. 2; *l’Unità* 24/03/1978).

*Corriere della Sera* 19/05/1973; Anon. 1973m, p. 1; *l'Unità* 20/05/1973)<sup>82</sup>. Indeed, at the moment the first *poliziotteschi* were released (1972-1973), the murder of Calabresi was embedded at various levels in the framework of the *strategia della tensione*. In fact, Crainz recognises “investigations [on Calabresi’s death] oscillated between various leads without result, although insisting more often over the lead pointing at the right” (2003, p. 395). Therefore, regarding guilt, the “ghost paradigm” can be questioned if related to the specific historical context, highlighting the absence of a single and consistent interpretation of the event in the early 1970s.

Buttafava (1980) also discussed the presence of Calabresi’s “ghost” in the *poliziottesco*. However, his “ghost” is not “haunting” anybody but is limited to a presence, “an unforgotten ghost that goes around all these movies, even if through different steps [...] that made the reference evanescent” (Buttafava 1980, p. 111). Buttafava registered the presence but did not imply issues of guilt. As was explained in Chapter 1, he interpreted the “political” intervention of these movies as “*pornografia cronachistica*” (news pornography) (Buttafava 1980, p. 116). The principal focus was on the action, which needed bloodthirsty criminals with no psychology to justify the violent reaction of the police. As indicated by Marlow Mann (2013, p. 134-135), ideological complexity was not as important as the overall “packaging” of the *filone*, which had to deliver thrills and action, pointing at audiences’ emotional reaction. Before the killing, counter-cultural news outlets, popular culture<sup>83</sup> and cinema had contributed to form the image of Calabresi as the “torturing commissario”. The representation of Calabresi had already made him a cartoon-like archetypal character, but his assassination provided the possibility to rewrite this representation. The diverse interpretations, or “usages”, of the murder left a space open for filmmakers to use the event in entertainment products featuring state conspiracy elements. Calabresi’s figure could now be adopted by the right for their political propaganda but was also part of counter-hegemonic narrations of the Italian socio-political context. Rather than seeking the truth, *poliziotteschi* exploited the confusion and the struggle to attribute meaning to the murder. The real ghost of the *poliziottesco* seems to be Pinelli, as the anarchist is instrumentally detached from

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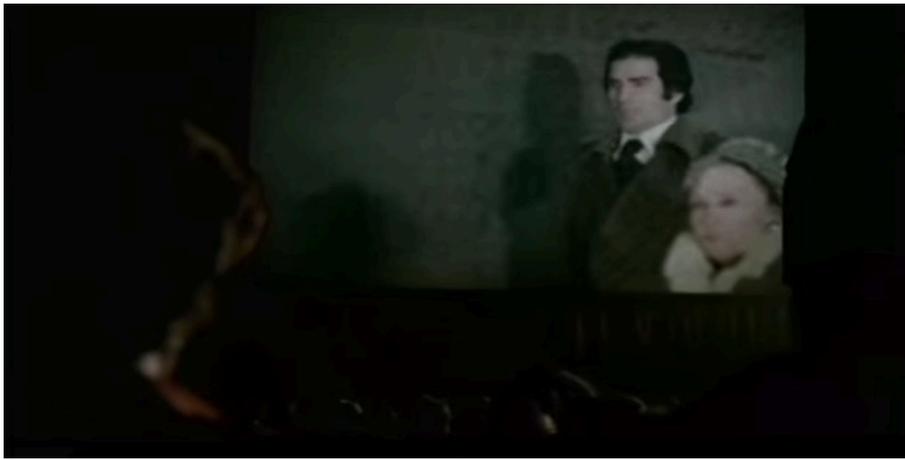
<sup>82</sup> For a broader account see Anna Cento Bull (2007, pp. 34-35).

<sup>83</sup> Beside Dario Fo’s performance, Pinelli and Calabresi became protagonists of many folk songs and ballads, which were sung in demonstrations, meetings and anarchist circles.

Calabresi to make the commissario a one-dimensional hero. If in *La polizia ringrazia* Pinelli is referenced explicitly, the death of Calabresi makes the anarchist disappear from the rest of the *filone*.

### Remediation: adapting the news, enhancing the spectacle in *Milano trema* and *La polizia incrimina*

As outlined in the previous chapters, the intersection of fiction and references to news media representations of Italian socio-political conditions participates in constructing the emotional impact of the *poliziottesco*. Additionally, as Wood states, the *filone* used “[r]ealist conventions such as location shooting, illusionistic detail, a typically European use of the mobile camera and intra-sequence long take [...] to link diegetic events firmly to the world of contemporary Italy” (Wood 2012, p. 32). Each film of the *poliziottesco* was in dialogue with other *filoni*, and with other *poliziotteschi*. As has been explored in Chapters 1 and 2, the *poliziottesco* remediated media features of newspapers and television into the language of cinema, “by multiplying spaces and media and by repeatedly redefining the visual and conceptual relationships among mediated spaces – relationships that may range from simple juxtaposition to complete absorption” (Bolter and Grusin 2000, p. 42). This resulted in an on-going tension between immediacy, the effort to erase the boundaries between mediation and real-life experience, and hypermediacy, the multiplication and exposure of different forms of mediation. References to other movies of the *filone*, like a *poliziottesco* screened in a theatre in another *poliziottesco* (Figures 4.10 and 4.11), contributed to remind audiences that they were moving into the framework of a game, exposing the mediation. Denying the possibility of complex political analysis, *poliziottesco* filmmakers marked their distance from cinema *di consumo impegnato* highlighting their lack of serious intentions. In such a way, the *poliziottesco* remained in a precarious equilibrium between social commentary and entertainment.



Figures 4.10 and 4.11: *La polizia ha le mani legate* screened in *Mark il poliziotto spara per primo*.

The employment of the Calabresi figure in the movies analysed in this chapter exemplifies the tension between immediacy and hypermediacy, deployed through the alternation of realist conventions and stylistic excesses, the spectacle. These films re-worked media discourses on the assassination and the investigation, intersecting them with the “history” behind Calabresi’s figure. On the other hand, they exaggerated crime news creating a distance between such news and the cinematic action. As Bruschini and Tentori write:

“Cinema was obviously different from reality. The former, however, served [...] to make audiences dream a better world and, mostly, release cathartically anxieties and tensions of the present, directing them towards a medium realistic in its appearance, but fictitious in its essence” (2004, p. 131).

Firstly, it is relevant to present how newspapers described Calabresi’s assassination. The detailed description serves to analyse the re-working of the attack in the movies.

The extract below is useful also to interpret how filmmakers modified the dynamics to meet cinematic demands, therefore playing with the intermingling of “realism” and spectacle:

“At 9.15 Calabresi crosses the front door of his house. [...] The Chief Inspector passes the sidewalk, pointing to his wife’s ‘500’ parked in a herringbone pattern on the other side of the roadway. Via Cherubini is crowded. The traffic is intense. The road is divided in the middle by a large traffic island. The blue subcompact that awaits the official is stuck between a ‘Primula’ and an ‘Opel’. When crossing the road, Calabresi draws from the pocket the keys to open the car door. At the same time - and this is the testimony that is more scrutinised - a young man standing still almost in front of the door number six with an open newspaper in front of his eyes, suddenly closes it.” (Giuliani 1972, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 18/05/1972)

*La polizia incrimina: la legge assolve* and *Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia* were released in Italy on the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August 1973 respectively. The investigation into the death of Calabresi had arrived at a dead end. The Baader-Meinhof lead had been abandoned. The charges against neo-fascists Nardi, Stefano and Kiess had been dismissed. The assassination of Calabresi seemed destined to remain without a culprit. Bertoli’s attack on the anniversary of Calabresi’s death had brought the policeman back onto the front pages of Italian newspapers.

Compared to the events described in the article, the action leading to the assassination of *Commissario Del Buono* (Chris Avram) - the mentor and dear friend of the protagonist in *Milano trema* - is reversed. The location is piazza De Angelis in Milan, designed to resemble via Cherubini. Del Buono comes out of a car; he crosses the busy road (Figure 4.12), the traffic island and approaches his house. The killer is waiting beside the door, surprisingly reading the *Suddeutsche Zeitung* (Figure 4.13). The idea of an international organisation based in Germany is fostered by this association of images, especially considering the stress on the Baader-Meinhof implication that characterised early accounts of the investigations on Calabresi’s death and Bertoli’s attack. The soundtrack that accompanies the scene, however, creates a friction with the content. The happy and light-hearted tune, *And life goes on* (De Angelis, 1973), contrasts with the murder, reminding the spectator of the fiction behind the reference to the actual event. The confusion that characterised the interpretation of Calabresi’s assassination allowed director Martino to juxtapose different and conflicting ideological elements. The

development of the plot frames the murder as part of a conspiracy by reactionary forces to seize power in Italy (see the plot in Appendix C). The audience could relate to the coup strategy, in which police officials were identified as conspirators against the democratic order; or to the fantasy of vengeance concerning Calabresi embodied by the homicidal rage of the protagonist, *Commissario Caneparo*.



Figure 4.12: *Commissario Del Buono* crossing the traffic island in *Milano trema*.



Figure 4.13: Del Buono's killer reading the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* in *Milano trema*.

Moreover, if in *La polizia ringrazia* the reactionary organisation hits criminals to manipulate public opinion, *Milano trema* adds to the formula the manipulation of militants, to whom is denied the capacity to understand the real meaning of their political action<sup>84</sup>. Maria Ex is a young girl who smokes marijuana and lives in a

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<sup>84</sup> The same scheme is replicated in other movies as *Squadra volante* (Massi, 1974) and *La polizia ha le mani legate* (see the plots in Appendix C).

commune of hippies in which the only activities are making free love and taking drugs. She is in love with a young idealist who seeks disorder to create a new order. In a dialogue with *Commissario Caneparo*, she refers to Mao and the Party, but the movie exposes the manipulation of her and her boyfriend's ideals by reactionary forces. Any agency of the couple is denied and, consequently, their political instances become irrelevant. Their manipulator, in fact, is a publisher, Padulo (Richard Conte). The ideological "colour" of the publisher, however, is left to the audience to infer, without challenging the polysemy of the narration of the present. Depending on "specific levels of prior knowledge" (Fisher 2014, p. 174), the publisher could represent the Communist publisher Feltrinelli, who had been at the centre of subversive plots broadly covered by such conservative newspapers as *Corriere della Sera*; although, he could also represent Giovanni Ventura, the neo-fascist publisher implicated in the massacre of Piazza Fontana. Accordingly, these features reinforced the link to the present but denied any sort of political analysis on the matter.

The ideological ambiguity, in fact, served to offend different kinds of audiences as little as possible. Barry (2004, p. 82) writes, "Italian produced crime/cop films gave oppressed citizens an opportunity to see on the screen what newspapers at that time did not dare show". To this claim, however, it could be opposed that they showed too many different things, and none of them were a main focus of the movies. All of them related to popular representations of what in 1973 was still a vague and contested issue: the *strategia della tensione*. Action drove the narrative set in a mediated reality reproduced only to serve the spectacle. *Corriere della Sera* (Anon. 1973n, p. 14) commented on *Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia*, identifying not only the reference to Calabresi, but also the reference to a real robbery in Vicenza that had ended with the thieves' car, with two women as hostages, crashing at high speed into a tree. The subheading of the article about the robbery in *Corriere della Sera* appears as a synthesis of the first robbery in the movie, showing to what extent the films built upon press representations that could be recognised by audiences.:

"Three hooded and armed men break into a goldsmith shop but are surrounded – One escapes with the car and leaves the rest in trap – Therefore, the three gangsters capture all the clients (a dozen) – Then they threaten to commit a massacre, they obtain a car, provided by the police, and leave at full throttle with two women as prisoners – On the way to Verona the car crashes against a plane tree: no survivors" (Anon. 1973d, p. 1; 11/03/1973).

As can be observed in Figure 4.14, in the movie the bandits ask for a car, threatening to commit a massacre. In Figure 4.15, the abduction of the two ladies can be observed, while the car crash can be seen in Figure 4.17. The news reported also the attempt of a policeman to take the place of the hostages (Zicari 1973a, p. 10), which was replicated in the film sequence (Figure 4.16).



Figure 4.14: *Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia*. The first robbery.



Figure 4.15: *Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia*. The first robbery.



Figure 4.16: *Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia*. The first robbery.



Figure 4.17: *Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia*. The first robbery.

Compared to the news, the car and the location (a goldsmith shop and not a bank) are different; in the news, moreover, there are no signs of bandits throwing hand-grenades at the police during the chase; in the movie, the car of the bandits crashes after repeated ramming with police cars, and not with an “850” of a civilian, as reported in the news. These differences, especially bandits throwing hand-grenades, work to enhance the spectacle while maintaining a close link to the Italian social reality. The boyfriend of Maria Ex dies in the accident and this convinces the girl to help Caneparo to tackle the organisation behind the peak of criminal actions in Milan. The change in the girl is not related to a political “epiphany” but it is a consequence of a private tragedy.

The subservient relation of politics to action and spectacle is even more explicit in *La polizia incrimina: la legge assolve*. Castellari, in the press conference to promote the movie, when asked about parallels with the Calabresi affair declared: “The scene of the murder is the same, with the *commissario* being killed in the morning as he leaves his

house. However, said Castellari, in the crime shown in the film there is no political implication. Here, instead of politics, there is the drug” (C.G. 1973, p. 15). Castellari continues: “the investigation extends to ‘citizens above suspicion’: ship-owners, prominent financiers, and then ends up investing influential people and also the political environment to which those people are closely linked” (C. G. 1973, p. 15; *Corriere della Sera* 07/03/1973). These elements are central to the plot but do not invest in political analysis, providing only a believable background to the action (see the plot in Appendix C). Therefore, specific references to the Italian socio-political context and the Italian cinematic context, namely cinema *di consumo impegnato*, integrate a plot that recalls Friedkin’s *The French Connection*.

As has been said above, the reference to *Commissario Calabresi* in the movies was immediately recognised in the reviews. *Corriere d’Informazione* wrote about *La polizia incrimina: la legge assolve*: “The movie should have been entitled ‘Death of a commissario’: the reference to the Calabresi affair is evident” (Anon. 1973o, p. 11). The scene of the assassination of *Commissario Scavino* starts with the policeman leaving his house (Figure 4.18), crossing the road, and concludes with the killer shooting him to death while he is trying to open his car (Figure 4.19).



Figures 4.18 and 4.19: The assassination of *Commissario Scavino* in *La polizia incrimina: la legge assolve*.

The direct reference to the news attempts to link the cinematic action to the actual event, also reinforced by the representation of the press coverage that follows the fictional murder. In Figure 4.20, it is possible to read the headline of the extraordinary edition of the Genoese newspaper *Il Secolo XIX*: “The commissioner of the drug affair killed in front of his house. Scavino shot dead”. Compared with the news provided by the evening edition of *Corriere della Sera*, *Corriere d’Informazione*, there are many

similarities. The headline of the real newspaper (Figure 4.21) states: “Milan – The commissioner of the Pinelli affair. Calabresi shot dead in front of his house” (Anon. 1972m, p. 1; *Corriere d’Informazione* 17-18/05/1972).



Figures 4.20 and 4.21: the edition of *Il Secolo XIX* commenting on the murder of Scavino in *La polizia incrimina: la legge assolve* and the evening edition of *Corriere della Sera*, *Corriere d’Informazione*, commenting on the assassination of Calabresi (Anon. 1972m, p. 1).

Scavino is not just a *Commissario* but is the “*Commissario* of the drug affair”, like Calabresi was the “*Commissario* of Pinelli”. Moreover, the fake edition of *Il Secolo XIX* replicates the ritual press performance. One article highlights through its headline the “Unanimous disdain” for the act (the article on the right). The headline of another article comments on the “Obscure threat” menacing public order and democracy (the article on the left). On the other side, the prolonged slow-motion that characterises the killing brings spectacle back to the forefront. The killing is followed by the clumsy escape of the criminals, who start shooting at an arriving *carabiniere*, who is knocked down by their car only for the “enjoyment” of the viewer. The addition has no reference to the actual assassination of Calabresi but increases the spectacle and the emotional

tension of the scene. Performing their role of “serial figures”, outlined in Chapter 3, the death of low-ranking policemen and *carabinieri* functioned as emotional triggers. Even if they are employing news media similarly, as has been observed in Chapter 2, the violent excesses marked the distance between the *poliziottesco* and other Italian products like cinema *di consumo impegnato*. Any complex political commentary is absent. Calabresi-like characters in the two movies analysed in this section are exemplary figures who try to limit the violent outburst of the protagonists. Their deaths serve to stimulate a change in the protagonist. At the same time, as is explained in the conclusion to this chapter, their guidance offers violent cops an occasion to return into a state of legality. This mechanism can be considered to be instrumental to the removal of the violent features associated with Calabresi before his death. As the analysis provided below aims at demonstrating, by 1975, this mechanism was not necessary anymore to articulate the reworking of Calabresi’s figure.

#### *La polizia accusa: secret plots and black plots*

In 1974, media started to scrutinise the Italian secret service (SID). Although the SID could not be directly accused of the murder of *Commissario* Calabresi, leftist newspapers such as *l’Unità* explicitly denounced the collusion of the service with neo-fascist terrorists (Anon. 1974g, p.1; *l’Unità* 02/09/1974). Newspapers began to blame the service for delays and false leads that had hindered police investigations. This implication became a shared interpretation of different events, stimulating a twist in the interpretation of unresolved Italian cases, such as the death of Feltrinelli (Zicari and Giuliani 1974, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 07/06/1974), the massacre of Piazza Fontana (Paolucci 1974, p. 1; *l’Unità* 22/08/1974) and neo-fascist acts of terrorism (Anon. 1974k, p. 1; *l’Unità* 09/11/1974). Most importantly, the SID was connected to different coup-d’états attempted in the early 1970s. The arrest of General Miceli, former chief of the service, was related to the reactionary organisation *Rosa dei Venti*, and to Borghese’s attempted coup. In March 1974 neo-fascists Nardi, Stefàno and Kiess were accused again of the assassination of Calabresi. The trio, however, had fled abroad, fomenting the suspicion of institutional sponsors. Stefàno and his girlfriend Kiess were found in June 1974 in Spain. Their extradition, however, was negotiated only ten years later. Nardi was found dead in Maiorca in 1976. As usual, the investigation into the trio was soon dismissed from the front pages of newspapers but remained the primary investigative hypothesis between 1973 and 1980 (Crainz 2003, p. 395).

In 1975, Martino's *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide* presented a conspiracy orchestrated by neo-fascists with the help of the secret service (see the plot in Appendix C). The conspiracy plot involving the service was the primary reference to contemporary social reality. The reviews in *Corriere della Sera* (M. Po. 1975, p. 15) and *La Stampa* (c. rz. 1975, p. 9) seemed not to notice the reference to Calabresi in one of the final scenes but speculated on the links with the situation at that time. *Commissario Solmi* (Luc Merenda) investigates a series of murders of prominent personalities. Solmi's discovery of a conspiracy, staged by reactionary forces with the help of the secret service, leads to his death. The movie sets the killing on a Roman street (Figure 4.22) resembling via Cherubini (Figure 4.23) and recalls the original events of the murder of Calabresi. The protagonist comes out of the building (Figure 4.24), crosses the first line of cars and turns to wave to his girlfriend at the window. As he opens his car (Figure 4.25), another vehicle approaches. In the car, there are three people, one of whom shoots at Solmi. On the passenger seat, there is a blond woman, which could be interpreted as a reference to Gudrun Kiess and the neo-fascist trio (Figure 4.26).



Figures 4.22 and 4.23: The setting of the scene of *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide* in Rome, via Cristoforo Colombo (left); Via Cherubini, Milan, in the aftermath of Calabresi's assassination (right).



Figure 4.24: *Commissario Solmi leaves his house in La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide.*



Figure 4.25: *Commissario Solmi shot dead while opening his car in La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide.*



Figure 4.26: *Commissario Solmi shot dead while opening his car in La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide.*

O’Leary writes on *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide* and Calabresi’s murder in terms of disavowal. In O’Leary’s terms, the killing of Solmi did not reproduce precisely the dynamic of the assassination because the killers “were known to have been far left” and, as has been said, “the murder of Calabresi [...] becomes the emblem of a sense of communal guilt” (O’Leary 2011, p. 102). This supposed disavowal and guilt, however, needs to be related to a context in which not everybody was ready to take responsibility for the campaign against Calabresi. The blame for the murder, in fact, was still a matter of negotiation between the left and the right. *Poliziottesco* filmmakers, using Calabresi-like characters, were marking their distance from those who had employed the *commissario* as a symbol of state repression. As Martino declared, filmmakers of *filone* cinema adopted a cynical approach to the profession, which resulted in a narrow selection of topics considered to be profitable (Martino 1980, p. 121). As such, those filmmakers also engaged with the same conspiracy theories as did the leftist milieu.

The secret service in relation to the *strategia della tensione* was the subject that, from 1974, attracted the fantasies of Italian *dietrologi* (advocates of conspiracy theories). Even conservative newspapers like *Corriere della Sera* had accepted the existence of the *strategia della tensione*<sup>85</sup>. The now-shared interpretation of the conspiracy theory as a manoeuvre of reactionary forces and state apparatuses had made it possible to trace a new trajectory of the recent past. The reference to recent events was compressed into a unified conspiracy plot to which the fictional framework of conspiracies in the

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<sup>85</sup> The article commenting the massacre on the Italicus train presented the headline: “Horror and disdain for the new serious act of the ‘*strategia della tensione*’” (Giuliani 1974c, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 05/08/1974). It is relevant to notice how, by 1975, *Corriere della Sera* started to use the concepts of “provocation” and “provocateur” to describe the violence of the extra-parliamentary left. Leftist clashes were described (and condemned) by journalists and the government as *ritorsioni* (retaliations): violent reactions to neo-fascist violence fomented by provocateurs. These retaliations were criticised as they provided oxygen to an already isolated radical right (Tito 1975, p. 1; Sensini 1975, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 19-20/04/1975). Other times, the same violence was interpreted as a deliberate strategy to “trigger a gigantic witch-hunt against the dissent of the left and extra-parliamentary groups” (Pansa 1975, p. 1 *Corriere della Sera*, 12/05/1975; Extract C.16, Appendix D). This framing signalled the coalescing of the two newspapers in the condemnation of neo-fascist violence.

*poliziottesco* corresponded. Therefore, the assassination of Solmi in the framework of a right-wing conspiracy sponsored by the secret service, referencing Calabresi, was consistent with a superficial understanding of the *strategia della tensione*. Italian audiences could also catch the reference to a well-known real event in the scene of the police attack on a paramilitary camp in the mountains (Figures 4.27 and 4.28): in the aftermath of the bombing in Brescia, *carabinieri* killed a neo-fascist, Giancarlo Esposti, in a paramilitary camp near Rome. In *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide*, the assault at a paramilitary camp is the occasion to uncover Captain Sperli (Tomas Milian), an official of the Italian secret service participating in the conspiracy.



Figures 4.27 and 4.28: the paramilitary camp; *Commissario Solmi* leaving the helicopter in *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide*.

In the “package” of an action movie, made of violent policemen with undemocratic methods, a connection was made to the news denouncing the protection of neo-fascist terrorists by the SID. Members of the service and the judiciary, in fact, had been suspected for the escape of Esposti’s accomplice (Anon. 1974i, p. 11; *Corriere della Sera* 27/09/1974), and connections were even made between Nardi, her German friend,

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Gudrun Kiess, and Esposti (Dragosei 1974, p. 3; *Corriere d'Informazione* 01/06/1974). An incoherent patchwork of ideological instances, thus, becomes less so, if compared with the overwhelming number of opposing hypotheses about the sponsors of Italian terrorism. *La polizia accusa* unified these hypotheses in a plot that was consistent with the conspiracies denounced by newspapers at that time, and that connected with the journalistic speculations related to the events of the recent past.

### A flat present: merging history through seriality

*Milano trema* and *La polizia accusa* are clear examples of the historicisation of fiction through the instrumental merging of discrete events of the recent past. Director Sergio Martino used newspaper headlines in the diegesis of *Milano trema* to give an ulterior connotation to Del Buono's death. Each of these headlines presents references to the 1970s recent past and present in Italy and a reference to a typical path of investigations. These are:

1. "Police are on the right track. Three Anarchists were arrested".
2. "The three Anarchists released yesterday after two months in jail".
3. "Is the assassination of Del Buono political?".
4. "Will the Del Buono affair remain unsolved? Six months after his death, all tracks covered up".

It is like Pinelli and Calabresi fused in a single person, as well as Piazza Fontana and Calabresi's assassination<sup>86</sup>. *Commissario* Del Buono, in fact, is the victim, and anarchists are arrested and released<sup>87</sup>. Then, the headlines wonder about the political significance of the murder; finally, the last prefigures the "typical" ending of

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<sup>86</sup> This association, however, was not proposed anew by the *poliziottesco*, as the Calabresi-Pinelli affair and Piazza Fontana had been intrinsically connected from the beginning in news media.

<sup>87</sup> Here, the reference is to Pietro Valpreda, the anarchist imprisoned in the aftermath of Piazza Fontana (December 15, 1969) who remained the principal suspect until the revelation of the *pista nera*. The parliament made a dedicated law to allow his release after three years (December 29, 1972) of prison without a trial.

investigations: cover-ups and dead-ends. It is something that audiences could have experienced concerning real events, and the questions in the headlines are almost self-explanatory. As has been observed concerning Piazza Fontana, it was not uncommon for news media to assume a political matrix for tragedies, even if there was nothing concrete on which to base the speculation. This mode of addressing attacks echoed in the *poliziottesco*, as the sequence of the explosion at the train station in *La polizia è sconfitta*, analysed in Chapter 2, exemplify.

Another example is the bombing in Peteano, near Gorizia, in which three carabinieri died after the detonation of TNT that had been placed in an abandoned car. In Figure 4.29, it is possible to read a quite contradictory headline of *L'Unità* stating: “Everything makes us foresee that we are facing a new episode of the chain of provocations. There is not official hypothesis about the attack in Gorizia” (Anon. 1972o, p. 1; *L'Unità* 03/06/1972). The presence of the political squad of Milan on the crime scene, in fact, is reported by *L'Unità*, even if the newspaper labels the attackers as simple criminals. The language is contradictory and bases the initial assumption on journalistic speculations that link the act to previous terrorist attacks.

**Tutto lascia prevedere  
che ci si trovi di fronte  
ad un nuovo episodio  
della catena di provocazioni**

**Ancora nessuna  
ipotesi  
ufficiale  
sull'attentato  
di Gorizia**

**Promessi cinque milioni a chi fornirà utili  
Indicazioni - Sul posto sono giunti funzionari e sottufficiali della squadra politica di Milano - I criminali non sarebbero della zona A PAG. 2**

Figure 4.29: Headline of the article about the attack in Gorizia (Anon. 1972o, p. 1).

Events and their mediated interpretations were not separated in news media. Each act of terrorism was interpreted following the conceptualisation of the recent past (e.g. “the chain of provocations”). The same happened in cinema. Events were conflated in a single meta-historical narrative of the recent past to which audiences could relate. The

multitude of historical references guaranteed a polysemy that fitted different levels of prior knowledge about the events that were used to drive audiences' emotional response. The seriality of the movies, which shared professionals, actors and themes, reinforced the sensation of an "already seen", to which audiences could relate not only cinematically, but also concerning the "real" world. As Wood (2012, p. 44) suggests: "Fears about how power is exercised gain force from the seriality of violent events, anxieties clustering around evocations of fascistic ideals, corrupt practices and misuse of power". Repetitions in the various plots, thus, reinforced dominant tropes of the historical moment.

Politicians, the higher ranks of the state and representatives of high finance are inscrutable embodiments of a mysterious power. O'Leary's conceptualisation of the *commissario* as a "scapegoat" becomes even more relevant if placed in relation to Calabresi. Del Buono is the scapegoat. His death provides the emotional trigger to justify Caneparo's action. The sacrifice of the good *commissario* is preceded by a civil-rights-oriented speech at Caneparo, reproaching him for his use of firearms. Del Buono's death allows Caneparo, and audiences, to unleash the emotional tension and undertake a violent journey against terrorists. Nonetheless, the release of rage concludes with the return into a state of legality. After having caused the death of the head of the organisation, Caneparo throws away his gun and seems to turn himself in to the police. The scene recalls the final sequence of *Dirty Harry*, but the spectator is not allowed to understand the consequences of Caneparo's action, leaving the final scene deliberately ambiguous (the movie ends with Caneparo approaching the police, but it is not possible to determine his real intentions). The movie, therefore, could suggest the mobilisation of Calabresi's persona as a symbol of sacrifice, a moment of trauma necessary to create the condition of using force to restore order. The release of destructive energy could respond to "the spectator's sense of social and economic insecurity or political impotence" (O'Leary 2011, p. 103), not appealing excessively to the most primitive instincts of the public but returning audiences home in the frame of restored legality. The action of throwing the gun could also respond to the initial reproach of Del Buono concerning Caneparo's use of firearms. The merging of the Calabresi affair with Piazza Fontana, Pinelli, and Valpreda, can be interpreted as instrumental to detach Del Buono and, therefore, Calabresi himself, from the blame attributed to the real *commissario* concerning these events and figures.

The operation of merging events and interpretations, even if single movies presented imprecise representations of real events, gained strength from seriality, as this provided an internal coherence to the *filone* and its depiction of power in Italy. Calabresi, in this respect, is the glue that kept all the *commissari* on the same track. The physical resemblance or dress style - the typical crew-neck sweater - made the cinematic *policeman* a victim even before the start of the movie. The press campaign against Calabresi resonated in the ambivalent relationship with journalists of cinematic *commissari*. Complaints about the lack of extensive coverage accorded by news media to institutional deaths can be argued to be more convincing in movies investing in the assassination of Calabresi. As outlined in Chapter 1, O’Leary (2011, p. 101) recognises a task performed by the *poliziottesco* in the “catalysing of mourning for the victims of the *anni di piombo*”. The reminiscence of Calabresi makes the protagonist of *Milano trema* entitled to comment on practices of mourning and their coverage by the press. *Commissario* Caneparo, in fact, pronounces the speech against the letter of condolence from the Minister, presented in the epigraph of Chapter 1. The scene is replicated identically in *La polizia accusa*, even if this time Solmi directs his outburst against television news. In the second movie, the focus is no longer the mourning practices of law enforcement agents, but the news concerning the mysterious connections between economic elites, state apparatuses and conspirators. The need to point at institutional mourning practices has faded. In 1973, in *Milano trema*, the accusation invested equally the culprits of the assassination of Del Buono and the civic institutions that had abandoned him, a feature that could be easily related to Calabresi. In 1975, on the contrary, *La polizia accusa* pointed to the confusion generated by the overwhelming number of speculations concerning the *strategia della tensione*, conflated into a single narrative. Moreover, Solmi did not need to be sympathetic with colleagues as he was destined to perish in the same way.

In the case of *Commissario* Scavino in *La polizia incrimina: la legge assolve* and *Commissario* Del Buono in *Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia*, the characters limited the rage instinct of the protagonists, opposing legality to violence. In 1973, Martino’s *Milano trema* and Castellari’s *La polizia incrimina* were directly addressing the death of Calabresi, placed at the core of the movies. The two movies seemed to address an on-going debate on Calabresi more than an already established definition of his status as a heroic figure. Castellari, in the press conference mentioned above, declared: “The character of *Death of a commissario* [*La polizia incrimina: la legge*

*assolve*] shares with Calabresi the lack of aspiration to become a hero” (C.G. 1973, p. 15). Scavino, in fact, in his last dialogue with Betti reminds him: “You want to be a hero, but in our job, there are no heroes or personal issues. There is only a society under threat. We need to protect it with the poor means at our disposal. We are just policemen”. At that historical moment, the harsh debate on the figure of Calabresi needed a subtler elaboration for a translation into a cinematic narrative. Del Buono and Scavino, and, therefore, Calabresi are role models. Their morality represents an aspiration for the police in a moment in which the institution was still under severe scrutiny from parts of news media.

With *Commissario Solmi*, the protagonist of *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide* (1975), the violent professional becomes Calabresi as the need to detach him from police brutality had faded. In 1975, not only had the Calabresi affair followed the path evoked by Caneparo and Solmi, slowly disappearing from front page news, but his assassination, as has been said, had been inscribed into the framework of the Italian mysteries related to the *strategia della tensione*. The violent cop is Calabresi, but the issue of violence is no longer a real issue. Scavino and Del Buono reproach Belli and Caneparo for their violent methods and the ease with which they recur to gunfire<sup>88</sup>. Solmi is Calabresi. His subsequent death justifies his methods in a narrative scheme that does not seem to need a moral voice to bring him back into the path of civil rights. Solmi, therefore, shouting at the television, seems to comment on his future death, attaching his destiny to those of real victims.

Not only had the increasing rate of police fatalities created the conditions for the acceptance of police violence in Italian movies, but, as with Calabresi, some of the victims were now part of the framework of the *strategia della tensione* and could be elevated to heroic status. The fact of not problematizing the link between Calabresi and police brutality is a sign of the changing discourse surrounding his media persona and police violence in general. Not surprisingly, in fact, *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide* was received by some critics as an ultra-leftist movie and was distributed

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<sup>88</sup> Scavino: “You always get mad! You take your gun and handcuffs and divide the world into good and evil. You need to have patience. Either you proceed slowly, or you risk ruining everything”.

successfully in the USSR (Buttafava 1980, p. 114). Calabresi, therefore, could be used, at that moment, as a symbol of the left who had suffered from the same mysterious plot that had affected the leftist milieu. The reference to Calabresi could be used explicitly to link the tragic story of the *commissario* to the events that had characterised the reactionary plot through which the recent past had been interpreted by news media: the *strategia della tensione*.

## Conclusion

*Commissario* Calabresi is the most illustrious institutional victim of the first half of the decade. His figure permeates the *filone* as a presence that suggests relations between fictional and actual events, like Del Buono's death serving to link the fictional narrative of *Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia* to Calabresi's assassination. Likewise, Calabresi's figure linked together different real events, as Solmi's death serves to link Calabresi to the coup strategy and the SID. The same link had been established in news media from 1974, covering the investigations into Borghese and the activities of the secret service. As a ghost, Calabresi seems to only haunt the prior knowledge of the average spectator. Audiences are left the freedom to move around conflicting ideological elements and interpreting the cinematic action according to their prior knowledge. *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide* provides a "closer" text oriented at the blaming of neo-fascists for the *strategia della tensione*. Accordingly, it provides evidence of the coalescing of news media discourses around a shared interpretation of the conspiracy theory.

More than an operation of disavowal on the part of *poliziottesco* filmmakers, thus, the movies seem to exploit, at first, the on-going debate on Calabresi's figure. Before the assassination of the *Commissario*, sectors of the left had managed to connect his figure to the themes of protest movements and anti-repression campaigns in the late 1960s. Cinema, in particular, was used to create powerful parallels that attached to the imagination of Italian audiences, as with *Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto*. In a reverse pattern, popular culture, in the form of *filone* cinema, recuperated the mediated character to give Calabresi the aura of a cinematic cop. In 1973, *Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia* and *La polizia incrimina: la legge assolve*, in this respect, took the side of the *commissario* through the removal of the link between him and police brutality. In 1975, *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide*, on the other hand, exploited the new framework of interpretation concerning Calabresi's death. The

violence attributed to Calabresi's media persona before his death was recuperated with Solmi, although purged from the controversy of police brutality. The meaning attributed to these characteristics and his persona, in fact, had changed. *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide* marks the superimposition of *commissario* figures that characterised early *poliziotteschi* - more concerned, or forced to be concerned, by police brutality - onto more reactionary *commissari* who would later be epitomised by Maurizio Merli. Merli's *commissari* shoot to kill almost unproblematically, connecting to their Hollywood colleagues, with *Roma violenta* (Guerrieri, 1975) as an example. Solmi behaves like Merli and does not need any moral voice internal to the police to "redeem" him. The reference to Calabresi had been inscribed, by that time, in the seriality of the *poliziottesco*, reproducing a recognisable formula already encountered in previous movies, isolated from the controversies concerning the actual point of reference. As the controversy concerning Calabresi had faded in favour of a new heroic status in mainstream news media, *poliziotteschi* filmmakers could construct the reference without the need of providing "escape points" for democratic readings of the character. Death allowed the movies to obfuscate the issue for Calabresi and Solmi alike.

Additionally, *Commissario* Calabresi functioned as the glue uniting the destiny of fictional policemen. Elements of seriality, in fact, provided an internally consistent view of the conspiracy plots in the *poliziottesco*: a strategy of tension manoeuvred by a single obscure organisation. This view connected with the most widespread and straightforward interpretation of the reactionary plots: the *trame nere*, as newspapers called the neo-fascist plot to seize power in Italy in the first half of the 1970s. It was instrumental not only in attracting audiences, but, also, it was the most adaptable to low-budget entertainment products. News media contributed to building the relationship between fiction and 1970s socio-political conditions in the *filone*. They provided a false immediacy that a product embedded in its present needed. The immediacy was exposed through the employment of stylistic excesses and self-citations, contributing to the emotional release of Italian audiences.

In this respect, the "ghost" paradigm does not seem the best interpretative filter to understand how cinema participated in the negotiation of the blame for the murder of *Commissario* Calabresi. Calabresi's family rightfully emphasises the campaign of hatred sponsored by sectors of the left before his death, but it is essential to fully

explore the meaning that was attributed to this figure to understand the historical value of his cinematic representations. The *poliziottesco* can help us to address the often-forgotten part of Calabresi's journey into Italian history, contributing to the historical discourse on the Italian 1970s: the negotiation of his death during the Years of Lead, which was not as linear as it may appear, but needed to deal with the weight of a cumbersome past also after death.

The next and final chapter explores the evolution of the representation of the judiciary in the *poliziottesco*. It engages with the development of the representation of cinematic *procuratori* to investigate the inclusion of this institution in the framework of the *strategia della tensione*. The attacks aimed at the judiciary for the slowness and inefficiency of state action against neo-fascist terrorism are used to establish a link with the negative depictions of the category in the *filone*. As such, the representation of the judiciary is used to assess the role of the *filone* in the negotiation of the blame for the events of the first half of the 1970s.

## Chapter 5 - The judge, the news and the *strategia della tensione*: negotiating blame through a transitioning institution in the *poliziottesco*

### Introduction

This chapter explores representations of the judiciary in the *poliziottesco*. The primary focus is on the devices that are used in the *filone* to orient the perception of judges as negative characters. As such, the chapter also analyses the pairing of journalists and judges as “serial figures” intervening in the movies to impede police investigations. The representation of judges is also linked to the evolution of news media discourses concerning the *strategia della tensione*. Hence, the chapter argues that the negotiation of the blame for the inefficiency of state action against terrorism and criminality contributes to the historical significance of the portrayal of judges in the *filone*. It fills a gap in research concerning the impact of cinematic judges in the construction of the relationship between the *poliziottesco* and socio-political conditions of 1970s Italy. Additionally, the chapter connects with Fisher’s framework of the “prior knowledge” (2014, p. 174) to interpret the engagement of the *filone* with news media discourses about the judiciary. As such, it contributes to the analysis of news media discourses around which the “prior knowledge” mobilised by filmmakers to avoid complex political analyses may have been formed.

The representation of judges is used to question scholarly arguments about the role and function of Italian institutions in the *filone*. Expanding from Chapter 2, films are analysed to bridge the mode of addressing the administration of justice in cinema *di consumo impegnato* and the *poliziottesco*. *In nome del popolo italiano* (Risi, 1971), *Confessione di un commissario di polizia al procuratore della repubblica* (Damiani, 1971) *Imputazione di omicidio per uno studente* (Bolognini, 1972) and *Perché si uccide un magistrato* (Damiani, 1975) are analysed for this purpose, also stressing the close relationship between media and justice in Italy. A national debate originated from the transitioning of the institution from an isolated caste to a category fully engaged in the political and social evolution of 1970s Italy. News media discourses are explored to understand the political implication of the representation of judges and identify how magistrates were used in cinema to symbolise broader political struggles in the country. Consequently, addressing the conspiracy mode of the *poliziottesco*, the analysis

investigates intertextual references that cross the *filone* and *cinema di consumo impegnato*. These two branches of 1970s Italian cinema continued to work in dialogue with each other, impacting themes and representations of civic institutions. The analysis of cinematic representations of judges serves also to investigate how the *poliziottesco* adapted narrative structures and cinematic tropes of *cinema di consumo impegnato* to meet the demands of its action-oriented plots. Focusing on the dialectic between cinematic *procuratori generali*, *sostituti procuratori*, and *commissari*<sup>89</sup>, the chapter investigates to what extent the *filone* can be considered to position the judge, and not the policeman, as a “scapegoat” (O’Leary 2011, p. 103). As this chapter argues, the scapegoat role, “who assuages or avenges the spectator’s sense of social and economic insecurity or political impotence” (O’Leary 2011, p. 103), needs to be re-thought in consideration of the impact of the judiciary in the negotiation of the blame for the failures of Italian institutions. The ambivalent representation of judges in the *filone* epitomises the confusion that characterised the negotiation of the blame concerning the *strategia della tensione*.

Hence, the analysis of *poliziotteschi* starts with *La polizia sta a guardare* (Infascelli, 1973) to identify the evolution of the formula developed by Vanzina’s *La polizia ringrazia*. Contrary to *La polizia ringrazia*, Infascelli’s film negates the final reconciliation of the police and the judiciary. Elements of Elliot’s press ritual (1981) can be traced in the devices utilised in the movie to present police action negatively. However, the development of the plot works to reverse this positioning, justifying the need for a resolute police action against criminals and conspirators. Moreover, hybrid forms of the *poliziottesco* (*Processo per direttissima*, De Caro 1974; *Il testimone deve tacere*, Rosati 1974; *Ordine firmato in bianco*, Manera 1974; *Il giudice e la minorenn*, Nucci 1974; *La polizia chiede aiuto*, Dallamano 1974) are analysed to highlight the increasing prominence of the judiciary in media discourses. These movies also exemplify the evolving relationship between *commissari* and *sostituti procuratori*. If *La polizia sta a guardare* deploys a perpetual conflict, hybrid forms elaborate their relationship differently. Judges become part of a single corrupt system embodied by the Italian state. Alternatively, the opposition between policemen and judges becomes a fruitful collaboration that gains support from the conflict with the higher ranks of the

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<sup>89</sup> See the glossary for the definition of the role and duties of these public figures.

police and the judiciary. Hence, Manera's and Nucci's movies show to what extent news media discourses made judges available to be used as points of entry into the framework of the *strategia della tensione*. Finally, returning to more standardised versions of the *filone*, Ercoli's *La polizia ha le mani legate* (1975) establishes the definitive surrender of the judiciary to the violent methods of the police. Ercoli's movie is connected with media discourses on the responsibility of the judiciary for state inefficiency in the struggle against the *strategia della tensione*.

More than analysing the complexity of the representation of judges, it is relevant to explore the information that seems to be taken for granted by filmmakers. To what extent do news media discourses impact the representation of judges in the framework of the conspiracy mode of the *poliziottesco*? To what extent did the cinematic judge change in relation to the relationship with cinematic *commissari*? The possibility of avoiding sophistication signals the internalisation of specific media discourses considered to be widespread in Italian public opinion, especially in relation to the judiciary.

### The judge enters the political struggle: cinema and the role of the judiciary at the beginning of the 1970s

The aim of this section is to look at representations of the judiciary in the *filone* to provide further evidence of the link between Italian cinema and socio-political issues that characterised the early 1970s. In Chapter 2, it has been explained how the *poliziottesco* remediated forms and structures of cinema *di consumo impegnato* concerning the use of news media as devices. Similarly, as has been explored in Chapters 3 and 4, news media discourses played a determinant role in the construction of the "serial figure" of the rank-and-file policeman and the *commissario*. Such discourses have been also explored concerning the judiciary. However, before 1972 judges had made sporadic appearances in front page news, mostly confined to political investigations like Piazza Fontana. Hence, in Chapter 3, I argued that the representation of characters like *Sostituto Procuratore Ricciuti* in *La polizia ringrazia* was more related to media discourses on the administration of justice stemming from the leftist milieu than a way of addressing concrete actions of the judiciary. From 1973, judges became a primary means of addressing the evolution of Italian institutions. As such, they were used in cinema to question the distortions of the Italian justice system,

directly addressing the ways in which the actions of the judiciary had been framed by news media.

In the framework of films *di consumo impegnato*, Judge Sola (Martin Balsam) is the protagonist of *Imputazione di omicidio per uno studente* (Bolognini, 1972). The movie revolves around the investigation of two murders. During a leftist demonstration, the police kill a student with a gunshot and Sola's son (Massimo Ranieri) kills a policeman with a brass knuckle (agent Annarumma and Saverio Saltarelli<sup>90</sup> seem to be the reference). The final dialogue of the movie exemplifies the representation of judges that characterised the first years of the 1970s in films and news media. Sola is a rigorous and honest bourgeois who does not understand the new generation. He embodies the torments of an institution that was coming out from isolation:

Judge Sola: "I demanded convictions for hundreds of years of jail, and now I fear that many of those years were served by innocent people. When a judge realises that he nearly condemned an innocent person to life imprisonment, that judge will be oppressed by doubt for the rest of his life. That judge is no longer capable of serving your justice."

*Procuratore Generale*: "You are right. You are not useful anymore. You think you have discovered doubt, a thing that you already knew as we all know it here, but you are not useful anymore because you don't trust justice anymore."

Sola: "I don't want to judge ever again. From now on I want to start understanding. Behind the ideas that we refuse there are our sons; and their certainties, their disorientation, their crimes. I want to find an explanation behind all these crimes, not a judgment. I want to join their problems. I don't want to be left alone."

As Chapter 3 highlighted, the representation of the judiciary presented the characteristics of a duality between high and low ranks in news media and *filone* cinema alike. Judge Sola also embodies another conflict that, at the beginning of the 1970s, brought the judiciary to the centre of the public arena: the politicisation of justice.

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<sup>90</sup> Saltarelli died in a demonstration on the anniversary of Piazza Fontana (12/12/1970), hit by a tear gas cannister shot by *carabinieri* (Crainz 2003, p. 376).

“Substantially, the judiciary is in an ambiguous position: it begins to discover, especially on the initiative of young judges, the sweet taste of fair judgments, typical of Anglo-Saxon magistrates. At the same time, however, it perceives the danger of losing the traditional position of impartiality, through which the Constitution has assured the judiciary independence from all other powers.” (Beria di Argentine 1973c, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 03/08/1973)

News media continued to frame a political conflict:

“In fact, a part of the judiciary seems anxious to return to the traditional ‘citadel’ of justice. Another part seems to run [...] towards political positions of total rejection of the system. However, it would be wrong to simplify the trend. The sector of the judiciary that is not going into the fray should not be ignored. In one way or another, this sector continues to set up a dialectical relationship with the evolving Italian society while remaining within the limits of the legal system.” (Beria di Argentine 1973a, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 05/04/1973)

*Procuratore Generale* Ugo Guarnera, opening the judicial year of 1973, summarised the political conflict, fuelling a prolonged debate concerning the role and function of the institution. *Corriere* described Guarnera as “a representative – with few exceptions – of the most conservative branch of the judiciary” (Sensini 1973a, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 14/01/1973). Both *Corriere* and *l’Unità* questioned his words against the “irresponsible minority that, with writings, practical action and sentences, would undermine the credibility of the administration of justice, compromising its mediating function” (Perna 1973, p. 1; *l’Unità* 18/01/1973). Even conservative newspapers such as *Corriere della Sera* felt the necessity to rethink the relationship between judges and a society under continuous transformation.

The tension between the progressive and conservative branches of the judiciary is also expressed by the comparison of Judge Sola and Judge Bonifazi (Ugo Tognazzi), the protagonist of Dino Risi’s *In nome del popolo italiano* (1971). Judge Bonifazi is a progressive magistrate sick of the corruption that plagues Italian society. He investigates a ruthless entrepreneur, Santenocito (Vittorio Gassman), for the death of a young girl. The evidence, however, exonerates Santenocito. Nonetheless, Bonifazi, moved by the hatred for the system of dishonesty that Santenocito represents, decides to destroy the evidence, condemning the entrepreneur to an unjust verdict. Both Sola (Figure 5.1) and Bonifazi (Figure 5.2) destroy important evidence at the end of the

movies. Nonetheless, their actions respond to the failure of two conceptualisations of justice: the former recognises the limitation of his isolation from the real problems of society; the behaviour of the latter exposes the risk of abandoning impartiality and politicising the administration of justice.



Figure 5.1: Judge Sola throwing into the River Tiber the brass knuckle, evidence of his son's culpability in *Imputazione di omicidio per uno studente*.



Figure 5.2: Judge Bonifazi destroying evidence that proves Santenocito's innocence in *In nome del popolo italiano*.

Adolfo Beria di Argentine, judge and writer for *Corriere della Sera*, addressed the debate defining some coordinates to interpret the perception of the judiciary:

“[...] the work of investigating magistrates [...] is accompanied by different and contradictory impressions or sensations: trust, perplexity, suspicion and consensus. For some, the judiciary, once again, proves to be the last garrison of a civil coexistence; for others, it has unduly engaged with too powerful dynamics, in the arbitrary search for new space of power; for others, finally, the recent events are a showcasing occasion for young ‘judges with a gun’.”<sup>91</sup> (Beria di Argentine 1973b, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 19/04/1973).

The *poliziottesco* originated in this time marked by the negotiation of the public understanding of the judiciary’s role and function. It dialogued with the productions of *consumo impegnato*, steeped by the aim, or at least the suggested aim, of denouncing the distortions of the Italian legal system. The *filone* participated in this negotiation through the dialectic between cinematic policeman and judges<sup>92</sup>. *Procuratori generali* and *sostituti procuratori* were counterparts of the *commissario*. Their action and behaviour worked to drive the sympathy of the audience towards the ambiguous

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<sup>91</sup> The “judges with a gun” cited by Beria di Argentine responded to the amendment of the Penal Code that established the new role of the judiciary, which assisted policemen in the field, “facing danger side-by-side” (Anon. 1972l, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 16/04/1972). It needs to be considered that in the Italian judicial system, part of the judiciary collaborated with the police in the collection of evidence. This feature of the Italian judicial system may have had an influence over the representation of judges like *Sostituto Procuratore Ricciuti* (*La polizia ringrazia*), who is often present in the field with *Commissario Bertone*. More details on the specific duties of the different roles comprising the Italian judiciary can be found in the glossary.

<sup>92</sup> In order to facilitate the recognition of Italian job titles of these civic institutions, it may be worth reminding the reader that *commissari* and *questori* are part of the ranks of the police. *Sostituti procuratori* and *procuratori generali* are part of the ranks of the judiciary. There is one figure that does not emerge from the representations of the *poliziottesco*: the *giudice istruttore* (the only exception is Judge Mannino in *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide*). Actually, the *giudice istruttore* was the judge that, under the supervision of the *procuratore generale* or the *sostituto procuratore*, collaborated with the police for the collection of evidence. This absence can be linked to the fact that the *procuratore generale* or his deputy, the *sostituto procuratore*, were the civic authorities in charge of the investigations and decided about the start of the prosecution. The *procura* opened the investigation and newspapers reported the decision of *procuratori generali*. See the glossary for more details about duties and roles comprising the Italian judiciary.

morality behind policemen's methods. As such, the two institutions expressed conflicting conceptualisations of law and order that impacted on their relationship with each other. As the analysis conducted below aims at demonstrating, the coordinates of this conflict were provided by news media discourses on state inefficiency against criminality and political violence.

### Impeding police action: judges and journalists in *La polizia sta a guardare*

*La polizia sta a guardare* (Infascelli, 1973) shows how filmmakers adapted the basic formula of *La polizia ringrazia* to exploit themes of primary relevance in news media. It can also be considered as a point of departure to analyse the exploitation by the *filone* of conflicting news media discourses concerning the judiciary, outlined in the previous section. Infascelli's movie reverses the narrative structure of *La polizia ringrazia*, remaining consistent with the original formula through the employment of a standardised set of actions and reactions of policemen and judges. Journalists play a central role in positioning the representatives of the two institutions. Furthermore, through an analysis of the exploitation of media discourses on the criminal practice of kidnapping in the film, elements of Elliot's (1981) press ritual can be related to the ambiguous depiction of the police in the first half of the movie. At this point, judges and journalists are superimposable in their alleged aim of impeding police work and are justified by moral and ethical concerns that can be traced back to news media discourses. Thereafter, the personal drama of the protagonist, *Questore* Cardone (Enrico Maria Salerno), leads to the reversal of the positioning of the police. Consequently, the resolute attitude of Cardone ends up casting a negative shade on the civil rights-oriented approach of the *procuratore*.

The relationship between the police and the judiciary in *La polizia sta a guardare* is one of perpetual conflict with no possibility of reconciliation. The judiciary is the moral voice of the democratic order: "I am a sincere democrat and I believe in the values of democracy. Do not make me prove it to you!", says *Procuratore* Aloisi. However, the judge fails at putting the *questore* in the best conditions to undertake the job that public opinion presses him to do. In this sense, the judiciary and news media are on the same side. As Curti writes:

“[j]ournalists and policemen glared at each other, and there are few doubts about who attracts the sympathy of screenwriters and directors: journalists’ rhetoric is often a mix of trite civil rights-oriented discourses that seems to be designed to provide an ulterior legitimation to the actions of the *commissario*” (2006, p. 302).

Journalists push policemen to curb the wave of criminality by reporting to them the alleged frustration and fear of citizens. Together with judges, they criticise policemen for issues of human rights in the rare moments they achieve a result.

The movie addresses the issue of kidnapping for ransom, exploiting its resonance in news media discourses. This criminal practice had long characterised southern Italy and Sardinia but, in 1973, started to spread to the wealthy North<sup>93</sup> (see Tables A.A.11 and A.A.12 in Appendix A representing the trend of the coverage of kidnappings by *Corriere della Sera* and *l’Unità* between 1969 and 1975). In the film, *Questore Cardone* does not want the families of the kidnapped to deal with criminals. As such, he is accused of putting the lives of the victims at risk. *Procuratore Aloisi* (Jean Sorel), with the support of the press, insists on the safeguarding of human life before anything else. The conflict between news media, the *procuratore*, and Cardone does not appear to respond to actual institutional conflicts concerning kidnappings. However, it epitomises media discourses that were questioning police methods.

“As soon as the kidnapping is done [...] the kidnapper knows he can count on two forced and precious ‘accomplices’: the family of the victim and the police. The first will ask the latter not to intervene, and they will not intervene” (Pansa 1973, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 18/11/1973).

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<sup>93</sup> The targets were sons and daughters of upper-class families. The kidnapping of Sergio Gadolla on October 1970 was the watershed for a new conceptualisation of kidnappings. In Gadolla’s case, investigators discovered connections between this criminal practice and politics. The leftist group *XX Ottobre* had kidnapped Gadolla, who was released after the payment of a considerable ransom. Afterwards, the police identified a former member of the neo-fascist party MSI, Diego Vandelli, as the head of the gang. The discovery led to the standard interpretation of the fact as evidence of the *opposti estremismi* (Migliorino 1971a, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 16/04/1971). Kidnapping, thus, was inscribed in the list of forbidden political practices. See Tables A.A.11 and A.A.12 in Appendix A to observe the trend of the coverage of kidnappings by *Corriere della Sera* and *l’Unità* between 1969 and 1975.

Hence, the title of the movie *La polizia sta a guardare*, which literally means: “the police are watching”, is no surprise. The action contained in the title does not intend to suggest that the police are actively looking after the citizenship. It suggests that the police are forced to observe the situation passively, without the (legal) possibility of intervening. Discourses concerning kidnappings arising from news media align with the reproaches that the *procuratore* gives to Cardone (“Do not forget your limits: the life of an innocent is worth more than anything else. We have to let the family deal with the kidnapers, the police must remain aloof”). However, the approach of the *procuratore* is not left unproblematic. Aloisi seems to be too dependent on the mood of the press. His complaints to Cardone follow or overlap with journalists remarking on the cynical attitude of the *questore*. Even more problematically, the *procuratore* seems affected by the mood of the upper class, embodied by the lawyer (Claudio Gora) who presses the judge to contain Cardone’s will to intervene. The mise-en-scène also fosters this impression. Figure 5.3 shows the typical press conference. Journalists are pressing Cardone to take responsibility for the death of a kidnapped boy. On the same side (left), there is the *procuratore* and the lawyer who represents the father of the victim. It is evident from the composition of the frame that the three categories, the lawyer, the *procuratore*, and journalists are part of the same “firing line” that impedes the work of the police.



Figure 5.3: the press conference of *questore* Cardone (from behind) in *La polizia sta a guardare*.

Hence, the first half of the movie frames Cardone as a morally ambiguous character. Following the argument of the press ritual, he does not express “the appropriate solidarity and sympathy” (Elliot 1981, p. 150) with the victims and he is sanctioned for

this by the press and the judiciary. Conversely, Aloisi sides with the victims and expresses “messages of sympathy”, especially after the death of a kidnapped child. Cardone may state his condemnation of the criminal act, but the focus of news media on the victims (not only in the films) places him on the wrong side of the “ritual”. The finale, however, leaves the *procuratore* as a defeated figure. Criminals abduct Cardone’s son and force the *questore* to question his approach.

“Others say: ‘we must begin to resist. We must stop paying, forcing families to cooperate with the police immediately’. A well-known criminal lawyer supported this approach. Again, however, there are pros and cons. The partial or total ‘stop’ of the investigation up to the liberation of the kidnapped allows the kidnappers to accumulate a huge, often decisive, advantage. However, what father or son will be so stoic as to decide: ‘I do not negotiate, and I do not pay: the police should do what they need to do’?” (Pansa 1973, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 18/11/1973).

Pansa published his article two days after the release of *La polizia sta a guardare* and the movie seems to address the question posed by the journalist. Nonetheless, Cardone manages to solve the situation with his methods. He initially contradicts his approach, deciding to pay the ransom, but his son asks him to be loyal to his principles, pronouncing an idealistic speech about “a better future without barbarism”. Finally, his decision allows him to defeat a reactionary organisation behind the kidnappings (see the plot in Appendix C). The second part of the movie seems to suggest that the role of “accomplices” (Pansa 1973, p. 1) of the kidnappers accorded to the police by newspapers is imposed on them by the judiciary. Police methods are the only possibility to defeat “barbarism”. *Questore* Cardone and *Procuratore* Aloisi do not share the success of police action and there is no reconciliation between the two civic authorities.

Institutional conflict continues to characterise the entire *filone*. Films such as *La polizia sta a guardare* deny any dialogue between the two institutions. The blindness of the moral voice represented by the judiciary is one of the embodiments of this conflict, which ultimately benefits the powers-that-be and criminals (*La polizia ringrazia*; *La polizia sta a guardare*; *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide*; *La legge violenta della squadra anticrimine*, Massi 1976). From 1974, following local cinematic trends, the formulas associated with the *poliziottesco* started to be consistently hybridised. Serial tropes coming from court drama or other *filoni* such as the *giallo*, the erotic, and mafia movies modified further the formula of the conspiracy mode provided by *La*

*polizia ringrazia*. These changes also affected the relationship between policemen and judges. Some movies placed the police and the judiciary as part of a single corrupt system, exaggerating the nihilistic attitude of the *filone*. Others, on the other hand, depicted a positive collaboration. Finally, *procuratori* surrendered to the violent methods of *commissari*, framed as the only way to overcome the inefficiency of the Italian legal system. However, this was not a simple case of returning to narrative structures encountered in movies like *La polizia sta a guardare*. This time, the judiciary had to surrender because its disloyalty to democracy in the framework of the *strategia della tensione* had been proven.

### Culprits, accomplices and collaborators: the judge and the *commissario* in hybrid forms of the *poliziottesco*

In some hybrid forms of the *filone*, the basic formula of the *poliziottesco* merged with outputs of other contemporaneous cinematic trends. On the one hand, the blame for the “explosive” Italian socio-political context is associated with a vague corruptive “system”. Neither the police nor the judiciary are immune. The police are framed as violent professionals, but the judiciary actively operates to cover them up. Ideally, this representation connected more with trends of cinema *di consumo impegnato*. In such a framework, in fact, films *di consumo impegnato* aimed at exposing the hypocrisy of a supposed “national interest” behind the articulation of repressive state apparatuses. In De Vincenti’s words, the movies highlighted the real aim of Italian power structures: “maintaining a profoundly anti-democratic system, ruled by top-level management presenting a political and personal behaviour typical of the mafia” (1997, p. 269). The judiciary was part of the state ranks that were blamed for the corruption and political repression in the country.

On the other hand, when merged with *giallo*, mafia, and erotic movies the representation of judges served different purposes. Women were the primary victims of serial killers in the *giallo filone* (Koven 2006, p. 65-67). The character of *Sostituto Procuratore Stori* (Giovanna Ralli) in *La polizia chiede aiuto* links the *giallo* to the *poliziottesco*. Firstly, she is a potential victim of a serial killer. Secondly, she is a means to establish a collaboration between the police and the judiciary by engaging with the serial device of the contraposition between higher and lower ranks of civic institutions. In such movies as *Ordine firmato in bianco*, the higher ranks of the judiciary are used to embody the indestructible and omnipresent power of the mafia. In erotic movies like *Il*

*giudice e la minorenn*, the judge is used to address the vices of Italian men. The element of scandal is provided by the sharing of sexual “perversions” by a judge, framed as an embodiment of high moral and ethical values, and the people. Hence, the last two movies merge with the conspiracy mode of the *poliziottesco* by deploying the typical reactionary manoeuvres of mysterious organisations.

*Processo per direttissima* (De Caro, 1974) and *Il testimone deve tacere* (Rosati, 1974) are example of films that stand against the Italian system of power. The first is an atypical mixture of *poliziottesco* and court drama. More than a police investigation, the movie is a journalistic investigation that takes place in a court. The screenwriter of *La polizia ringrazia*, Lucio De Caro, reconstructs the Pinelli affair merging it with the bombing on the Italicus train. The result is a film about a journalistic investigation into the legality of institutional action (see the plot in Appendix C). The judiciary and the police, in *Processo per direttissima*, are “two sides of the same coin”, as a lawyer explains to a journalist:

Lawyer: “The judge, man of togas, perceives himself superior to the policeman, man of the truncheon, but he easily forgets that they are both part of the same big judicial family.”

Journalist: “Thus what is it, the mafia? Are you telling me that it is a state mafia?”

Lawyer: “The state is not *mafioso*, it’s old and decrepit.”

*Il testimone deve tacere* deploys the same nihilistic representation of civic institutions. However, it avoids addressing the events of the recent past explicitly. The movie centres on a private citizen – Doctor Sironi – whose life is ruined by the collusion of part of the state with criminal powers (see the plot in Appendix C). The attack on state institutions is so strong that the filmmakers felt the need to apologise through a final disclaimer:

“This is the story of Doctor Sironi... Every reference to facts, names, and places is purely casual. We apologise to anyone who would identify himself with one of the various characters. The moral, however, remains... It also remains the silent honesty (the one that matters more) of citizens, politicians, judges, law enforcement agents, who every day continue to defend our democratic order bravely”.

Both *Processo per direttissima* and *Il testimone deve tacere* can be considered atypical *poliziotteschi* as the first focuses on a journalistic investigation and the second on the misfortunes of a private citizen. However, they contain many different elements that

link them to the *poliziottesco* (actors, professionals, themes, the mode of representing civic authorities, the names of some of the characters<sup>94</sup>).

The same can be said about Dallamano's 1974 film *La polizia chiede aiuto*, which merges the *poliziottesco* and the *giallo* (see the plot in Appendix C). The movie introduces a third version of the conflict between the police and the judiciary. After the initial lack of communication and the representation of the police and the judiciary as part of the same corrupt system, Dallamano depicts a fruitful collaboration between mid-ranks. *La polizia chiede aiuto*, in fact, provides a complete reconciliation between *Commissario* Silvestri (Claudio Cassinelli) and *Sostituto Procuratore* Stori (Giovanna Ralli). In the finale, they curse the *questore* who wants to cover up a case of child prostitution that involves a minister and influential personalities (Figures 5.4 and 5.5).



Figures 5.4 and 5.5: *Commissario* Silvestri (front) and *Sostituto Procuratore* Stori (back) cursing the *questore* in *La polizia chiede aiuto*.

*La polizia chiede aiuto* is relevant to this analysis also for another element related to the judiciary: the *sostituto procuratore* is a woman and is the co-protagonist of the movie. It is surprising that a woman is finally able to escape the stereotyped representation of the *poliziottesco* introduced in Chapter 1: a victim, a prostitute or the lover of the *commissario*. Less surprising is the fact that Giovanna Ralli plays a judge. Italy had -

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<sup>94</sup> *Processo per direttissima* is directed by Lucio De Caro, screenwriter of *La polizia ringrazia*, and stars Mario Adorf (*La polizia ringrazia*, *Milano calibro 9*, *La polizia chiede aiuto*). *Il testimone deve tacere* is directed by Giuseppe Rosati (*La polizia interviene: ordine di uccidere*, *Paura in città*), and stars Elio Zanuto (*Il poliziotto è marcio*, *Milano calibro 9*, *Napoli violenta*) and Rosario Borelli (*Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia*, *Il poliziotto è marcio*). Moreover, the judge in the film (Elio Zanuto) shares the name, Belli, with the protagonist of *La polizia incrimina: la legge assolve*, *Commissario Belli* (Franco Nero).

and, arguably, has – chauvinist issues that, in the 1970s, intersected with a wave of sexual liberation that had seen women finally asking for more power to decide about their lives and bodies. In 1974 Italians voted in favour of divorce after an intense debate. Moreover, as Ginsborg records “the number of women employees rose by nearly 50 per cent in the period 1970-1985” (1990, p. 410). Hence, Giovanna Ralli’s *Stori* expresses a tension internal to Italian society. The tension can be also linked to the representation of civic institutions. On the one hand, *Stori* offered the image of an emancipated and powerful woman – one of the few of *filone* cinema; on the other hand, the fact of using a woman to portray the *sostituto procuratore* can be interpreted as a way of addressing the judiciary as the weak side of the law<sup>95</sup>. Aligning with the approach towards women of news media and the *poliziottesco*, outlined in Chapter 1, she is resolute but needs the protection of men – the superintendent of the building where she lives or *Commissario Silvestri* - to overcome the threat of a serial killer (Figure 5.6).



Figure 5.6: *Sostituto Procuratore* Stori in shock after the attempted murder. She has been saved by the (male) superintendent of the building, as is reported by television news in *La polizia chiede aiuto*.

*Sostituto Procuratore* Stori is the progressive and human face of the state. Her character aligns with previous representations of the category like Ricciuti in *La polizia ringrazia*

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<sup>95</sup> Not surprisingly, the next magistrates played by women are part of the erotic *filone*. Firstly, in Nucci’s *Il giudice e la minorenn*e, analysed below. Secondly, in Lucio Fulci’s *La pretora* (1976), an erotic comedy in which greedy entrepreneurs blackmail an honest judge (Edwige Fenech), threatening to expose her by publishing the photos of her porn star twin sister.

(Vanzina, 1972) and Aloisi in *La polizia sta a guardare* (Infascelli, 1973): she wants evidence and releases criminals if the police cannot manage to find any, conflicting with *Commissario* Silvestri and his subordinates. She might follow the law, but the movie ends up proving the policeman right. The way of reconciling the two figures is the distinction between the high and low ranks of the judiciary. Stori and Silvestri are united by their complaints against the *procuratore generale* (a man). Facing him with evidence of the implication of politicians in the scandal, they receive the more typical answer:

*Procuratore*: “There are names involved that cannot be touched. They can’t be touched unless we receive orders from above.”

Silvestri: “And this means never, as usual. It’s always the same story; they accuse us of incompetence, inefficiency but when we finally close a case nothing happens”.

Similarly, the policeman and the judge express solidarity with each other after the confrontation between *Commissario* Silvestri and the *questore*. However, their collaboration secures the defeat of the serial killer at the centre of the plot but not the defeat of the system of power that protects him. Stori and Silvestri, in fact, are not powerful enough to face a “justice system [that] is not only inefficient but corrupt and in the service of the criminals” (Bondanella 2009, p. 471). Criminals and the higher ranks of the state, following the initial conceptualisation, are two sides of the same coin. Hence, there is still a generalised attack on the “system” represented by the higher ranks of the police and the judiciary. However, contrary to *Processo per direttissima* and *Il testimone deve tacere*, the mid-ranks provide a hint of hope to Italian audiences.

Such collaboration with the mid-ranks disappeared as a plot device in subsequent movies. Part of the reason behind this change can be found in the evolution of news media discourses on the judiciary, which was invested by suspicions in the framework of the *strategia della tensione*. The result was either the framing of corrupt *procuratori* or the complete surrendering of the judiciary to the violent means of the *commissario* in the films. At the same moment mainstream news media, conservative or not, started to link the judiciary to the *strategia della tensione*, judges started to be framed explicitly as

active participants in the cinematic conspiracies. The judiciary had exited the “*torre d’avorio*” (“ivory tower”)<sup>96</sup>. On the one side, after being at the margins of the news, it was reported engaging with many different aspects of Italian society, from the control of prices to water pollution. Beria di Argentine wrote in August 1973 about “the feeling that, nowadays, the judiciary is active everywhere [...]. There is not a single aspect of the life of our country that doesn’t involve the judiciary” (1973c, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 03/08/1973). Accordingly, judges started to be included in plot formulas external to cinema *di consumo impegnato* and the conspiracy mode of the *poliziottesco*. On the other side, the *trame nere* and the increasing accusations of inefficiency against terrorism allowed *filone* filmmakers to shift the blame from the police to the judiciary. *Ordine firmato in bianco* and *Il giudice e la minorenn*e are two hybrids that exemplify this double representational dynamic. The films move within the framework of *filone* cinema, re-working the coordinates of the *poliziottesco* around the judge, who is the antagonist in the former and the protagonist in the latter. The absence of the *commissario* signals the possibility of having judges as stand-alone protagonists in plots revolving around - or including elements of - the *strategia della tensione*.

*Ordine firmato in bianco* (Manera, 1974) deploys tropes of *filoni* such as the *giallo* (the serial killer), mafia movie (a gang of Italo-Americans) and *poliziottesco* (a corrupt *procuratore* and a conspiracy theory) (see the plot in Appendix C). Concerning the representation of the judiciary, it is interesting to analyse the marketing of the film. As can be observed in Figure 5.7, the poster announces: “This is the movie that honours the judiciary”.

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<sup>96</sup>A metaphor repeatedly used to foster a stereotyped representation of an isolated category (Beria di Argentine 1973a, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 05/04/1973. Martinelli 1973a, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera*, 19/05/1973. Giuliani 1974b, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 04/06/1974).



Figure 5.7: poster of *Ordine firmato in bianco*.

However, a judge, an unnamed *procuratore*, uncle of one of the gang's members, appears briefly only at the halfway-point of the movie, and then abruptly returns before the end of the movie, denouncing himself as a *mafioso* and killing the last survivor of the gang. A mysterious man in a tree films the assassination. In the next scene, the spectator discovers that the man filming was a policeman. He reveals to the *procuratore generale* the result of his investigation, labelled “*fascicolo Z*” (dossier Z), that proves the culpability of “a person above suspicion”:

*Questore*: “We started the investigation to catch simple thieves, and we encountered a political affair. I’m going to tell you my conclusion: the brain of the organisation, unfortunately, is a man that is very close to us. *Eccellenza*, I don’t dare to tell you. He is a very influential person, you know...”

He finishes his sentence dramatically whispering the name in the *procuratore generale*’s ear. Actually, there is nothing strictly political in the action of the *procuratore*. Loose references to political films such as *Indagine su un cittadino al di*

*sopra di ogni sospetto* and *Z* (Costa-Gavras 1969) makes the dialogue – and the movie – an “exposé<sup>97</sup> based on *dietrologia d’acatto* [second order conspiracy theories]” (Curti 2006, p. 282). The very last scene pretends to “honour the judiciary” but, in reality, is an unrequested apology that exposes an accusation. At this point, some high court (Figure 5.8) – it could be the *Consiglio Superiore della Magistratura*, the organ of self-control of the Italian judiciary – condemns the action of corrupt judges. It declares loyalty to the democratic system and the importance of the judiciary to uncover the plots that threaten it. The director inserts the *trame nere* into the movie even though this is unmotivated in the context of a serial killer chasing a gang of Italian American *mafiosi*. It seems that the theme does not need a consistent elaboration anymore. In movies such as *La polizia ringrazia* and *Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia*, it is the climax of the plot. In movies such as *Ordine firmato in bianco* and *Il giudice e la minorenne* (analysed below), it becomes one of the interchangeable units of content that add little to the narrative of the films. The representation of the judiciary signals two elements. Firstly, it exposes how cinematic judges became the primary means of addressing conspiracies. Secondly, it shows the easiness of blaming judges regarding the inefficiency of the state to tackle conspiracies in Italy, a feature that can be traced in news media discourses.



Figure 5.8: the *Consiglio Superiore della Magistratura* in *Ordine firmato in bianco*. The judge at the left is the killer of the movie. He is arrested but commits suicide after praising the invincibility of the mafia.

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<sup>97</sup> The initial disclaimer suggests a news-oriented, quasi-documentary approach of the movie, starting with, “From a note of the Criminalpol”.

The erotic *poliziottesco* *Il giudice e la minorenne* (Nucci, 1974; see the plot in Appendix C) centres on the vicissitudes of Judge Marco Serra (Chris Avram) who investigates cases of sexual crimes involving minors. Similar to Judge Sola in *Imputazione di omicidio per uno studente*, Serra's distance from contemporary society gets in the way of his understanding of the phenomenon. Despite his apparent moral integrity, he is not able to resist temptation and has sex with his daughter's best friend. A subplot presenting Serra's daughter (Antiniska Nemour) and assistant<sup>98</sup> (Romy Schell) introduces a conspiracy in the movie. Schell's character becomes a judge but, following the traditional path of women in the *filone*, she is relegated to the role of the unfulfilled lover of Serra. Her choice to act against the law to protect Serra undermines her status as a rigorous state servant. In fact, she decides to erase the evidence that connects the judge's daughter to an organisation of subversives responsible for corruption, conspiracy against the state and massacre. The political origin of the group is ambiguous ("Perhaps they put in your head ideals of revolution, I don't know... perhaps ideals of order and justice"<sup>99</sup>) but can be assimilated to the *strategia della tensione* ("Corruption, conspiracy against the state, massacre..."). Noticeably, the movie was released in August 1974, ten days after the massacre on the Italicus train and three months after the massacre in Brescia, which were clearly represented by news media as acts of neo-fascist terrorism. "Audiences' prior knowledge" (Fisher 2014, p. 174), hence, could intervene to fill the gaps left by shoddy dialogues and plot holes. Additionally, the conspiracy theme is used to connote the relationship between the characters: the daughter is problematic because of the organisation; it allows the female magistrate to express her feelings for judge Serra; finally, it allows the filmmakers to attach a socio-political connotation to the gruesomeness of thugs' violence. In the film, the *strategia della tensione* is part of a set of behaviours that are corrupting Italian society, compromising traditional social relations. The action focuses on judges because their prestigious status could increase the impact of the corruption affecting Italy. Moreover, they provided a believable background for the inclusion of political investigations.

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<sup>98</sup> The filmmakers did not think that was important to tell her name to the audience.

<sup>99</sup> In a previous dialogue it is stated: "a group of extremists, right- or left-wing we don't know. Apparently, it is a simple brawl, but there is something else".

*Ordine firmato in bianco* and *Il giudice e la minorenne* highlight the instrumental and exploitative relation to contemporaneous events that encompasses the whole *poliziottesco*. The re-elaboration of political issues was operated through different “usages” of institutional figures. Transitioning from a position of isolation, the judge could be the external figure to whom the blame for the political situation in Italy could be addressed less problematically<sup>100</sup>. The shifting of the blame from the police to the judiciary in the conspiracy subset of the *poliziottesco* was facilitated by the representation of judges in media discourses concerning the *strategia della tensione*. From 1972, when *La polizia ringrazia* established a basic formula, too many political trials had been postponed, transferred or delayed. Too many suspects had been released, only to commit further acts of political violence. Too many investigations had floundered due to conflicts internal to the judiciary, as Italian newspapers framed them.

### Judges and the *strategia della tensione*: negotiating blame and assuming the “prior knowledge” through news media discourses in the *poliziottesco*

*Procuratore Generale Di Federico*: “Justice is not a race or a sports competition, Minister. [...] this time I don’t want to risk somebody committing suicide at the wrong moment, or a roll of wiretappings disappearing mysteriously, or a tape being tampered with or, above all, that after two or three years it is discovered that I’m not the competent judge anymore.”

*La polizia ha le mani legate* (Ercoli 1975)

The dialogue above comes from a 1975 *poliziottesco*, *La polizia ha le mani legate* (Ercoli). It lists many of the controversial issues that had characterised the judiciary in the first half of the 1970s. The listing of items did not need specific explanations. The remarks were rooted in the “levels of prior knowledge assumed to be shared by their [the movies] immediate target market” (Fisher 2014, p. 174). This thesis has been attempting to fill a gap in research, analysing media discourses around which the “prior

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<sup>100</sup> This is not so different from the use of international organisations, which could allow filmmakers to divert or nuance the responsibilities of internal enemies of the state in many *poliziotteschi* (*Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia*; *Mark il poliziotto Colpisce Ancora*).

knowledge” may have been formed. In respect to Judge Di Federico’s list, the issues addressed could be linked to the representation of the Italian investigative procedure by news media, especially concerning political violence.

The movie re-works the massacre of Piazza Fontana. Consequently, the “risk that somebody commits suicide at the wrong moment” could be linked to Pinelli or Alberto Muraro. Muraro, a former *carabiniere*, had been involved in the investigations against neo-fascists for the bombings of 1969, culminating in the massacre in Piazza Fontana. He was a witness who could have led to the incrimination of Franco Freda, one of the neo-fascists suspected for the bombing of Piazza Fontana, even before the attack, and long before the emergence of the *pista nera* (the investigation against neo-fascists for Piazza Fontana) in 1972. However, he had been found dead in September 1969. The fact had been interpreted as a tragedy or suicide (Anon. 1972p, p. 1; *l’Unità* 12/07/1972), leading to the dismissal of the investigation.

The concern regarding “a roll of wiretappings disappear[ing] mysteriously, or a tape being tampered with” connected with important investigations that had been characterised by the mysterious disappearance of evidence. The spy-telephone scandal involved state functionaries, private detectives, misconducts of both the police and the judiciary, and politicians for illegal wiretappings. Rolls containing illegal wiretappings related to major political personalities (Anon. 1973c, p. 1; *l’Unità* 23/02/1973), mafia investigations (Gambescia 1971a,b,c, p. 1; *l’Unità* 21;23-24/11/1971), and political scandals (Martinelli 1973b, p. 1; Martinelli 1973c, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 06-07/12/1972) also disappeared from the offices of Italian judges. The spy-telephone scandal brought much criticism on the judiciary because it was soon covered up (Anon. 1973k, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 09/05/1973). Concerning the disappearance of wiretappings regarding the ANAS scandal<sup>101</sup>, the responsibility was fully attributed to the judiciary – “this time, there wasn’t a problem of surveillance. The tapes were taken

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<sup>101</sup> A major case of corruption related to public procurements involving politicians and state functionaries in 1971 (Colarizi 2000, p. 435).

over by the magistrate, and there is a regular report prepared by the chancellor<sup>102</sup>” (Martinelli 1973b, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 06/12/1973).

The element that contributed significantly to the deterioration of the prestige of the judiciary was the inscription of the institution in the framework of the *strategia della tensione* by news media. Judges were suspected of colluding with neo-fascist forces. Before 1974, the police had attracted most of the accusation concerning alleged collusion with neo-fascists. The massacres in Brescia (May 1974) and on the Italicus train (August 1974) brought criticism on the judiciary for its excessive tolerance towards neo-fascists (Russo 1974, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 12/11/1974; Passanisi 1974, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera*, 29/05/1974; Manfellotto 1974, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 30/05/1974; Calvino 1974, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 06/08/1974). Scrolling through the news, in fact, there are many names of neo-fascists arrested and subsequently released that re-emerge in further investigations. Media discourses concerning the struggle against neo-fascist terrorism provide the coordinates to understand the last concern included in Di Federico’s list. “I don’t want to risk [...], above all, that after two or three years it is discovered that I’m not the competent judge anymore”, says the magistrate. The issue of conflicts of competence<sup>103</sup> was a primary element of discontent by news media. Conflicts of competence had been signalled to have considerably slowed down investigations regarding the spy-telephone scandal (Zicari 1973b, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 11/04/1973) and mafia (Giuliani 1974a, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 22/03/1974). More importantly, the issue significantly affected the investigations on the *trame nere* (Gambescia 1974, p. 1; *l’Unità* 15/11/1974) and the bombing in Brescia (c.s. 1974, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 23/12/1974). Finally, at the same time as the release of

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<sup>102</sup> The *cancelliere* (chancellor) in the Italian legal system performed administrative work in Italian courts. The primary duty of the *cancelliere* is to help judges in the redaction of the reports of their activities.

<sup>103</sup> By conflict of competence, *conflitto di competenza* in Italian, I mean the conflict between different *procure* (the offices of inquiring magistrates) concerning the right to conduct an investigation. In the 1970s, it often happened that different *procure* investigated on the same crime, fragmenting the investigation and impeding a consistent and effective action by the Italian judiciary. This significantly slowed down investigations. Conflicts of competence emerged when one *procura* claimed the exclusive right to investigate on that same crime.

*La polizia ha le mani legate* (March 27, 1975), *l'Unità* criticised the decision of the Court of Cassation to take the investigation into Piazza Fontana away from the judges of Milan (Paolucci 1975, p. 1; *l'Unità* 05/04/1975).

Thereby, connecting to Fisher's (2014) argument, Di Federico's words confirm the extent to which *poliziottesco* filmmakers constructed their narratives based on a knowledge assumed to be shared by its target audience. There are not explicit references to the 1970s present because they were not needed. As has been said in the previous chapters, the general theme of the movie and elements of the *mise-en-scène* provided the reference to the recent past, which worked as emotional triggers. As such, filmmakers could avoid detailed explanations, assuming the elements that could be linked to widespread media discourses. *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide* addresses the issue of the manipulation of evidence. *Commissario Solmi* and Judge Mannino blame each other for having tampered with the rolls of wiretappings exposing the conspiracy at the base of the plot. Later on, Solmi discovers that the evidence had been tampered with by the secret service. One month after the release of the film (April 4, 1975), Italian newspapers denounced the manipulation of the rolls of wiretappings related to the investigation into Borghese's attempted coup. *L'Unità* and *Corriere* questioned the responsibility of the Italian secret service (Anon. 1975a,b,c, p. 1; *l'Unità* 06-08/05/1975; Martinelli 1975, p. 1; *Corriere della Sera* 04/06/1975). It is not my intention to attribute to *poliziottesco* filmmakers the power of predicting the future. The issue, however, signals the availability of particular speculations, which were part of audiences' "prior knowledge" assumed by *poliziotteschi* filmmakers. Eventually, the fiction could intersect with the development of actual investigations, relying on the accumulation of suspicions that, even if not supported by evidence, had a prominent space in news media discourses. As Pergolari wrote about the engagement of the *poliziottesco* with the *strategia della tensione*, the movies managed to insert within the codes of the *filone* "all the *surplus* of mystery" (2009, p. 160, emphasis in the original) characterising the events of the recent past.

As has been said above, *La polizia ha le mani legate* reworks the massacre of Piazza Fontana (see the plot in Appendix C). The actual massacre is immediately evoked through evident similarities between the hotel hall where the fictional attack takes place

and the Bank of Agriculture in Milan<sup>104</sup> (Figures 5.9 and 5.10). The movie deploys the contrast between the police and the judiciary. The typical subdivision of roles between high (*procuratore generale*) and low (*sostituto procuratore*) ranks, however, is reversed. *Procuratore Generale* Di Federico (Arthur Kennedy) compels Rolandi to fulfil his duty, privileging the code over an effective police action. Nonetheless, he realises that Rolandi's methods are needed and supports his action. *Sostituto Procuratore* Bondi, instead, is the mole who leads the organisation into killing all of the suspects. Similar to previous *poliziotteschi*, the representation of the judiciary in the movie is ambivalent. Di Federico is an honest state servant who, perhaps trapped by his class identity, does not dare to shake the base of the corrupt Italian system. Bondi is a dishonest and shady figure who conspires against the democratic order.



Figure 5.9: the hall of the hotel destroyed by the bomb in *La polizia ha le mani legate*.

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<sup>104</sup> Even if it has not been possible to establish the intentionality, a link with Piazza Fontana is established also through the surname of the protagonist. *Commissario* Matteo Rolandi shares the surname with the main witness of Piazza Fontana: taxi driver Cornelio Rolandi.



Figure 5.10: the hall of the bank of Agriculture in piazza Fontana after the bombing, 12/12/1969.

In another scene, Rolandi is eating in a bar. Seated at the same table two men are reading a newspaper, commenting on the headline (“Was it a mistake? In the hands of *Procuratore Di Federico* a message of the bomber, who declares that it was a mistake”):

Man 1: “A mistake? The mistake has been allowing them to do these things. They are criminals, but also who covers for them is a criminal. The usual Palestinians will end up being accused. In the hall there was an international meeting, there were also Israeli delegates. [Dialogue interrupted by Rolandi thanking the waiter] they would have claimed it. Here, investigation after investigation, the responsibility for the bombing will remain unknown.”

Man 2: “Yes, the usual *strategia della tensione*. [...]”<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Surprisingly, this is the first time that the *strategia della tensione* is overtly named in the *filone* beyond the use of allusions.

The dialogue cited above attempts to replicate the debate occurring in the country concerning the blame for the season of terrorism that had characterised Italy in the first half of the 1970s. Man 1 addresses the responsibility of the media in orienting public opinion. Italians are confused and divided and talk through the slogans that are touted by the press. Man 2 focuses on the action of Italian civic institutions to tackle terrorism. The target of the complaints is the state that “covers them [terrorists]” and the institution that “allow[ed] them to do these things”. Stemming from an article commenting on the actions of Judge Di Federico, the comments seem to blame the judiciary. Hence, judges in the *poliziottesco* seem to convey the dissatisfaction of the citizenship towards state action. As such, they mediate between Italians’ thirst for justice and the *raison d’état*. Accordingly, they mediate between *commissari* – the action - and the mysterious powers at the top of state elites – the brain of the *strategia della tensione*.

It may seem that the figure of the judge had not changed structurally from the representations of the first years of the *poliziottesco*. However, the historical context and the accusations against the judiciary marked a change. In *La polizia ringrazia* (1972) Ricciuti, similarly to Aloisi in Infascelli’s *La polizia sta a guardare* (1973), is a simple moraliser of police action. The collusion with reactionary forces of the high ranks of the judiciary is just suggested. In the last dialogue of *La polizia ringrazia*, the use of the title *eccellenza* suggests the involvement of the higher ranks of the judiciary in the conspiracy staged by the police. In Infascelli’s film, two kids who are helping the organisation of reactionary conspirators are described as the son of a former fascist hierarch and the son of a high magistrate. In stark contrast, *La polizia ha le mani legate*, similarly to other movies like *Il testimone deve tacere*, has the judiciary explicitly framed in collaboration with the conspirators. The police did not cease to be depicted as an agent of reactionary subversion (see, for example, *La polizia interviene: ordine di uccidere*, Rosati 1975). However, the judiciary became the primary target of accusation in state conspiracy plots. At the beginning of the decade, the conspiracies always revolved around the high ranks of the police (*La polizia ringrazia*; *Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia*; *La polizia sta a guardare*). From 1974, the judiciary was available to be an agent, if not the leader, of the conspiracies. In 1975, the best thing that the honest judge could do was to surrender to police methods and retire to other matters. The finale of *La polizia ringrazia* (1972) leaves the space for a possible positive solution due to the epiphany of *Sostituto Procuratore* Ricciuti, motivated by

the death of *Commissario* Bertone. The final scene of *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide* (1975) presents Judge Mannino completely defeated by his “blindness”. The scene cuts between the murder of Secret Service Agent Sperli (the man who could have connected state apparatuses to the conspirators), the assassination of Solmi (the man of the state who had discovered the plot), and Judge Mannino approaching the Roman prison where he intends to interrogate Sperli. Therefore, it is too late for any effective action on the part of the judiciary, which has lost the only person within the state who could have helped him unveil the truth: an honest policeman. If a sort of agency for change was accorded to *Sostituto Procuratore* Ricciuti, Judge Mannino is left powerless.

The glorification of police action should not come as a surprise. As has been said, the organisation of the *poliziottesco*, especially due to prominent action features, tends to give the last word to policemen. In *La polizia ringrazia*, *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide*, *La polizia ha le mani legate* and *La polizia chiede aiuto* the events of the plot convince judges to take the side of the *commissario*. Only in the last two films does the *commissario* manage not to die in the process. The last confrontation between *Procuratore Generale* Di Federico and *Commissario* Rolandi in *La polizia ha le mani legate* expresses the reconciliation of the two institutions. The roles are ironically reversed: when Di Federico asks why Rolandi did not tell him about the collusion of his subordinate, Rolandi answers “without proof, *eccellenza*, we have our hands tied”. The finale of *La polizia ha le mani legate* suggests that Rolandi kills *Sostituto Procuratore* Boni (Figure 5.11). In the scene before, *Procuratore Generale* Di Federico thanked *Commissario* Rolandi for the discovery of the disloyalty of his subordinate. The judiciary seems to have surrendered to violent police methods. It is the final stage of a conflict that had passed from total incommunicability to collaboration and, finally, to a necessary submission.

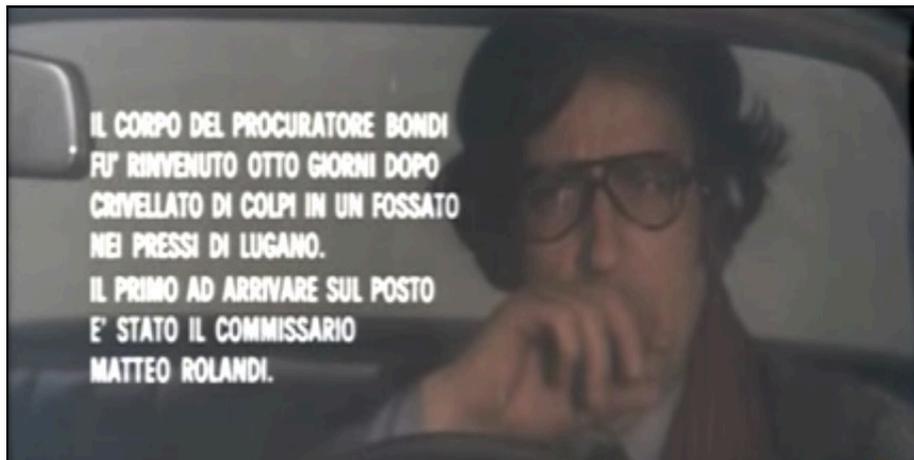


Figure 5.11: “The body of *procuratore* Bondi was found eight days after, riddled with gunshots, in a moat near Lugano. The first person to arrive at the location was *Commissario* Matteo Rolandi”, the finale of *La polizia ha le mani legate*.

### Cinematic scapegoats and wish-fulfilment projections: the judiciary mediating blame

As has been said throughout this chapter, the representation of cinematic judges helps to interpret the negotiation of the blame for the failures of the Italian state in the struggle against terrorism. As this chapter explained, in the conspiracy mode of the *poliziottesco* judges were the primary reference to news media discourses together with the figure of *Commissario* Calabresi explored in Chapter 4. To conclude the last chapter of this thesis, it can be useful to bring back the analysis to cinema *di consumo impegnato*. This is because movies *di consumo impegnato* show the impact of film seriality on the narrative structure of *filone* cinema. As has been said in this thesis, the “levels of prior knowledge” (Fisher 2014, p. 174) assumed by *poliziotteschi* filmmakers to avoid complex political analysis and focus on action relied on references to widespread news media discourses. However, by 1975, the continuous dialogue between *filoni* and cinema *di consumo impegnato* concerning themes, forms, and professionals had established a shared framework of interpretation for both the filmic material and the contemporaneous socio-political context. In the *poliziottesco*, the deployment of cinematic references to Italian productions of the early 1970s often suggested a political reading of the relationship between institutional characters. In Chapter 2, it has been explained how cinema *di consumo impegnato* had an impact on the use of news media in the *filone*. The repetition of tropes and plot items originating from the formulas of the

two cinematic forms also affected the representation of civic institutions. Nonetheless, these representations continued to be consistently constructed in response to the impact of media on the perception and exertion of power in Italy. Particular attention was devoted to question the impact of media on the relationship between justice and legality.

Damiano Damiani can be considered a key influence on the representation of the Italian judiciary and his films offer examples of the dynamic outlined above. Damiani's judges move between anonymous bureaucrats, typical of Hollywood cinema, and Italian investigative magistrates. Importantly, the filmmaker contributed to the representation of the judiciary not only in terms of the representation of state elites in Italy but also for the close relationship between media and justice that stems from his movies. *Confessione di un commissario di polizia al procuratore della repubblica* (1971) and *Perché si uccide un magistrato* (1975) exemplify this relationship. Concerning the relationship between Damiani's productions and the *filone*, it needs to be remembered that *poliziotteschi* were judged against cinema *di consumo impegnato* in relation to the political complexity of their representation of Italian socio-political conditions. *Poliziotteschi* filmmakers were aware of the fact that their movies privileged action in a cultural context that favoured political complexity. They suffered the ostracism of the critics (Martino, 1980; Olesen, 2017) and often reacted by subverting the meaning of tropes recuperated from more respected "models" (Buttafava 1980, p. 104).

Returning to the final dialogue between *Procuratore Generale* Di Federico and *Commissario* Rolandi in *La polizia ha le mani legate*, the mise-en-scène presents clear similarities with the final scene of Damiani's 1971 *Confessione di un commissario di polizia al procuratore della repubblica* (Figure 5.12). The dialogue is set on the stairs of *Palazzo di Giustizia* (Figure 5.13).



Figure 5.12: the last dialogue between *Procuratore Generale* Di Federico and *Commissario* Rolandi in *La polizia ha le mani legate*.



Figure 5.13: *Procuratore Generale* Malta approaching *Sostituto Procuratore* Traini in the final scene of *Confessione di un commissario di polizia al procuratore della repubblica*.

In Damiani's film, the killing of *Commissario* Bonavia (Martin Balsam) exposes the collusion of *Procuratore Generale* Malta (Claudio Gora) with the mafia. The death of Bonavia brings *Sostituto Procuratore* Traini (Franco Nero) to face Malta. Traini, similar to *Sostituto Procuratore* Ricciuti in *La polizia ringrazia*, is convinced of the possibility of changing the system from within. This is why he decides to confront Malta and the film ends with Traini staring at Malta (Figure 5.14), metaphorically condemning the "eccellenza" and providing a hint of hope for a positive resolution of the malfunctions of Italian justice (see the plot in Appendix C). Conversely, as has been explained above, the final dialogue between Di Federico and Rolandi does the opposite. Di Federico understand the impossibility of defeating the corrupt Italian system of power and surrenders to the violent means of the *commissario*.



Figure 5.14: *Sostituto Procuratore Traini* (left) faces *Procuratore Generale Malta* (right) in the finale of *Confessione di un commissario di polizia al procuratore della repubblica*.

However, this mode of playing with intertextual references was not peculiar to the *poliziottesco* but was also a feature of cinema *di consumo impegnato*. A cultural context characterised by the proliferation of serial products favoured the development of forms of self-referentiality constructed around elements of seriality. *Perché si uccide un magistrato* is a movie about a movie about a judge. The film seems to arise from the controversies that *Confessione di un commissario di polizia al procuratore della repubblica* (1971) attracted at the time of its release. The director had allegedly masked the figure of *Procuratore Generale* of Palermo Scaglione, killed by the mafia nearly one month before the release of the movie, under the guise of the fictional *Procuratore Generale Malta* (Claudio Gora). *L'Unità* opened the article commenting on the killing of Scaglione referencing the supposed inspiration given to Damiani by the “controversial” magistrate (Polara 1971, p. 1; *l'Unità* 06/05/1971). Morreale writes that more than a self-criticism *Perché si uccide un magistrato* is “an exorcism or, at least, an admission of crisis and confusion” (2014, p. 49), but it can be also read as a sort of apologetic movie. The protagonist, in fact, is a leftist filmmaker who releases a movie about the *procuratore generale* of Palermo. Seeking a scandal, he accuses the judge of collusion with the mafia. Nonetheless, he soon realises that his ideological bias could get in the way of his understanding of the “truth” (see the plot in Appendix C).

*Perché si uccide un magistrato* (1975) is in dialogue with its 1971 counterpart, *Confessione di un commissario di polizia al procuratore della repubblica*, through actors Claudio Gora and Franco Nero. Claudio Gora played the shady *Procuratore Generale Malta* in *Confessione di un commissario di polizia al procuratore della*

*repubblica* (Figure 5.15). In the film within *Perché si uccide un magistrato*, he is the high magistrate killed at the end of the fictional movie (Figure 5.16).



Figure 5.15: Claudio Gora as *Procuratore Generale* Malta in *Confessione di un commissario di polizia al procuratore della repubblica*.



Figure 5.16: Claudio Gora as the *Procuratore Generale* in Solaris' film in *Perché si uccide un magistrato*.

In *Confessione di un commissario di polizia al procuratore della repubblica* (1971), Franco Nero played Traini, the honest *sostituto procuratore*. As has been said above, the movie ends with moral condemnation of Malta by the *sostituto procuratore*. Reversing the roles, the *Procuratore Generale* in *Perché si uccide un magistrato* is called Traini (Marco Guglielmi). Franco Nero, on the other hand, is filmmaker Solaris (Figure 5.17).



Figure 5.17: Solaris talks with *Procuratore Generale* Traini in *Perché si uccide un magistrato*.

Nero's Traini in *Confessione di un commissario di polizia al procuratore della repubblica* reproached *Commissario* Bonavia because the policeman could not provide evidence for his accusation against a *mafioso*. Bonavia's evidence, in fact, was based on his personal knowledge of the dynamics internal to the Sicilian system of power. Thus, the death of the *commissario* directed the blame also to the indolence of Traini. Reversing the dynamic, Solaris' movie in *Perché si uccide un magistrato* is not based on concrete evidence but is aimed at fuelling a scandal. Similar to the dynamic of the Calabresi-Lotta Continua trial, re-proposed in *Processo per direttissima*, the scandal was instrumental in going to court and forcing the *procuratore* to answer precise questions (*Procuratore* Traini: "So, you trust justice?"; Solaris: "No, I trust the scandal. I have no illusions about the verdict"). Solaris' faith in the scandal, however, crumbles when Traini gets killed and the scandal is used to mask the assassination as a mafia ambush<sup>106</sup>. Solaris, in this respect, can be considered the embodiment of Damiani himself, elaborating on the negative impact of his 1971 film on the media persona of *Procuratore Generale* Scaglione.

This reading gains support from the depiction of leftist journalists. For his movie-within-a-movie, Solaris had benefitted from the collaboration of a leftist Sicilian newspaper: *La Notte*, whose aim is to expose the connections between parts of the state, politics, and mafia. Solaris' discovery of the real killers of Traini undermines the struggle of *La Notte*. The result is that the leftist journalists reject the director. As the

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<sup>106</sup> Actually, the murder is the result of a private matter. The killer is the lover of Traini's wife.

moral of the movie suggests, they were interested only in the political power of the scandal and not in finding evidence of the judge's collusion with the mafia. Solaris, in fact, asks: "Otherwise, how would we have been different from Traini?". The journalists, however, answer with an eloquent gesture (Figure 5.18).



Figure 5.18: Journalists cursing Solaris in the finale of *Perché si uccide un magistrato*.

Thus, in Damiani's movies, an invisible tie links justice and media. Media, appealing to the scandal, negotiate the blame for the distortions of the Italian system of power. Judges are used as a means to bring forward the negotiation, embodying the tension between Italians' desire for justice and the distrust towards the justice system.

To connect to the literature addressed in the previous chapter, the final scene of *Confessione di un commissario di polizia al procuratore della repubblica*, having *Sostituto Procuratore* Traini indicting *Procuratore Generale* Malta, morally if not legally, could be interpreted as a wish-fulfilment. In the framework of cinema *di consumo impegnato*, the same wish-fulfilment turned into a sense of guilt in *Perché si uccide un magistrato*, reflecting on the consequences of a sort of "judicial determinism" (Mancino 2013, p. 87). As O'Leary argues, the *poliziottesco* "depict[s] situations pushed to the *ne plus ultra* which articulate[s] not the reality of contemporary Italian society so much as a fantasy projection of that reality which is part anxiety and (I propose) part wish-fulfilment" (2011, p. 95). The scandal is a way to win the mechanism of self-defence of the corrupt "system". As such, it works in the direction of a wish-fulfilment. Accordingly, the wish-fulfilment turns into guilt related to the violence that unfolds as a consequence of the instrumental use of the scandal. Damiani's approach to Italian justice seems to echo in the *poliziottesco*. As has been said in previous chapter, however, in the *filone*, rage substitutes guilt as the emotional trigger

that drives the narrative. The scandal created by institutional misconduct operates to prove police methods right and position judges as the weak link of state ranks in the struggle against violence. The final reaction of *sostituti procuratori* - from *La polizia ringrazia* to *La polizia chiede aiuto*, and *La polizia ha le mani legate* - can be read as a wish-fulfilment emerging from a cinematic action that presents the characteristics of a “public debate’ on violence and legality” (Fatelli 2013, p. 112).

In the *filone*, the power of the scandal is often substituted by the power of violence, which by itself is the evidence – clearly not in terms of the legal procedure – that *commissari* need to take action. The episodes of extreme violence by bloodthirsty criminals and terrorists prove that an extreme reaction is needed. O’Leary saw in the policeman “a scapegoat and fantasy representative who assuages or avenges the spectator’s sense of social and economic insecurity or political impotence” (2011, p. 103). The “fantasy representative” remained firmly attached to more and more violent *commissari*. In Chapter 4, it has been explained how the scapegoat role of *Commissario Del Buono* and *Commissario Scavino* can be connected to their sacrifice, which expressed the hopes for a more progressive police force and returned the violent protagonists into the parameters of the law. The analysis provided in this chapter shows the judiciary as a scapegoat for the failures of the Italian state. Judges did not sacrifice for a greater good but were “offered” to audiences to avenge their “sense of social and economic insecurity or political impotence” (2011, p. 103). Blaming judges could allow audiences to identify with the angry reaction of policemen. It also permitted the release of the emotional tension related to audiences’ distrust towards sectors of the Italian state in the framework of the *strategia della tensione*. Judges Ricciuti, Stori, Belli, Mannino, and Di Federico are scapegoats who “explain” the inefficiency of the state to tackle terrorism in Italy. In the extreme cases – *Sostituto Procuratore Bondi*, the *procuratore* in *Ordine firmato in bianco* – judges embody the corruption of the state. *Commissari* continued to sacrifice themselves, dying in the process of unveiling conspiracies. Judges, transitioning from a position of isolation, could be positioned less problematically as scapegoats both for the necessity of the state to turn to violence and for the failures of effective action against violence in the country.

From 1975, judges tended to disappear from leading roles in the *poliziottesco*. Different factors contributed to this trend. Firstly, from 1975 the political elements of the *filone* decrease significantly. If bombings and massacres come back, it is by the hand of

bloodthirsty apolitical psychopaths (*Quelli della calibro 38*, 1975; *La polizia è sconfitta*, 1977). The prominence of the judiciary in crime news was mostly related to political investigations, so the breaking of the link between the *poliziottesco* and contemporary politics might have reduced the presence of the judiciary in the *filone*. Moreover, the *filone* crystallised around structured formulas particularly based on action and criminal violence. Judges could be jettisoned for the sake of more spectacular car chases or shootouts. The *strategia della tensione* had ceased to be a controversial theory and had become a shared interpretation of contemporary political violence. The police, contrary to the judiciary, had already given to media such heroic figures as *Commissario Calabresi*. These figures were instrumental to cinematic plots and, in the framework of the press ritual, to media discourses related to national solidarity against terrorism. Death had been the price paid by Calabresi to be elevated to heroic status. Judges started to be the target of terrorist assassinations from 1976 onwards (Coco, Occorsio, Palma, Tartaglione, Calvosa, Alessandrini, Bachelet, Minervini, Galli, Giacumbi, Amato). Even if the *filone* always thrived to attract controversies, it could be argued that the escalation of violence against the judiciary limited the space for the use of judges as scapegoats in the fantasies of filmmakers and audiences alike.

## Conclusion

Not without inconsistencies, judges, particularly *sostituti procuratori*, represented mediating figures concerning two different aspects. First, they mediated between the sector of the state available to arrive at the truth at any cost – *commissari* – and the sector of the state that wanted to prevent the disclosure of the truth – the powers-that-be. Second, they mediated between violent police methods and the civil rights of suspects. As such, the judiciary embodied both hopes and concerns of sectors of Italian public opinion. Additionally, the transition from an isolated institution to its active involvement in different sectors of Italian society gave the possibility of constructing a cinematic character from scratch. This element favoured both the responsiveness of cinematic judges to media discourses on justice in Italy and the adaptability of these institutional figures to cinematic tropes originating in Italian and international cinema.

As has been explained in the last section, cinema *di consumo impegnato* often addressed judges to elaborate on the relationship between media discourses and the perception of justice. The *poliziottesco* shared with *consumo impegnato* specific representational tropes, while often subverting the political meaning of such representations. As such,

judges in the films became the perfect counterpart of violent policemen, serving the purpose of orienting audiences' identification towards the *commissario*. On the other hand, judges became a significant part of cinematic conspiracies, addressing contemporaneous news media discourses. The same duality makes them scapegoats for the failures of the Italian state but also the embodiments of a wish-fulfilment for the resolution of the corruption affecting the political life of the nation.

As this chapter has argued, this ambivalent position epitomises the confusion that characterised the negotiation of the blame concerning the *strategia della tensione*. This negotiation did not follow a straightforward path either in the *filone* or in news media. As has been explained in Chapters 3 and 4, *poliziotteschi* directly addressed news media discourses on the implication of the police in the *strategia della tensione*. As soon as news media discourses offered the possibility of diverting the blame towards the judiciary, judges became the link between the cinematic action and the *strategia della tensione*. The ambiguous position of judges, related to their role as “moralisers” of police action in movies such as *La polizia sta a guardare*, favoured this transition.

News media discourses on the judiciary have also proved useful to trace the sources of audiences' “prior knowledge” used by filmmakers to link the cinematic action to the socio-political context of the early 1970s. Hence, after proposing the analysis of the cinematic *commissario* through the figure of *Commissario* Calabresi in Chapter 4, this chapter has aimed at bringing forward the argument that the *poliziottesco* constructed its institutional characters based on media discourses around the *strategia della tensione*. The representation departed from the initial formulation proposed by *La polizia ringrazia* but evolved by responding to contextual factors. The focus of the blame for state action had ceased to be the police alone. The violent means of the police attracted fewer controversies in the middle of the decade. Media discourses had moved the focus from street clashes to investigations, denouncing the inefficiency of the judiciary. This shift in media discourses can also be traced in the inclusion of conspiracy themes in sub-plots of hybrids such as *Ordine firmato in bianco* and *Il giudice e la minorenn*e. These movies exemplify how the *poliziottesco* used to re-elaborate political issues, using judges to absorb and re-contextualise these political issues in the most diverse plots.

The evolution of the relationship between *commissari* and judges was central to consolidate the argument of this mediating function of cinematic judges. Similar to

*Sostituto Procuratore Ricciuti* and *Commissario Bertone* in *La polizia ringrazia*, *Procuratore Aloisi* and *Questore Cardone* deploy the features of an irremediable conflict in *La polizia sta a guardare*. *La polizia chiede aiuto* and *La polizia ha le mani legate* establish the coordinates of a collaboration that originate from an initial distrust. The previous chapter identified the closing of a cycle in the recuperation of the violent features of Calabresi in the character of *Commissario Solmi*. The collaboration seems to be the prerequisite to close the cycle of the representation of judges. *La polizia chiede aiuto* deploys a renovated trust between mid-ranks of the police and the judiciary. The trust seems to persist in *La polizia ha le mani legate* but, in reality, becomes a complete surrender to police methods. In the last dialogue Di Federico, who is abandoning the investigation, asks Rolandi if he has come to *Palazzo di Giustizia* to take back his gun. The closing inscription (Figure 5.18) suggests a closure to the events through violent means. In the wake of the repeated failures of the Italian judiciary to provide closure to the mysteries of the previous years, expressed by media discourses on the *strategia della tensione*, the *poliziottesco* seems to suggest the defeat of the Italian legal system, surrendering to a nihilistic cynicism. Arguably, it confirms O'Leary's concerns about the possible effect of movies relying on conspiracy theories: "If the conspirators' will is shown to be irresistible, then resistance to it is pointless, and political activism or reformist aspiration is thereby allegorized as vain" (2011, p. 90). Only violence seems to be able to provide a partial closure to Italian conspiracies.

The figure of the judge in popular culture would take nearly two decades to be reevaluated through the figures of Judges Falcone and Borsellino, both of whom were killed by *Cosa Nostra* (the Sicilian Mafia) in 1992. The events of the 1970s, filled with political significance, affected the representation of Italian judges. The tension between politics and justice returned to the public sphere through the figure of Silvio Berlusconi, who was elected president in 1994. The rhetoric of Berlusconi and his party *Forza Italia* reinvigorated the criticism about the politicisation of Italian judges. His battle against the so-called *toghe rosse* (red togas), belonging to *Magistratura Democratica*, characterised Italian media discourses on the judiciary and justice. The origin of the conflict, however, needs to be sought at the moment in which the institution was transitioning from a position of isolation to a protagonist in Italian public life. In this respect, the exploration of media representations of the 1970s represents a pivotal operation. It allows the understanding of the construction of the social role of judges. The consensus towards Berlusconi's battle against the communists and their supposed

representatives in the judiciary had roots in a cultural context in which state action had been read ostensibly through the lenses of the political struggle. As a period of dramatic change in Italian society, the 1970s can be considered a watershed in the definition of the relationship between Italians and their institutions. The *poliziottesco*, engaging with mediated representations of institutional figures, becomes a significant source to interpret the evolution of this relationship, depicted through the idioms of popular culture and *filone* cinema.

## Conclusions: the *poliziottesco* as a public debate

### Introduction

“Here they are! Assassins! Give them to us!” screams the crowd outside *Commissario Bertone’s questura* (Figure 6.1) in *La polizia ringrazia* (Vanzina, 1972). In *Poliziotti violenti* (Tarantini, 1976), angry faces distorted by a wide-angle lens (Figure 6.2) express the uncontrollable rage of Italian people recurring to self-made justice as a consequence of state absence. They are not subversives or students. They are middle aged and middle-class men and women, shop owners, housewives. The lynch mob exemplifies a mode of representing the citizenship in the *poliziottesco*. This representation embodies a sector of the ideal addressees of the movies: citizens not directly involved in the political struggle, equally angry with violent criminals and militants, and with the civic authorities who are failing to protect them. The *poliziottesco*, more than suggesting a reaction of the people against the distortion of the Italian system of power, demands a response by Italian civic institutions.



Figure 6.1: the crowd waiting for some suspects outside the *questura*. On the signs, there is written: “Lynching”; “Give them to us”; “Shop owners want to be protected” (*La polizia ringrazia*).



Figure 6.2: women lynching two criminals in *Poliziotti violenti*.

This representation of the citizenship is neither consistent nor unproblematic. The state is asked to fulfil its duty of securing justice and protecting citizens even from themselves. Movies may indulge in details of people's blind fury. Nonetheless, the failure to contain citizens' anger is framed as the failure of the state. Hence, it is the failure of the *commissario* and the democratic society in general. In the movies, other civilian characters participate in what seems to be a public debate on the meaning of violence. In *Poliziotti violenti*, a soldier, *Maggiore Alfieri*, sick of the violence of criminals, decides to leave two outlaws he had stopped in the hands of passers-by, who savagely beat them (Figure 6.3). His girlfriend, however, is disappointed by the behaviour of the soldier (Figure 6.4). She accuses him of participating in the escalation of violence that is unfolding in the country. Accordingly, both ways of addressing audiences – the lynch mob and the disappointed girlfriend - bore conflicting conceptualisations of law and order.



Figure 6.3: *Maggiore Alfieri* (Henry Silva), in the back, passively observes the savage beating by passers-by of two criminals he helped to stop in *Poliziotti violenti*.



Figure 6.4: Anna (Silvia Dionisio), Alfieri's girlfriend, looks down disappointed by his behaviour in *Poliziotti violenti*.

This concluding chapter starts by outlining the features that make the *filone* a historical document. Referring to the analysis conducted in this thesis, it elaborates on the capacity of the films to represent the deterioration of the relationship between citizens and the state in the early 1970s. The chapter continues by delimiting the characteristic of its ideal addressee. It argues that the *poliziottesco* was a *filone* directed at mass audiences. The elements that constitute the historical significance of the *poliziottesco* are used to question Spinazzola's (1974) and Wagstaff's (1992) definition of popular cinema applied to the *filone*. More than focusing solely on lower class audiences, supported by Spinazzola and Wagstaff's interpretation of *filone* cinema, the movies seem to target an ideal inter-class spectator: the citizen. Such a spectator needs to be considered outside or above the binary contraposition between left- and right-wing constituencies. The mixture of conflicting ideological instances provides the evidence to this argument.

The meaning attributed to the representation of civic institutions links the chapters of this thesis together. As such, the chapter concludes by re-stating the argument of this thesis, which identifies civic institutions as political symbols in both news media and the *filone*. In the movies, civic institutions conveyed multiple and conflicting political positions related to moderate political constituencies. The organisation of institutional action seems to privilege reactionary readings of the behaviour of cinematic *commissari*. Nonetheless, connecting with news media discourses, the fluidity of political identities in the Italian 1970s is registered by the *filone*, making it a document of the struggle over the meaning of state, political, and criminal violence in the decade.

## Issues of “popular” cinema: the *poliziottesco* as a public debate involving an ideal addressee

The analysis of films and news media discourses has allowed this thesis to fill a gap in research concerning the identification of precise links between the *poliziottesco* and other mediated representations of the Italian 1970s. This analysis traced the representation of the political context in Italy. It explored the mediation of the investigative procedure, as well as the development of practices of news reporting. Moreover, this research enhanced current knowledge on the *filone* through the specific focus on the representation of civic institutions. The link between these media discourses facilitated an understanding of the construction of the relationship between the *poliziottesco* and its present. It also helped to identify modes of addressing audiences, relying on representational strategies that filmmakers considered recognisable by the exposure of such audiences to mainstream news media. The repetition of determinate tropes – granted by elements of seriality that characterised the *filone* and news media – enabled a reading of the movies as a “‘public debate’ on violence and legality” (Fatelli 2013, p. 112). The parameters of this “debate”, which occurred internally to the movies, can be comprehended by deconstructing news media discourses on law and order. In this respect, the intentionality of such an intervention in contemporary debates by *poliziottesco* filmmakers can be questioned in favour of “the essential opportunism” (Bordwell 1996, p. 442) of the creative practice related to *filone* cinema.

*Poliziotteschi* were released in a context of confusion, disorientation, and conflict concerning the interpretation of the violent outcomes of the political struggle. The actions of civic institutions in the films and the intention to address citizens’ perception of the socio-political context were means by which filmmakers sought to drive audiences’ emotional reactions. The methodology has been designed to connect with the immediate reception context of the *filone*. News media were particularly useful to link the *filone* to contemporaneous media discourses and the cultural production of the 1970s. The impact of mediation – from politics to news - represented one of the primary concerns of the Italian cultural production of the decade. Modes of expression of different media were used to experiment with new ways of addressing spectators or readers.

The ideological inconsistency of the *filone* could be considered to undermine the validity of the historical representation of the *poliziottesco*. Nonetheless, connecting with ongoing debates in film studies (O’Leary, 2011; Marlow-Mann, 2013; Fisher, 2014), I have argued that the inconsistency represents the primary contribution of the *filone* to a historical discourse on the Italian 1970s. The movies did not address specific instances of trauma concerning individuals directly affected by or involved in political violence. On the contrary, they addressed that part of the population that was experiencing political violence through news media. When the movies referenced actual victims of the political struggle, like Calabresi or Annarumma, these figures were used to drive audiences’ emotional responses following narrative patterns that had emerged in news media. *Poliziotteschi* mobilised the surplus of information about traumatic events provided by Italian media. This surplus was the “prior knowledge” assumed to be shared by the target market of the *poliziottesco* (Fisher 2014, p. 174). It was a commercial approach more than a socio-political or psychological analysis. Although, even in the form of wish-fulfilment fantasies, the films echoed the profound crisis of state-citizen relations in the first years of the *anni di piombo* (Years of Lead).

This thesis has argued that the *poliziottesco* is a historical document that articulates the distrustful relationship of Italians towards the state. The interpretation of the *strategia della tensione* considering state-sponsored terrorism and massacres did not belong only to the political extremes. By 1975, the idea had become a common-sense interpretation of the events of the decade by mainstream news media. The ideal addressee of the *poliziottesco* did not comprehend the leniency of state action against the threats to democracy repeatedly reported by newspapers such as neo-fascist conspirators and left- and right-wing terrorists. Similarly, this ideal addressee struggled to comprehend the failures to fight the threats to citizens posed by a rampant criminality. As Sergio Martino declared in the interview I conducted (Olesen 2017, p. 263), “[n]ewspapers were always a source of inspiration for Italian genre films”. The target audience that was in the minds of filmmakers can be considered to have formed as a result of news media discourses. The analysis of these discourses, performed throughout this thesis, evidences the confusion about what was happening in the country. The struggle to allocate the blame for institutional failures over different state agencies confirms this reading. The recurrence of emotional triggers (murdered children and women, for instance) was instrumental to highlight the impact of state action (or inactivity) on the quiet life of “normal” citizens. The extreme violence portrayed on screen avoided the

need for explanations because it was the necessary prerequisite for a call for more resolute police action. As such, the movies participated in the negotiation of the blame for the inefficiency of state action. They exposed conflicting impulses arising from broad sectors of the Italian population: the desire for more effective implementation of democratic values in the country, and the tendency to recur to drastic and authoritarian solutions to social and political issues. The *filone* gave prominence to the second impulse but acknowledged the first. Cinematic institutional figures embodied this tension. Police officers and judges represented a tension internal to the public body of the nation concerning the administration of justice. The repetition of values and behaviours expressed by institutional figures made the *poliziottesco* a public debate between different political constituencies.

As introduced in Chapter 1, Christopher Wagstaff (1992) questioned the notion of popular cinema in relation to the spaghetti western *filone*. He posed a twofold problem. Firstly, he considered whether the term “popular” is “a description of the characteristics of the addressee of a given film or genre, or it is a description of the characteristics of the film or genre itself” (1992, p. 248). The second problem considered the distinction between “popular” audience and “mass” audience (1992, p. 249). Quoting Spinazzola: “To the popular cinema belong works destined to be consumed by the lower classes exclusively; the mass cinema is instead designed to unify the public, bourgeois and proletarian, and therefore it appears to have an interclass value” (1974, p. 348).

Concerning the first problem raised by Wagstaff, the conceptualisation of “popular” cinema relating to an intrinsic characteristic of a given genre or film appears to invest too much in notions of quality. Wagstaff distinguished between more “‘auterist’ spaghetti western” and “the bulk of *terza visione* spaghetti westerns” stripped of any cultural value (Wagstaff 1992, p. 259). Arguably, the same cannot be said about the *poliziottesco*. The crisis of Italian cinema considerably affected the circuits of *terza visione*. In the midst of the 1970s, “In Italy, like in France, the small exhibitors in the outskirts of the cities or the countryside paid the biggest price for the decrease of spectators” (Corsi 2001, p. 120). The deregulation of private televisions drew the public away from these local cinemas (Corsi 2001, p. 121). Compared to the previous decade, there were considerably fewer movies directed exclusively at *terza visione* cinemas, making less significant the distinction between “high” and “low” expressions of the *filone*. Even if we take for granted the association between *terza visione* cinema and the

working classes, it becomes problematic to determine the “popular” element of the *poliziottesco* by its supposedly lower-class addressees. As Wagstaff recognised “historians are inevitably tempted to look very hard for a match between film and audience, and to be satisfied with after-the-fact conclusions (these must be the addressees, because they are the people who went to see the film)” (1992, p. 249). This leads to the distinction proposed by Spinazzola (1974) mentioned above. Focusing on the targeting of lower-class audiences by the *filone* risks flattening the diversified socio-political contexts of 1970s Italy.

A focus on the content of the movies also does not help to clarify the issue of “popular” in terms of a single addressee. Anti-bourgeois elements overtly present in the *poliziottesco* can lead to a misinterpretation. As Sergio Martino told me: “the movies were produced in a context in which wealth was identified as a negative value, and I often exploited this feature, in horror as in action movies” (Olesen 2017, p. 264). The class distinction is even more problematic if related to the mechanism of identification suggested by the films. “The *commissario*, who is the hero of the genre, the heart and emotional centre of the broad *filone*”, as Buttafava argued, “does not pay attention to money as his subordinates do. He is above classes, economically, iconographically, physically, and culturally” (1980, p. 111). This reading confirms Bordwell’s “ideology of pluralism” (1996, p. 444) concerning films directed at mass audiences, introduced in Chapter 1. If audience members were interpellated as unitary subjects, they were asked to partake for the defence of democracy. As has been explained in this thesis, however, the defence of democracy was a framework shared by mainstream news media despite their different political orientation.

It appears to be more useful to investigate the boundaries of an ideal target audience. Such an audience was described by director Sergio Martino as:

“an audience that was going to the cinema not to get bored. [...] When I walked into theatres, I often saw upper-class people that were there to enjoy themselves, perhaps with their wife looking for strong sensations. [...] At that time, the ritual of going to the cinema in the evening was not peculiar just to the working classes” (Olesen 2017, p. 264).

As this thesis has sought to demonstrate, the reliance on news media discourses served to address the diverse voices of the debate concerning the legitimacy of state violence. Even if specific movies seem to take particular positions, cinematic civic institutions,

with the inclusion of news media, gave voice to different political constituencies that reflected an inter-class approach. These links between media discourses and cinematic representations participated in the historical discourse on the 1970s. It is necessary to avoid the equation between the lack of complexity of the socio-political analysis of the *poliziottesco* and the targeting of lower-class audiences. The approach of the movies may seem schematic and rough but reflected a similar path in news media, dividing the world abruptly into good and evil, defenders of justice and threats to democracy.

### News media and media discourses in the *poliziottesco*: cinematic and news media seriality constructing the perceived reality

The first chapter of this thesis provided the theoretical and methodological ground to interpret how *filone* cinema addressed the concerns of a public opinion facing the huge volume of contradicting information concerning the *strategia della tensione* (Foot 2009, p. 424-425). The concept of serial narrative (Kelleter, 2017) helped me to link the narrative strategies of news media and the *poliziottesco*. Common narrative strategies, based on seriality, allowed the films to address audiences through emotional devices. The *filone* and news media seemed to construct the narrative around an “average” public that was addressed as an “everyman”. It was implied that what happened on screen or was reported by news media could happen to audiences outside the theatre. Each addressee participated in the suffering of the country because she was asked to identify with the victims of violence and the institutions responsible for protecting democracy. As such, chaos and fear opposed an artificial unity, as is explained below.

The analysis of “press performance as a political ritual” (Elliot, 1981) within the framework of interpretation of the “violent society” (Schlesinger 1981, p. 95) addressed elements of seriality in the narrative of newspapers. For Schlesinger, different forms of dissent, from industrial-relations conflicts to street crimes and juvenile hooliganism, have been grouped “based upon the notion of a society suffering from the malaise of violence” (1981, p. 91). Press rituals operated to nuance the political division that characterised the constituencies of parliamentary parties. In Western Europe, these constituencies were addressed through the object of thought of the threat to democracy. Press rituals worked to address the “masses” and isolate radical instances. News media opposed chaos and fear sponsored by irrational and devilish enemies to an artificial unity provided by institutional action, defined by Elliot as an “affirmatory ritual” (1981,

p. 156). As such, news media negotiated the tension between progressivism and conservatism, addressing audiences with the emotional tools of fear and chaos.

In the framework of the conspiracy mode, the press ritual has been linked to the *poliziottesco*. The concepts of remediation (Bolter and Grusin, 2000), intermediality (Rajewsky, 2005), and liveness (White, 1999) proved to be relevant analytical tools to undertake the analysis of the patterns – linguistic and formal - that link news media and the *poliziottesco*. Remediation allowed me to isolate specific features of different media - immediacy and liveness - and their function in the mediating process in the *poliziottesco*. Rajewsky's concept of intermediality provided the tools to undertake the exploration of news media as devices in the *filone*. This offered the theoretical grounds to identify how the interaction of different media allowed filmmakers to play with the perception of the socio-political context. As has been said, the *poliziottesco* aimed at describing more than explaining. Television and newspapers had already provided a detailed description of political violence based on emotional triggers. The same descriptive elements were mobilised by the *filone* and participated in the attempt to merge fiction and 1970s socio-political conditions. News media in the 1970s and the *poliziottesco* registered the economic, political and social conflict in the country. In the movies, this conflict was reabsorbed into a discourse of national solidarity against violence that reunited the divided community through practices related to the press ritual. As such, newspapers and movies addressed audiences in terms of the sharing of emotions. The spectator or reader was not a subject participating in a rational elaboration of the distortion of the Italian system of power. They were the objects of an irrational panic. They were asked to react emotionally and not to think or elaborate. Serial narrative and formal elements deployed by news media and cinema exemplify the latter point.

The elements of seriality outlined in Chapter 1 were linked to the *poliziottesco* with the support of the methods outlined in the same chapter. Chapter 2 explored the use of news media in the *filone*, linking it to representational strategies of cinema *di consumo impegnato*. Chapter 3 took *La polizia ringrazia* as a case study to investigate the engagement of the *poliziottesco* with media discourses on Italian civic institutions and the *strategia della tensione*. Chapter 4 focused on the impact of the death of *Commissario* Luigi Calabresi on the evolution of cinematic *commissari*. Finally, Chapter 5 elaborated the impact of media discourses on the evolution of cinematic

*procuratori*. Each chapter outlined the close relationship between the *poliziottesco* and news media representations. Moreover, they exposed the exploitative relationship of the *filone* to its present. The action of the *poliziottesco* was organised around emotional triggers that relied on news media sensationalism and violent cinematic excesses.

A tension originated from the confrontation of two distinct features attributed to the average Italian: rage and indignation. These two features corresponded to active and passive emotional reactions respectively. Rage exemplified the tendency (and fantasy) to recur to violence for the resolution of the Italian socio-political conflicts. Indignation originated from the contrast between constitutional laws and citizens' rights - including the right to have a transparent administration of justice - and their improper implementation by the state. Rage and indignation often fed each other. The lynch mob and *commissari* embodied the rage. However, as the scene from *Poliziotti violenti* analysed earlier in this chapter aimed at exemplifying, specific figures such as the girlfriend or the *sostituto procuratore* exposed the malicious effect of improper state action on the social coexistence in Italy. In the *poliziottesco*, institutional misconduct always leads to the unleashing of violent instincts of the population or the suffering of innocent citizens, working as a warning against self-made justice. Journalists connected rage and indignation. They alternated between one opposite and the other. In many instances, *commissari*, *procuratori* and journalists deployed both features. As such, they appeared as serial figures capable of adapting to the contingency but always recognisable through standardised actions and reactions.

Chapter 2 analysed Bellocchio's *Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina* (1972) and Lizzani's *Banditi a Milano* (1968) as case studies to establish formal links between cinema *di consumo impegnato* and the *poliziottesco*. The aim was to expose how newspapers and cinema relied on the same shock value related to violence. The *filone* engaged with similar cinematic practices, often recurring to the deployment of fake newspapers, television screens and archive footage as devices. The repetition of these intermedial practices exposed the impact of media on the construction of the 1970s' present. Television news, as a supposed direct take on the socio-political conditions, expressed the shock. As such, the use of television idioms and television screens as devices diminished the need for complex explanations, shifting the focus from the rational elaboration to the emotional and immediate reaction to violence. Archive footages, as

historical documents, linked the present with the recent past, transporting spectators directly in the heat of the moment.

The approach towards their audiences differentiated the *poliziottesco* from *Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina* and *Banditi a Milano*. The latter exposed the effort to manipulate public opinion, asking the spectator to reflect on the Italian power structure. The *poliziottesco* took the manipulation as a starting point. Being manipulative was one of the characteristics of the serial character of the journalist. The movies pushed the spectator towards indignation. However, indignation addressed an “already known”. They mobilised indignation especially because they signalled issues that everybody recognised but that had not been addressed efficiently by the state. The conflicts in the *filone*, in fact, originated from simplistic explanations of state inefficiency. Not surprisingly, cinema *di consumo impegnato* and the *poliziottesco* invested highly in the concept of the scandal. In the *filone*, the scandal becomes the only means of coercing civic institutions into an honest confrontation concerning state responsibility in acts of political violence. It was the consequence of the accumulation of different interpretations concerning the *strategia della tensione* that emerged from news media. When answers could not be provided, the “truth” was sought outside official channels. *Poliziotteschi* denied a definitive closure. The net of complicities was assumed more than explained. Obscure forces of order manoeuvred the chaos fomented by criminals. In the middle, there was the average citizen. The spectator was asked to sympathise with the men in uniform risking their lives, to watch the higher ranks of the state with suspicion, and to form a coalition against the enemies of democracy.

Chapter 2 also explored how idioms of news media were used in the *poliziottesco*. Intentionally or not, the *poliziottesco* replicated the narrative pattern concerning violence of mainstream newspapers. The press ritual that can be traced in newspapers is remediated through the codes of *filone* cinema. Specific episodes of violence were the consequence of a society embedded in violence. The exploration of Elliot’s press ritual (1981) in relation to the *poliziottesco* exposed a similar representation of political violence. Practices of mourning of institutional figures were replicated in the movies. Fictional press conferences and television news provided the typical communication of law enforcement agencies with media. The confrontation with media led to a debate – albeit a shallow one – on the necessity to change the laws governing the action of the police force. Details of police operations hunting criminals were reproduced in the

films. Negative representations of judges and journalists were mobilised to stress the impact of community members not showing the appropriate solidarity and sympathy. Finally, the almost morbid focus on the details of physical and emotional suffering of citizens and *commissari* led the plots back to human-interest terms. The aim of newspapers and movies alike was to show violence as “horrid and senseless” (Elliot 1981, pp. 149-150). Arguably, the conspiracy mode of the *poliziottesco* focused on the coup strategy and massacres because they were especially apt to a symbolic translation. The mechanism of the press ritual had made them easily recognisable because, by the time of the release of the movies, they were already inscribed in standardised (ritualised) media practices. The enemies, the conspirators, had been already objectified as evil forces with no face. The analysis, thereby, identified a similar way of addressing readerships and audiences by newspapers and movies. The average citizen is surrounded by faceless and evil enemies against whom a hard reaction is needed.

### Negotiating blame through institutional figures

The reaction against violence, requested by citizens and disseminated by Italian newspapers, in the *poliziottesco* came from the police. Chapter 3 explored how *La polizia ringrazia* (Vanzina, 1972) exploited media discourses concerning the police and the judiciary formed before the release of the movie. Newspaper analysis showed the construction of the figure of the rank-and-file policeman as a victim. The same strategy of representation has been identified in leftist news media like *l'Unità*, questioning the validity of “its [the *poliziottesco*] reception as a proto-fascist genre” (Marlow-Mann 2013, p. 134). This chapter argued that the framing of this victim status was central to allow audiences coming from different political constituencies to empathise with the actions of the police in *La polizia ringrazia* and subsequent *poliziotteschi*. Additionally, Chapter 3 linked the cinematic actions of civic institutions to the procedures of the Italian legal system, highlighting a difference from Hollywood models like *Dirty Harry* (Siegel, 1971). Newspapers, in fact, evidenced the hierarchy internal to state agencies through the use of language. Power relations between policemen and judges were replicated through the representation of the dialectic between *Commissario Bertone* and *Sostituto Procuratore Ricciuti*. As Pergolari (2007, p. 161) suggested, Bertone, Ricciuti, and the journalist Sandra embodied three different ideological perspectives: the right (Bertone), the centre (Ricciuti), and the left (Sandra). I argue that these ideological perspectives were used to address mass-audiences. The rhetoric of the movie seems to

address different political constituencies, represented by the characters mentioned above. In different moments of the film, each of them is framed as a problem and as a solution to the resolution of the action. The finale seems to aim at reconnecting these conflicting constituencies in the name of a superior threat to the common good: Bertone understands the risks of asking for more power to the police; Ricciuti realises that the state is not always on the side of citizens; Sandra decides to trust an honest state man. The progressive sector of the judiciary is the last hope to save the state from itself. Thereby, the finale can be considered a call for the reunion of the different constituencies comprising the Italian political context. It seeks the reconciliation of a divided citizenship facing the threat of the return of fascism.

Chapter 4 explored the evolution of the figure of the cinematic *commissario*. As mentioned before, the *poliziottesco* lacked a clear ideological position. The re-working of the figure of *Commissario* Luigi Calabresi in the *filone* exemplified the ideological struggle over the meaning of state and political violence. Additionally, the re-working of Calabresi in the *poliziottesco* was connected to the negotiation of the meaning of his death and to the process of rehabilitation of his public figure. Before his death, Calabresi had been made the symbol of police violence by the leftist milieu, becoming a representative of that sector of the state participating in the *strategia della tensione*. Cinema participated in the construction of his image as a torturing and murdering *commissario*. *La polizia ringrazia*, released before the assassination, addressed Calabresi's relation to police violence explicitly. From the start, Bertone, referencing Anarchist Pinelli, declares the intention to punish eventual misconducts. Therefore, Calabresi's persona is erased from the beginning, negating the link with police violence shown on screen. In the aftermath of his death, two movies released in 1973, *La polizia incrimina: la legge assolve* (Castellari) and *Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia* (Martino), used Calabresi-like figures and their death as a means to justify police violence. However, at the same time, they were used to project the hopes for more civil-rights-oriented police. The chapter argued that changes in discourses concerning Calabresi's death and the *strategia della tensione* affected the evolution of the cinematic *commissario*. In 1975, Calabresi started to be framed as a victim of the *strategia della tensione*. The primary lead of the investigation into his death accused three neo-fascists who had escaped to Spain. In the same period, the Italian secret service was accused of supporting neo-fascist terrorism. The protagonist of *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide* (Martino 1975), *Commissario Solmi*, is a direct reference to Calabresi,

dying like him in the finale. Solmi is the victim of a conspiracy plot staged by neo-fascist forces with the aid of the secret service. He is a violent cop who is not powerful enough to tackle the enemies within the state. *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide* could be considered to end the cycle of Calabresi's representations in the *poliziottesco*. Solmi recuperates the negative features that had characterised Calabresi's depictions before his death. The meaning of the violence he exerts is reversed. Solmi's violence is now necessary – although not sufficient. His death is a consequence of his opposition to the *strategia della tensione*.

Hence, throughout the movies, the Calabresi-like characters moved between conflicting positions. Nonetheless, they converged to the centre at the end of the films. The meaning of the action of cinematic *commissari* in relation to Calabresi addressed diverse political constituencies that were finally reconciled, more or less successfully. By 1975, Calabresi had been elevated to heroic status. He had become one of the victims of the *strategia della tensione*. As such, movies such as *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide* could recuperate some of the traits that associated him with police brutality, which responded to the perceived necessity of stronger measures to fight political and criminal violence<sup>107</sup>. Hence, the analysis put into question the conceptualisation of the re-working of Calabresi in the *poliziottesco* as the consequence of the collective “guilt” (Curti 2006, p. 97) or “disavowal” (O’Leary 2011, p. 102) of Italian cinema. More than an attempt to detach from the responsibilities of negative representations of the *commissario*, the movies seem to address contemporary media discourses on the death of the iconic police officer. In media discourses, the blame for the murder of the *commissario* was associated mostly with the right until the end of the decade. Not everybody believed in the association, but it was part of the set of conflicting interpretations that were mobilised by the films. These interpretations were juxtaposed in the movies similarly to how they had overlapped inconsistently in leftist and conservative news outlets. Intentionally or not, this juxtaposition made the movies a public debate on the consequences of violence that addressed left- and right-wing, as well as non-politicised, audiences.

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<sup>107</sup> In 1975 the parliament approved the *Legge Reale*, expanding the right of the police to use firearms by the police (Colarizi 2000, p. 608).

Additionally, in 1975, there was no space for optimistic views concerning the possibility of defeating the “system” sponsoring the *strategia della tensione*. Chapter 5 expanded the exploration of the negotiation of the blame for state inefficiency introduced in Chapter 3. The focus of the chapter was the cinematic figure of the judge. The judge, approaching the middle of the decade, started to be positioned at the centre of cinematic conspiracies. Newspaper analysis highlighted a correlation between the shifting of the blame for state inefficiency against terrorism towards the judiciary in news media and the *filone*. The institution was transitioning from an isolated caste to a protagonist of Italian public life. As such, the judiciary embodied both hopes and concerns of sectors of Italian public opinion. They moved ambiguously between corruption and loyalty to democracy, depending on the plot of single movies and the state of the debate concerning the *strategia della tensione*. In the framework of a *filone* dedicated to the police, the actions of judges needed to be interpreted following their relationship with policemen. The evolution of the relationship between *commissari* and *procuratori* encompassed three stages: lack of communication, collaboration with conflict, and necessary submission to police methods. This path has been linked to changes in media discourses concerning the judiciary and the police. The final reactions of *sostituti procuratori* like Ricciuti (*La polizia ringrazia*, 1972) and Traini (*Confessione di un commissario di polizia al procuratore della repubblica*, Damiani 1971) have been interpreted as wish fulfilment for the resolution of the Italian socio-political situation. These representations originated from a context in which police brutality was a primary concern of news media. Other judges (Aloisi in *La polizia sta a guardare*, Malta in *Confessione di un commissario di polizia al procuratore della repubblica*, Di Federico in *La polizia ha le mani legate*, Mannino in *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide*, the *procuratore* of *Ordine firmato in bianco*) have been interpreted as scapegoats for the failures of the Italian legal system. These representations also responded to the new focus of news media on the behaviour of the judiciary concerning the *strategia della tensione*.

The analysis expanded O’Leary’s conceptualisation of the policeman as “a scapegoat and fantasy representative who assuages or avenges the spectator’s sense of social and economic insecurity or political impotence” (2011, p. 103). From 1974, newspapers focused on the (ineffective) action of the judiciary in the framework of the *strategia della tensione*. The police, on the other hand, had suffered many losses clashing with left- and right-wing terrorists and criminals. Before terrorist formations, like the *Brigate*

*Rosse*, started to kill judges, the judiciary was available to be framed at the centre of conspiracies. Still transitioning from a position of isolation, judges could be accused less problematically. The police had already provided such heroic figures as *Commissario Calabresi* to the media. These figures were instrumental to cinematic plots and, in the framework of the press ritual, to media discourses related to national solidarity against terrorism. The “fantasy representatives” can be considered to remain firmly attached to the figure of the *commissario*. The evolution of media discourses concerning the *strategia della tensione* can be linked to the framing of the judiciary as the scapegoat for the failures of the Italian state in the *poliziottesco*. Similar to the ideological inconsistency, the ambiguous representation of the judiciary served to represent opposing interpretations of the role and function of the institution in the framework of the *strategia della tensione*.

Following the argument of this chapter, the failures of the state, in the *poliziottesco*, were the failures to provide social and economic security. The feeling of political impotence was represented by the complete distrust towards the possibility of effective collective action. The denial of the full resolution of the action, from *La polizia ringrazia* to *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide*, supports this reading. Violence was the only effective means to fight criminals. Nonetheless, it was never enough to dismantle the corrupt system where conspirators proliferated. This cynical view of current socio-political conflicts was the answer of the *poliziottesco* to the threat assumed to be perceived by the ideal addressee of the *filone*. Actions and behaviours of civic institutions in the movies embodied the voices of a divided citizenship that was struggling to attribute meaning to the violence experienced in the streets and through media.

## Conclusion

Through different civic institutions, the *filone* projected fantasies, recriminations, and disillusionments of audiences composed of diverse political constituencies. The shifts in media discourses affected the positioning of the police or the judiciary as scapegoats, wish fulfilment, or both. The same media discourses were the source to organise the dialectic between policemen and judges in the *filone*, who exemplified different approaches of Italian citizens concerning state action in the framework of the *strategia della tensione*. The extremes – right- and left-wing radicals, criminals – were rendered as pure and irrational evil. Different expressions of moderate political positions were

conveyed through policemen and judges. If the *commissario* went beyond the limits of the legal system, recurrent tropes of the *filone* contributed to punish or question his behaviour. If the *procuratore* over-reached in the blind defence of the code and civil rights, his action was counter-weighted by the suffering of innocent citizens. In other words, the *filone* elaborated specific tropes to balance the excesses of the protagonists. In the end, the action was traced back to the centre, reconciling, more or less successfully, the different parties involved in the “public debate” (Fatelli 2013, p. 112).

The political body that was addressed by the movies was similar to the *Democrazia Cristiana* (DC), the party that governed Italy from the collapse of Fascism up to 1992. Positioned at the centre of the Italian political spectrum, the DC oscillated between the right and the left depending on political opportunities. The *poliziottesco* addressed Italian audiences following a similar scheme. It reminded its mass audiences of the dangers of following the wrong path, in one direction or the other. At the same time, it gave voice to conflicting impulses stemming from a fluid political body through specific representations of citizens and civic institutions. The movies engaged with that part of the Italian population that was relegated into the background by more powerful voices. It engaged with mass audiences identifying an enemy in vague and distant entities as state and economic elites. The enemies were not middle or upper-middle class bourgeois opposed to the proletariat, but billionaires and faceless state functionaries. As such, the *poliziottesco* can be interpreted as a historical document. It is a repository of different positions that participated in the negotiation of the meaning of political violence, especially in relation to state violence.

The tension originating from conflicting narrations of the present provided by the daily chronicle of newspapers can help to link the *poliziottesco* to the memories of the 1970s. This *filone*, in fact, developed its mode of addressing the present by constructing its narrative and formal characteristics around the same syncopated narration. It is not accidental if the decade is often introduced in contemporary movies or television series through archive footage, television news and the slogans and signposts that in public demonstrations synthesised political feelings and attitudes. *Mio fratello è figlio unico* (Lucchetti, 2007), *La prima linea* (De Maria, 2009), *Romanzo di una strage* (Giordana, 2012) and the television mini-series *Gli anni spezzati* (Diana, 2014), among others, make extensive use of scenes of protest, graffiti, television news, and the broadcasting of speeches of Italian institutions in the aftermath of terrorist attacks (Figures 6.5 and

6.6). It seems that the memories of the decade are transmitted through their mediated representations to appear somehow unfiltered and authentic and express the immediate shock for acts of extreme violence.



Figure 6.5: *Commissario Calabresi* and his wife watch television news in which the newscaster reads the message of condolence for the death of Agent Annarumma of President Saragat (*Romanzo di una strage*).



Figure 6.6: the second episode of the television mini-series *Gli anni spezzati*, dedicated to *Commissario Calabresi*, opens with television news reporting the massacre in Piazza Fontana.

Moreover, they are used to synthesise the multiplicity of political positions that characterised the decade. The consumption of media in different forms unified the bourgeois, the worker, and the student. The repurposing of this media consumption attempts an inter-class representation of the decade, providing a little bit of everything that populated the social world of the Italian 1970s. As Fisher wrote “the events of the 1970s were inseparable from the processes of mediation that grew around them” (2014, p. 173). The original content of the daily media consumption of Italian citizens went beyond its original status. It became the symbol of the confusion of Italian citizens at

the start of a season of terrorism that lasted until the 1980s, and that still has many obscure points. Arguably, the use of news media in the *poliziottesco* also transcended its original aims. It became the blueprint for contemporary modes of representing the Italian 1970s.



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*La città sconvolta: caccia spietata ai rapitori*, 1975. [film, DVD]. Directed by Fernando Di Leo. Italy: Cinemaster S.r.l.

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*Milano odia: la polizia non può sparare*, 1974. [film, DVD]. Directed by Umberto Lenzi. Italy: Dania Film.

*Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia*, 1973. [film, DVD]. Directed by Sergio Martino. Italy: Champion; Compagnia Cinematografica Champion; Dania Film.

*Milano calibro 9*, 1976. [film, DVD]. Directed by Mario Caiano. Italy: Jarama.

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*North by northwest*, 1959. [film, DVD]. Directed by Alfred Hitchcock. USA: MGM.

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*Pasolini: un delitto italiano*, 1995. [film, DVD]. Directed by Marco Tullio Giordana. Italy, France: Cecchi Gori Group Tiger Cinematografica; CGG Leopold Srl; Numero Cinque Srl; Flach Film.

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*Processo per direttissima*, 1974. [film, DVD]. Directed by Lucio De Caro. Italy, France: Compagnia Cinematografica Prima; Paris Interproductions (PIP).

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*Roma città aperta*, 1945. [film, DVD]. Directed by Roberto Rossellini. Italy: Excelsa Film.

*Romanzo criminale*, 2005. [film, DVD]. Directed by Michele Placido. Italy, France, UK: Cattleya; Babe Film; Warner Bros.; Aquarius Films.

*Romanzo criminale - La serie*, 2008-2010. [televisione series]. Directed by: Stefano Sollima. Italy: Cattleya; Sky Italia.

*Romanzo di una strage*, 2012. [film, DVD]. Directed by Marco Tullio Giordana. Italy, France: Cattleya; Rai Cinema; Babe Film; Regione Piemonte; Film Commission Torino-Piemonte; Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali (MiBAC); Fonds Eurimages du Conseil de l'Europe.

*Roma violenta*, 1975. [film, DVD]. Directed by Marino Girolami. Italy: Flaminia Produzioni Cinematografiche.

*Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina*, 1972. [film, DVD]. Directed by Marco Bellocchio. Italy, France: Jupiter Generale Cinematografica; UTI Produzioni Associate; Labrador Films.

*Scarface*, 1932. [film, DVD]. Directed by Howard Hawks. USA: The Caddo Company.

*Shaft*, 1971. [film, DVD]. Directed by Gordon Parks. USA: MGM, Shaft Productions.

*Shane*, 1953. [film, DVD]. Directed by George Stevens. USA: Paramount Pictures.

*Spellbound*, 1945. [film, DVD]. Directed by Alfred Hitchcock. USA: Selznick International Pictures; Vanguard Films.

*Squadra antifurto*, 1976. [film, DVD]. Directed by Bruno Corbucci. Italy: Cinemaster S.r.l.

*Squadra antigangster*, 1979. [film, DVD]. Directed by Bruno Corbucci. Italy: Cinemaster S.r.l.

*Squadra antiscippo*, 1976. [film, DVD]. Directed by Bruno Corbucci. Italy: Cinemaster S.r.l.

*Squadra antimafia*, 1978. [film, DVD]. Directed by Bruno Corbucci. Italy: Cinemaster S.r.l.

*Squadra antitruffa*, 1977. [film, DVD]. Directed by Bruno Corbucci. Italy: Cinemaster S.r.l.; Dear Film Produzione.

*Squadra volante*, 1974. [film, DVD]. Directed by Stelvio Massi. Italy: Rewind Film.

*The French connection*, 1971. [film, DVD]. Directed by William Friedkin. USA: Philip D'Antoni Productions; Schine-Moore Productions; D'Antoni Productions.

*Torino violenta*, 1977. [film, DVD]. Directed by Carlo Ausino. Italy: Lark Cinematografica.

*Un poliziotto scomodo*, 1978. [film, DVD]. Directed by Stelvio Massi. Italy: Atlas; Rewind Film.

*Z*, 1969. [film, DVD]. Directed by Costa-Gavras. France, Algeria: Valoria Films; Reggane Films; Office National pour le Commerce et l'Industrie Cinématographique (ONCIC).



# Appendix A - Tables and concordances from Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis

Table A.A.1: Concordances: lemma *tepp\**. *L'Unità*, November 1969-February 1972.

Query *teppist.\** 100 (354.31 per million) 

1 doc#1	o direttamente legati al MSI. Gli atti	<b>teppistici</b>	e criminali si sono verificati in un arco di
2 doc#3	dall'Alleanza contadini - In città gruppi di	<b>teppisti</b>	hanno continuato a provocare e ad alzare
3 doc#3	del centro della città mentre gruppi di	<b>teppisti</b>	hanno continuato ad agire, a rialzare
4 doc#13	assurdi compromessi con i caporioni -- I	<b>teppisti</b>	ne approfittano per provocare altri incidenti
5 doc#13	giorni prima dello scoppio della violenza	<b>teppista</b>	, sulla gravità e delicatezza della situazione
6 doc#13	fin dal primo giorno. Ma alle azioni dei	<b>teppisti</b>	che -- malgrado il freddo intenso e la neve
7 doc#19	dai compagni, i quali hanno messo in fuga i	<b>teppisti</b>	fascisti. Un comunicato unitario PCI- - PSIUP -
8 doc#31	della stazione centrale da parte di un gruppo di	<b>teppisti</b>	fascisti contro il gruppo di militari in par
9 doc#31	NON SI COSTITUISCE PARTE CIVILE CONTRO I	<b>TEPPISTI</b>	Colpo di scena al processo iniziato ieri
10 doc#39	e si rafforza la convinzione che la violenza	<b>teppista</b>	è stata guidata e organizzata da gruppi di
11 doc#46	Battisti - Grave provocazione a Bergamo:	<b>teppisti</b>	armati feriscono sei giovani ma vengono messi
12 doc#52	, è stato attuato nel tardo pomeriggio dai	<b>teppisti</b>	del MSI di Catanzaro, che hanno gettato dalla
13 doc#56	atteggiamento della polizia che consente ai	<b>teppisti</b>	di ostacolare l'afflusso a Reggio e assiste
14 doc#61	già è accaduto in occasione di altri episodi	<b>teppistici</b>	le squadacce fasciste degli agrari tentano di
15 doc#74	mafia >>. Emanuele Macaluso CAPORIONE DEI	<b>TEPPISTI</b>	REGGINI ARRESTATO A UN COMIZIO MISSINO Si
16 doc#111	della FIOM, FIM e UILM Ferito dalla sua arma un	<b>teppista</b>	mentre assalta una sezione PCI Dalla nostra
17 doc#129	il potere. Massimo Ghiara In azione bande di	<b>teppisti</b>	provenienti da varie città TRIESTE HA ISOLATO E
18 doc#129	a tutta una serie di provocazioni e di azioni	<b>teppistiche</b>	, nel quadro di una manifestazione preordinata
19 doc#137	della democrazia. Ieri sera un gruppo di	<b>teppisti</b>	fascisti aveva ripetutamente tentato di
20 doc#137	; né è poi intervenuta per espellere una banda di	<b>teppisti</b>	del MSI che sfilava ai limiti della piazza
21 doc#170	un consigliere comunale che capeggiava i	<b>teppisti</b>	- Perquisita la sede del MSI La denuncia del PCI
22 doc#170	di disturbare la manifestazione: poi i	<b>teppisti</b>	si sono allontanati di corsa e sono andati a
23 doc#174	della polizia che non interviene contro i	<b>teppisti</b>	armati Dalla nostra redazione NAPOLI, 12 Una
24 doc#174	dei fascisti a Catanzaro e a Reggio, uno dei	<b>teppisti</b>	ha preso la parola, pronunciando frasi
25 doc#174	suscitato la reazione degli studenti. Subito i	<b>teppisti</b>	hanno estratto pesanti bastoni e manganelli,
26 doc#175	corso degli interrogatori, Angelo Angeli, il	<b>teppista</b>	fascista di 19 anni arrestato nelle prime ore di
27 doc#175	che Gianluigi Radice e un altro famigerato	<b>teppista</b>	fascista, Nestore Crocesi, gli avrebbero
28 doc#180	Ateneo, avevano reagito ad una provocazione di	<b>teppisti</b>	fascisti. La polizia, invece di arrestare i
29 doc#205	, che, poco dopo, li rimise in libertà. Azioni	<b>teppistiche</b>	sono state poi registrate al Fermi, al
30 doc#207	i tre arresti sorprendendo alle spalle i	<b>teppisti</b>	e dopo aver ingaggiato con essi drammatiche
31 doc#207	di << guerriglia >> di un pugno di autentici	<b>teppisti</b>	appoggiandole con esplosioni notturne, come
32 doc#208	campeggi paramilitari fascisti. È stato il	<b>teppista</b>	diciannovenne Angelo Angeli, arrestato
33 doc#209	A TRIESTE DA UN PICCHIATORE FASCISTA IL	<b>teppista</b>	è fuggito indisturbato: assente la polizia - Un
34 doc#209	una frase provocatoria. Fatti pochi passi, il	<b>teppista</b>	tornava indietro e, esprimendosi in dialetto
35 doc#209	prevenute e stroncate le azioni provocatorie e	<b>teppistiche</b>	contro il Partito e i suoi dirigenti>>. Che
36 doc#223	a S. Vittore il loro camerata Angelo Angeli, il	<b>teppista</b>	arrestato venerdì scorso per gli attentati
37 doc#223	fascista della scorsa estate al quale il	<b>teppista</b>	arrestato partecipò. I sostituti
38 doc#234	un crescendo di raduni provocatori, di gesta	<b>teppistiche</b>	, di aggressioni a pacifici cittadini, di
39 doc#240	della città. A PAGINA 2 Milano: saliti a sette i	<b>teppisti</b>	in galera ALTRI TRE FASCISTI ARRESTATI
40 doc#240	sette. Un dirigente provinciale del MSI e sei	<b>teppisti</b>	, alcuni dei quali compresi nel << Gotha della
41 doc#243	fascista Nencioni nei giorni in cui un gruppo di	<b>teppisti</b>	fascisti, guidati dal consigliere comunale
42 doc#247	jonico che su quello tirrenico. Gruppi di	<b>teppisti</b>	organizzati e trasportati con autopulman
43 doc#248	Nuove violenze nel centro di Reggio Calabria I	<b>TEPPISTI</b>	SI BARRICANO NEL DUOMO Berlinguer: colpire le
44 doc#248	CALABRIA è stato sconvolto dalle violenze dei	<b>teppisti</b>	, che nella nottata avevano devastato la sede
45 doc#262	maggioranza silenziosa >> - Atti di violenza di	<b>teppisti</b>	nel centro della città - Prese di posizione
46 doc#262	migliaia di passanti. Alcune centinaia di	<b>teppisti</b>	provenienti da tutta la Lombardia e anche da
47 doc#271	- Nel pomeriggio era fallito il tentativo dei	<b>teppisti</b>	di organizzare una dimostrazione popolare -
48 doc#284	di provocare disordini a Brescia - Gazzarra	<b>teppista</b>	a Torino a un convegno unitario sull'obiezione
49 doc#284	lezione a Pescara. Stamattina, un gruppo di	<b>teppisti</b>	ha innalzato nel centro della città un quadro
50 doc#290	della morte di Carmelo Jaconis -- Ieri sera i	<b>teppisti</b>	hanno sparato nuovamente contro agenti e CC Dal
51 doc#290	(Segue in ultima pagina) REGGIO CALABRIA -- I	<b>teppisti</b>	fascisti hanno provocato anche ieri disordini
52 doc#316	vittime. A PAGINA 13 Milano: ennesima impresa	<b>teppistica</b>	NUOVA BOMBA FASCISTA CONTRO UN MAGISTRATO L'
53 doc#316	: probabilmente discesi da un'auto i	<b>teppisti</b>	hanno gettato l'ordigno al di sopra dell'
54 doc#319	Del Bosco (Segue a pagina 2) Nuova grave sortita	<b>teppistica</b>	dei fascisti A MILANO SEI BOTTIGLIE
55 doc#327	politico. Va di certo notato che le squadre dei	<b>teppisti</b>	hanno tentato questo assalto a due giorni di

56 doc#327 a poca distanza dalla questura. E a Milano i  
57 doc#331 protratti per circa 40 minuti a mettere in fuga i  
58 doc#332 caratteristica. Recano la firma. Le bande  
59 doc#333 prossimo >>. Procedimento giudiziario contro  
60 doc#333 gomito a gomito sul banco degli imputati,  
61 doc#349 continuare. Cacciati a calci dall'aula  
62 doc#349 picchiatori hanno insultato i consiglieri - I  
63 doc#349 loro una durissima lezione. Una ventina di  
64 doc#349 verso i loro posti mentre dalla tribuna alcuni  
65 doc#349 scendevano i consiglieri, che affrontavano i  
66 doc#345 della estrema destra. :: :: :: MILANO, 22. Due  
67 doc#353 l'aggressione dallo esterno: circa 40  
68 doc#353 colpito alla testa il pittore Giovanni Cocco. I  
69 doc#366 alle operazioni contro alcune formazioni  
70 doc#366 conosce la complicità di fatto tra polizia e  
71 doc#366 sullo stesso piano studenti democratici e  
72 doc#372 UNITA LA PROVOCAZIONE FASCISTA Nuovi atti  
73 doc#372 . Nel corteo non sono mancati nutriti gruppi di  
74 doc#376 e giornalisti comunisti hanno messo in fuga i  
75 doc#376 : fa polizia ancora una volta che protegge i  
76 doc#376 indifferenza della PS e dello stesso D'Avack, i  
77 doc#376 prima, si sono viste bandiere con svastiche. I  
78 doc#376 . Il governo era al corrente della sortita che i  
79 doc#376 gli studenti e i democratici. Alle violenze dei  
80 doc#376 di opporsi validamente alla provocazione  
81 doc#376 lezione davvero pesante che è stata inflitta ai  
82 doc#385 dai forti picchetti - La polizia non arresta i  
83 doc#400 contro gli studenti in lotta - Ferito dai  
84 doc#400 , è poi intervenuta per proteggere i  
85 doc#406 , ferendone uno. Dopo l'aggressione, i  
86 doc#406 dei compagni, prima di fuggire, uno dei  
87 doc#420 . Non solo, ma i poliziotti hanno lasciato che i  
88 doc#421 a ripetuti assalti di un numero soverchiante di  
89 doc#424 sulla via delle riforme. Aldo Tortorella I  
90 doc#424 via Asproni. Da una macchina balzavano alcuni  
91 doc#424 fino all'arrivo della polizia. Dopo, i  
92 doc#424 appartenente agli stessi aggressori. Altri  
93 doc#437 A pag. 6 NAPOLI: UN GIOVANE ACCOLTELLATO DA  
94 doc#437 giovane aggredito a coltellate da un gruppo di  
95 doc#439 sede del PCI e a compagni isolati - La lezione ai  
96 doc#439 , lasciando praticamente campo libero ai  
97 doc#455 di Reggio è stata tentata stasera da un gruppo di  
98 doc#455 nostra redazione MILANO, 29 Una ventina di  
99 doc#455 allarme; accorrevano decine di lavoratori e i  
100 doc#467 impunemente una fitta rete di organizzazioni

teppisti che si erano presentati davanti al liceo  
teppisti . Il compagno senatore Gerolamo Sotgiu,  
teppistiche non si peritano di lasciare sul terreno delle <<  
teppisti e finanziatori di squadracce A BOLOGNA 40 <<  
teppisti picchiatori, << liberi >> professionisti  
teppisti che avevano tentato di aggredire i consiglieri  
teppisti cacciati dall'aula da esponenti di tutti i  
teppisti si erano radunati nella tribuna del pubblico  
teppisti cercavano di scavalcare la transenna che  
teppisti , che non esitavano a scagliarsi con pugni  
teppisti sono stati arrestati e altri tre fermati dopo la  
teppisti hanno cominciato a scagliare bulloni e biglie  
teppisti hanno rovesciato una automobile e sfondato un  
teppisti di destra che operano nella Valtellina, la  
teppistiche fascisti, la cui sede, a trecento metri dalla  
teppisti nazisti, antifascisti e [NL]. Le cose stanno  
teppisti - Prese di posizione di partiti e  
teppistici armati di manganello e di catene. Saluti romani  
teppisti davanti all'« Unità »> Due aspetti della  
teppisti , aggredisce gli studenti, carica, picchia,  
teppisti hanno tentato il << colpo grosso >>. Sotto l'  
teppisti sono comparsi armati di spranghe e bastoni. L'  
teppisti andavano preparando e infatti da circa tre  
teppisti ha aggiunto le sue. QUESTO comportamento non è  
teppista e alla provocazione politica. Alla violenza  
teppisti non varrà solo per loro. Roberto Romani COME  
teppisti - La fabbrica paralizzata da giovedì per il  
teppisti un giovane democratico a Napoli - I fascisti  
teppisti . A Susegana in provincia di Treviso la  
teppisti si sono dati alla fuga. Immediata è stata la  
teppisti ha estratto un coltello colpendo al collo uno  
teppisti tentassero di scagliarsi contro gli studenti,  
teppisti . Tre compagni sono rimasti feriti. Alla fine i  
teppisti messi in fuga dai compagni STRONCATA UN'  
teppisti che, con randelli, infrangevano la vetrata del  
teppisti bloccati dai compagni sono stati consegnati ai  
teppisti fascisti sono riusciti a mettersi in salvo,  
TEPPISTI MISSINI Arrestato per tentato omicidio il  
teppisti fascisti è ricoverato in gravi condizioni. Uno  
teppisti - La vigilanza nelle sedi democratiche - Chi  
teppisti . Un'anziana compagna -- Vincenza Armeni di 60  
teppisti che hanno affrontato alcuni compagni mentre in  
teppisti fascisti, fra cui il noto manganellatore e  
teppisti fascisti, molti dei quali armati di coltelli,  
teppisti e paramilitari ben conosciuta dalla polizia A

Table A.A.2: Concordances: lemma *tepp\**. *Corriere della Sera*, November 1969-February 1972.

Query *teppist.\** 14 (46.79 per million) ⓘ

1 file#5	DI TRENTO Riprovazione nella città per gli atti	<b>teppistici</b>	e in particolare per il prolungato sequestro
2 file#15	Dopo la partita SCONTRI A ROMA FRA POLIZIA E	<b>TEPPISTI</b>	Grave un carabiniere Violenti incidenti sono
3 file#15	stadio Olimpico di Roma tra polizia e gruppi di	<b>teppisti</b>	al termine dell'incontro vinto dagli inglesi
4 file#15	hanno cercato di frenare l'invasione dei	<b>teppisti</b>	che hanno divelto la grande gabbia di ferro
5 file#27	corso Vittorio Emanuele. Gruppetti di giovani	<b>teppisti</b>	hanno tentato di far chiudere alcuni negozi, ma
6 file#45	: << Mascalzoni, assassini, delinquenti,	<b>teppisti</b>	>>. Poi venti, venticinque di loro (in seguito
7 file#63	programma una manifestazione del Cantagiuro. I	<b>teppisti</b>	hanno scagliato sassi contro la polizia,
8 file#69	agosto del 1969 e la strage di Milano Cinque	<b>teppisti</b>	del MSI arrestati a Bolzano TREVISO, 5 dicembre
9 file#118	di violenti hanno fatto degenerare in episodi	<b>teppistici</b>	manifestazioni pubbliche. Assalto e
10 file#244	Reggio Calabria con l'interpretazione di atti	<b>teppistici</b>	, puri e semplici: anche, direi, se atti
11 file#244	, puri e semplici: anche, direi, se atti	<b>teppistici</b>	possano essere stati compiuti. Le motivazioni
12 file#316	antisociali: squilibrati, mitomani,	<b>teppisti</b>	, ribelli e violenti. Pertanto in qualsiasi
13 file#357	DIVERSO Il 1969 si apriva con l'assalto, fra	<b>teppistico</b>	e squadristico, alla Bussola delle Focette nel
14 file#381	nella giornata di sabato scorso contro tre	<b>teppisti</b>	fascisti - Reno Casagrande, segretario di una

Lexical Computing

Table A.A.3: Concordances: noun *Annarumma* + adjective (ADJ). *Corriere della Sera*, November 1969-February 1972.

Query *Annarumma* 34 > Positive filter (excluding KWIC) ADJ 18 (60.16 per million) ⓘ

1 file#129	durante i funerali a Milano dell'agente	<b>Annarumma</b>	non sarebbe <i>responsabile</i> questo o quel gruppo,
2 file#153	: a venti giorni dall'eccidio del <i>povero</i> agente	<b>Annarumma</b>	. Le misure preannunciate dal governo, e
3 file#175	Carlo al Corso il corteo <i>funebre</i> dell'agente	<b>Annarumma</b>	, che occasioni così tristi non dovessero
4 file#187	la speculazione di segno <i>opposto</i> sulla morte di	<b>Annarumma</b>	? Il quadro politico-psicologico, infine, non
5 file#249	Un agente di <i>pubblica</i> sicurezza -- Antonio	<b>Annarumma</b>	, ventidue anni -- è rimasto ucciso ieri a Milano
6 file#249	della Costituzione <i>repubblicana</i> . Antonio	<b>Annarumma</b>	, caduto a ventidue anni, merita un rimpianto
7 file#249	della guardia di <i>pubblica</i> sicurezza Antonio	<b>Annarumma</b>	, "la cui giovane vita -- ha detto il ministro
8 file#249	agente di <i>pubblica</i> sicurezza Antonio	<b>Annarumma</b>	, nato da una famiglia di braccianti, in una
9 file#258	alla salma del <i>povero</i> agente di polizia Antonio	<b>Annarumma</b>	, vittima della violenza estremista
10 file#258	tragica fine della guardia di P.S. Antonio	<b>Annarumma</b>	, ha inviato il <i>segunte</i> telegramma: "La
11 file#258	giovane agente di <i>pubblica</i> sicurezza Antonio	<b>Annarumma</b>	. "La violenza irresponsabile di coloro che
12 file#258	posto accanto alle spoglie dello sventurato	<b>Annarumma</b>	-- la <i>seconda</i> è quella del sostituto
13 file#258	fra le sue una delle mani <i>callose</i> di Carmine	<b>Annarumma</b>	, questi singhiozzava disperato, senza poter
14 file#258	Turchetto, compagni di plotone del <i>povero</i>	<b>Annarumma</b>	. I due l'hanno visto abbattersi sul volante del
15 file#270	sulla polizia, e magari sul <i>povero</i> agente	<b>Annarumma</b>	, la colpa dell'eccidio solo perché non si sono
16 file#270	. La lezione che si leva dalla salma del <i>povero</i>	<b>Annarumma</b>	è anche e soprattutto questa: il richiamo a
17 file#291	SARAGAT: MONITO PER TUTTI IL SACRIFICIO DI	<b>ANNARUMMA</b>	<< La legalità <i>democratica</i> deve essere
18 file#357	in breve tempo. L'eccidio dell'agente	<b>Annarumma</b>	<i>prima</i> , la strage di piazza Fontana poi hanno

Lexical Computing

Table A.A.4: List of nouns modified by the adjective *fascista*. *L'Unità*, November 1969-February 1972.

<b>nouns modified by "fascista"</b>		
		<b>77.98</b>
provocazione	<u>22</u>	10.70
provocazioni fasciste e		
violenza	<u>21</u>	10.66
violenza fascista		
organizzazione	<u>21</u>	10.49
delle organizzazioni fasciste		
teppista	<u>13</u>	10.18
di teppisti fascisti		
attentato	<u>14</u>	10.03
attentati fascisti		
squadraccia	<u>11</u>	9.97
squadracce fasciste		
teppa	<u>9</u>	9.69
teppismo	<u>9</u>	9.68
partito	<u>9</u>	9.45
codice	<u>8</u>	9.43
rigurgito	<u>7</u>	9.32
manifestazione	<u>9</u>	9.15
gruppo	<u>8</u>	9.10
teppaglia	<u>5</u>	8.86
provocatore	<u>5</u>	8.85
marca	<u>5</u>	8.85
norma	<u>5</u>	8.79
bomba	<u>5</u>	8.74
aggressione	<u>5</u>	8.73
ambiente	<u>5</u>	8.71
adunata	<u>4</u>	8.53
squadrisimo	<u>4</u>	8.53
squadra	<u>4</u>	8.50
caporione	<u>4</u>	8.49
raduno	<u>4</u>	8.48

Table A.A.5: Concordances: preposition *contro* (against) + lemma *poliz*\*. *Corriere della Sera*, November 1969-February 1972.

Query *poliz*.\* 659 > Positive filter (excluding KWIC) *contro* 41 (137.04 per million) ⓘ

1 file#2	più attivi nei disordini L'Aquila: un agente di	<b>polizia</b>	rilancia un sasso scagliato <b>contro</b> di lui dai
2 file#11	presso costoro dalle operazioni di	<b>polizia</b>	<b>contro</b> i picchetti operai e gli studenti egli ha
3 file#36	e missini - Minacciose scritte <b>contro</b> la	<b>polizia</b>	Reggio: una fase dei violenti scontri; i
4 file#36	; i dimostranti all'attacco <b>contro</b> reparti di	<b>polizia</b>	. (Tel. AP) DAL NOSTRO INVIATO SPECIALE REGGIO
5 file#45	comunista italiano e non autorizzato dalla	<b>polizia</b>	, per protestare <b>contro</b> il primo attentato. La
6 file#53	contro le famose dichiarazioni del capo della	<b>polizia</b>	, <b>contro</b> gli organi esecutivi dello Stato in
7 file#61	Durante uno sgombero A ROMA BOMBE CONTRO LA	<b>POLIZIA</b>	Bombe <b>contro</b> la polizia nel quartiere
8 file#61	A ROMA BOMBE CONTRO LA POLIZIA Bombe <b>contro</b> la	<b>polizia</b>	nel quartiere periferico di Centocelle a Roma:
9 file#63	. I teppisti hanno scagliato sassi <b>contro</b> la	<b>polizia</b>	, eretto barricate, e devastato il velodromo.
10 file#102	del cittadino ed efficienza delle forze di	<b>polizia</b>	nella lotta <b>contro</b> la malavita: su questi temi,
11 file#119	e calpestate dalle attuali operazioni di	<b>polizia</b>	<b>contro</b> i protagonisti delle responsabili e
12 file#145	avvisaglie guerrigliere, dimostranti <b>contro</b>	<b>polizia</b>	e carabinieri, alcuni candelotti lacrimogeni
13 file#162	di studenti hanno lanciato sassi <b>contro</b> la	<b>polizia</b>	ed eretto barricate. Nella telefoto: la
14 file#167	una salva di sassi <b>contro</b> le camionette. I	<b>poliziotti</b>	hanno fatto uso di lacrimogeni, decine e decine
15 file#170	giorno senza che iniziative delle forze di	<b>polizia</b>	sul fronte della lotta <b>contro</b> la mafia. Un
16 file#173	. A questo punto sono stati sparati <b>contro</b> la	<b>polizia</b>	altri colpi di pistola. Il vice-questore
17 file#177	forze dell'ordine, colpi di pistola <b>contro</b> la	<b>polizia</b>	, quattro attentati dinamitardi Reggio
18 file#177	, sono stati i guerriglieri a sparare <b>contro</b> la	<b>polizia</b>	a Sbarre: undici colpi calibro 6.35. Ha
19 file#184	in tre riprese <b>contro</b> un'autocolonna della	<b>polizia</b>	, l'ungo l'autostrada - Fermati alcuni
20 file#190	di evitare che i contrasti fra magistratura e	<b>polizia</b>	possano danneggiare l'azione <b>contro</b> la mafia
21 file#203	formale, deplorare l'accanimento della	<b>polizia</b>	<b>contro</b> gli apostoli della rivoluzione e della
22 file#214	autocarri in discesa usati come armi <b>contro</b> la	<b>polizia</b>	, con le devastazioni degli enti pubblici ed
23 file#214	- Donne lanciano bottiglie Molotov <b>contro</b> la	<b>polizia</b>	- Incendi, sassaiole, barricate - Mancano luce
24 file#214	di bombe Molotov <b>contro</b> camionette della	<b>polizia</b>	. Grave pericolo In quella infernale baraonda
25 file#219	alcuni edifici e da li hanno lanciato <b>contro</b> la	<b>polizia</b>	, oltre alle pietre, anche bottiglie Molotov.
26 file#219	, forato il parabrezza dell'idrante della	<b>polizia</b>	, si è schiacciata <b>contro</b> lo specchietto
27 file#229	state lanciate pietre <b>contro</b> camionette, la	<b>polizia</b>	ha risposto con il lancio di un candelotto.
28 file#249	ha provocato una rabbiosa reazione <b>contro</b> la	<b>polizia</b>	anche da parte di altri dimostranti che si
29 file#258	non contro chi l'ha ucciso, ma <b>contro</b> la	<b>polizia</b>	: intanto, per una istintiva reazione che deve
30 file#258	a parlare di irresponsabili iniziative della	<b>polizia</b>	<b>contro</b> i lavoratori>>. Ma i comunisti non
31 file#268	scaraventati <b>contro</b> le camionette della	<b>polizia</b>	che si fossero avventurate in eventuali
32 file#290	numerosi lavoratori Un momento delle cariche	<b>poliziesche</b>	<b>contro</b> gli operai delle fabbriche romane
33 file#290	innalzando la tenda. Aspre cariche della	<b>polizia</b>	ieri mattina <b>contro</b> gli operai delle fabbriche
34 file#290	protestare <b>contro</b> la gravissima aggressione	<b>poliziesca</b>	. I metalmeccanici hanno già preannunciato uno
35 file#312	lacrimogeni dall'altra. <b>Contro</b> le forze di	<b>polizia</b>	sono stati lanciati anche i tavolini e le sedie
36 file#320	fermati e quaranta feriti MILANO -- La	<b>polizia</b>	si scaglia <b>contro</b> il corteo studentesco Dalla
37 file#320	per protestare <b>contro</b> i brutali interventi	<b>polizieschi</b>	di lunedì e martedì scorsi in numerose scuole
38 file#320	: << L'operazione di repressione politica e	<b>poliziesca</b>	in atto da tempo <b>contro</b> le scuole e le università
39 file#374	poco tempo dopo <b>contro</b> due furgoni della	<b>polizia</b>	. Le forze dell'ordine hanno operato diverse
40 file#378	lotta che classe politica, magistratura e	<b>polizia</b>	stanno conducendo <b>contro</b> la mafia. Ecco il
41 file#390	, caso Ciancimino, querela <b>contro</b> il capo della	<b>polizia</b>	, Angelo Vicari. << Andiamo ad accertare come

Table A.A.6: Concordances: preposition *contro* (against) + lemma *poliz\**. *L'Unità*, November 1969-February 1972.

Query *poliz.\** 870 > Positive filter (excluding KWIC) *contro* 54 (191.33 per million) 

1 doc#16	testa NAPOLI, 1. Violentissime cariche della	<b>polizia</b>	<b>contro</b> centinaia di operai si sono avute
2 doc#16	i lavoratori, ma rapidamente la violenza	<b>poliziesca</b>	si è scatenata anche <b>contro</b> gli abitanti del
3 doc#21	- Le arringhe dei difensori Roma: intervento	<b>poliziesco</b>	all'Ateneo <b>contro</b> attori del Living e studenti
4 doc#23	gravi, sottolineando che l'intervento della	<b>polizia</b>	<b>contro</b> i dimostranti fu illegittimo. A PAGINA 2
5 doc#28	metallurgici a Napoli <b>contro</b> l'aggressione	<b>poliziesca</b>	- A Trieste giornata di lotta dei marittimi -
6 doc#28	il lavoro per due ore in risposta alle violenze	<b>poliziesche</b>	<b>contro</b> i picchetti operai dell'Alfa Sud, a
7 doc#28	a un vero e proprio crescendo di aggressioni	<b>poliziesche</b>	<b>contro</b> i lavoratori in lotta. Limitiamoci solo
8 doc#31	sassi <b>contro</b> un treno che trasportava	<b>poliziotti</b>	- Devono rispondere di omicidio
9 doc#46	in fuga e inseguiti per 3 km. dalla popolazione -	<b>Polizia</b>	tollerante coi fascisti interviene <b>contro</b> i
10 doc#60	aggressione <b>contro</b> i lavoratori in lotta	<b>POLIZIOTTI</b>	SPARANO A PORTO MAGHERA Numerosi operai feriti
11 doc#60	degli incidenti durante le cariche della	<b>polizia</b>	<b>contro</b> i lavoratori Nostro servizio VENEZIA 4
12 doc#74	un pugno a un funzionario di PS - Cariche della	<b>polizia</b>	<b>contro</b> i fascisti che tentavano di impedirne la
13 doc#74	da gruppi di fascisti, violenta resistenza. La	<b>polizia</b>	ha effettuato cariche <b>contro</b> i presenti al
14 doc#77	VENEZIA PER PROTESTA <b>contro</b> l'aggressione	<b>poliziesca</b>	Scioperi e assemblee nelle fabbriche in
15 doc#81	, e non si fa nulla <b>contro</b> la violenza della	<b>polizia</b>	? E altri ancora - ha affermato Macaluso - sono i
16 doc#95	-- Improvvise e violentissime cariche della	<b>polizia</b>	<b>contro</b> i lavoratori milanesi -- Caccia all'
17 doc#102	del provvedimento e il ritiro delle forze di	<b>polizia</b>	. Cariche dei celerini <b>contro</b> studenti del <<
18 doc#109	per la riorganizzazione delle forze di	<b>polizia</b>	che devono essere impegnate <b>contro</b> la
19 doc#113	. Ma dopo la carica <b>contro</b> i metalmeccanici, la	<b>polizia</b>	è uscita ancora una volta in forze, nel centro di
20 doc#115	dei tanti loro compagni di lavoro, <b>contro</b> cui la	<b>polizia</b>	fu mandata a sparare nel vano tentativo di
21 doc#120	), l'uomo che a Foggia ha scagliato la	<b>polizia</b>	<b>contro</b> i disoccupati che chiedevano lavoro e
22 doc#122	di recente celebrazione <b>contro</b> dirigenti di	<b>polizia</b>	. È in questo ambiente, in questo costume
23 doc#135	del classico << Pilo Albertelli >>, la	<b>polizia</b>	è intervenuta <b>contro</b> gli studenti dello
24 doc#142	l'archiviazione del processo <b>contro</b> i	<b>poliziotti</b>	che uccisero i due lavoratori e ne ferirono
25 doc#144	e calpestata dalle attuali operazioni di	<b>polizia</b>	, <b>contro</b> i protagonisti delle responsabili e
26 doc#149	corteo sotto l'accusa di avere oltraggiato dei	<b>poliziotti</b>	lanciando <b>contro</b> di loro delle monetine. Il
27 doc#153	ottenere un intervento massiccio di forze di	<b>polizia</b>	<b>contro</b> gli scioperanti; e risulta che ingenti
28 doc#156	per protestare <b>contro</b> la permanenza della	<b>polizia</b>	nelle scuole cittadine, ha impedito il
29 doc#158	, Milano, Napoli e Bari - Intervento della	<b>polizia</b>	<b>contro</b> i bancari di Milano - Astensioni dei
30 doc#170	Napoli incidenti a ripetizione, provocati dai	<b>poliziotti</b>	duramente intervenuti <b>contro</b> pacifici cortei
31 doc#170	, cittadini invitavano concitatamente la	<b>polizia</b>	a intervenire <b>contro</b> i criminali. Ricevevano
32 doc#172	. Emanuele Macaluso OPERAI AGGREDITI La	<b>polizia</b>	<b>contro</b> gli occupanti dello stabilimento
33 doc#174	randellate al capo - Scandalosa condotta della	<b>polizia</b>	che non interviene <b>contro</b> i teppisti armati
34 doc#202	non assisteranno passivi a questa violenza	<b>poliziesca</b>	che si scatena sempre <b>contro</b> chi lotta per la
35 doc#207	-- ha detto -- mi accusano di essere amico della	<b>polizia</b>	o di essere <b>contro</b> Reggio. il che non è vero... >>
36 doc#215	dal buio ha cominciato a sparare <b>contro</b> i	<b>poliziotti</b>	. Cinque sei sette colpi tutto un caricatore e un
37 doc#231	comandò il SIM - Un'altra sparatoria <b>contro</b> la	<b>polizia</b>	- Appello CGIL, CISL e UIL Reparti dell'
38 doc#247	intanto la protesta <b>contro</b> gli eccessi della	<b>polizia</b>	, non deve impedire una chiara dissociazione e
39 doc#253	gli studenti medi <b>contro</b> l'aggressione	<b>poliziesca</b>	dentro il liceo << Tasso >>: alle 9, partendo dal
40 doc#309	le responsabilità. Quando i camion della	<b>polizia</b>	sono stati lanciati <b>contro</b> la gente, la
41 doc#328	l'aggressione scatenata a freddo ieri dalla	<b>polizia</b>	<b>contro</b> i lavoratori che uscivano dal Teatro
42 doc#330	del PSI ritengono che il grave intervento della	<b>polizia</b>	<b>contro</b> la manifestazione unitaria indetta a
43 doc#330	del PSIUP per protestare <b>contro</b> la repressione	<b>poliziesca</b>	e giudiziaria nei confronti degli operai e
44 doc#343	LA PROVOCATORIA aggressione delle forze di	<b>polizia</b>	<b>contro</b> la manifestazione unitaria di Milano è
45 doc#347	sparato da un agente della << volante >>. Il	<b>poliziotto</b>	gli ha esploso <b>contro</b> una revolverata mentre
46 doc#366	sono lì a dimostrare che forze autorevoli della	<b>polizia</b>	non sono affatto schierate <b>contro</b> gli <<
47 doc#369	La stessa richiesta formulata <b>contro</b> gli altri	<b>poliziotti</b>	presenti all'interrogatorio dell'anarchico
48 doc#376	delle squadracce, di aver schierato la	<b>polizia</b>	<b>contro</b> chi si batteva per spazzar via le
49 doc#387	assurda repressione <b>contro</b> i settanta giovani	<b>poliziotti</b>	del primo reggimento mobile di Torino che
50 doc#406	aggressione annata -- Grave inerzia della	<b>polizia</b>	Oggi Rovigo manifesta unitariamente <b>contro</b>
51 doc#407	unitaria di protesta <b>contro</b> le violenze	<b>poliziesche</b>	. A pochi metri dalla questura RAPINATORE SPARA
52 doc#419	delle bombe lacrimogene lanciate dalla	<b>polizia</b>	<b>contro</b> i lavoratori in sciopero. Per
53 doc#435	- Sproporzionato intervento della	<b>polizia</b>	<b>contro</b> un gruppo di ragazzi - << Soffiata >> ad un
54 doc#453	, spesso provocati dalla destra e dalla	<b>polizia</b>	e <b>contro</b> i quali il movimento delle masse e i

Table A.A.7: List of verbs with *magistratura* (judiciary) as subject. *L'Unità*, November 1969-February 1972.

verbs with "magistratura" as subject		
		10
aprire	<u>2</u>	11.09
formalizzare	<u>1</u>	10.60
trascurare	<u>1</u>	10.60
rinvviare	<u>1</u>	10.60
presumere	<u>1</u>	10.60
spiccare	<u>1</u>	10.60
mandare	<u>1</u>	10.54
condurre	<u>1</u>	10.54
disporre	<u>1</u>	10.47
applicare	<u>1</u>	10.41
occupare	<u>1</u>	10.30
colpire	<u>1</u>	10.04
lasciare	<u>1</u>	10
chiedere	<u>2</u>	9.93
prendere	<u>1</u>	9.91
portare	<u>1</u>	9.87
mettere	<u>1</u>	9.87
dire	<u>1</u>	9.48

Table A.A.8: List of verbs with *magistratura* (judiciary) as subject. *Corriere della Sera*, November 1969-February 1972.

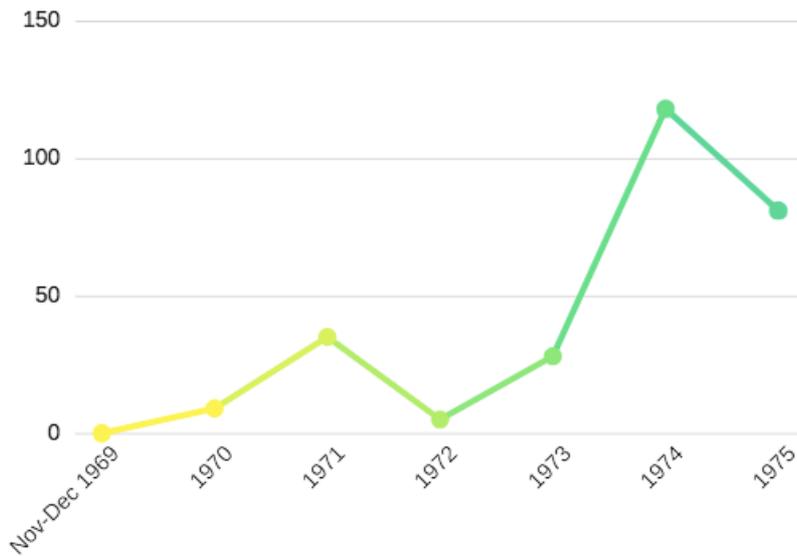
verbs with "magistratura" as subject		
		12.50
procedere	<u>3</u>	11.63
ritenere	<u>4</u>	11.45
adoperare	<u>2</u>	11.41
emettere	<u>2</u>	11.14
autorizzare	<u>1</u>	10.47
controllare	<u>1</u>	10.41
coprire	<u>1</u>	10.35
girare	<u>1</u>	10.30
condurre	<u>1</u>	10.24
escludere	<u>1</u>	10.14
dimostrare	<u>1</u>	10.14
credere	<u>1</u>	10.09
cercare	<u>1</u>	9.44
trovare	<u>1</u>	9.27
dare	<u>1</u>	9.21

Table A.A.9: List of verbs with *polizia* as subject. *L'Unità*, November 1969-February 1972.

verbs with "polizia" as subject		
		10.72
arrestare	<u>4</u>	10.75
caricare	<u>3</u>	10.37
effettuare	<u>3</u>	10.37
fermare	<u>3</u>	10.32
sapere	<u>3</u>	9.95
invadere	<u>2</u>	9.83
muovere	<u>2</u>	9.80
funzionare	<u>2</u>	9.80
assistere	<u>2</u>	9.79
definire	<u>2</u>	9.75
continuare	<u>2</u>	9.52
dare	<u>2</u>	9.48
fare	<u>2</u>	8.98
rinvenire	<u>1</u>	8.85
cha	<u>1</u>	8.85
inseguire	<u>1</u>	8.85
setacciare	<u>1</u>	8.85
prelevare	<u>1</u>	8.85
fronteggiare	<u>1</u>	8.82
provvedere	<u>1</u>	8.82
ricercare	<u>1</u>	8.82
perquisire	<u>1</u>	8.82
impedire	<u>1</u>	8.82
adottare	<u>1</u>	8.82
condurre	<u>1</u>	8.82

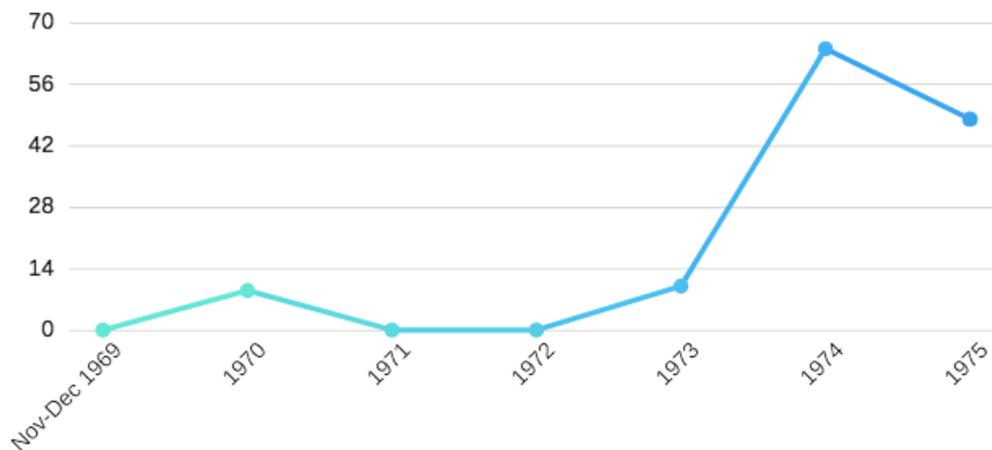
Table A.A.10: List of verbs with *polizia* as subject. *Corriere della Sera*, November 1969-February 1972.

<b>verbs with "polizia" as subject</b>		
		<b>10.81</b>
seguire	<u>4</u>	10.81
fronteggiare	<u>3</u>	10.49
cercare	<u>3</u>	10.10
trovare	<u>3</u>	10.01
operare	<u>2</u>	9.95
intensificare	<u>2</u>	9.95
accertare	<u>2</u>	9.91
rinunciare	<u>2</u>	9.80
rispondere	<u>2</u>	9.57
ritenere	<u>2</u>	9.52
rovistare	<u>1</u>	8.98
assediare	<u>1</u>	8.98
ritelefonò	<u>1</u>	8.98
attenere	<u>1</u>	8.98
acciuffare	<u>1</u>	8.98
rinvenire	<u>1</u>	8.98
sgomberare	<u>1</u>	8.98
intervenire	<u>1</u>	8.98
exasperare	<u>1</u>	8.98
faticare	<u>1</u>	8.96
irrompere	<u>1</u>	8.96
pensare	<u>1</u>	8.96
presidiare	<u>1</u>	8.96
aderire	<u>1</u>	8.93
provvedere	<u>1</u>	8.93



\* The different number between *Corriere* and *l'Unità* concerning reported kidnappings involving the action of Italian civic institutions can be explained considering the fact that the communist newspaper avoided giving prominence to crime news. In *l'Unità*'s terms, the moral panic originated from such news was helping the right (Anon. 1974, p. 1; *l'Unità*, 18/11/1974).

Figure A.A.1.1: Activities of Italian civic institutions regarding kidnappings reported by *Corriere della Sera*, November 1969-December 1975.



\*The kidnapping of Judge Sossi (48) affects the numbers of 1974; the kidnapping of Judge Di Gennaro (15) affects the numbers of 1975; the difference makes the number of kidnappings for ransom

\*\*It needs to be considered that, especially before 1975, first page articles on kidnappings focused on the detailed reports of the dynamic of the criminal action more than on the action of civic institutions; the call for action, responding to the increasing rate of the phenomenon, could explain the inclusion of civic institutions in the reports from 1974.

Figure A.A.1.2: Activities of Italian civic institutions regarding kidnappings reported by *l'Unità*, November 1969-December 1975.

## Appendix B - Newspaper categorisation

### Corpora

Table A.B.1: Corpora of *Corriere della Sera* and *l'Unità*.

Corpus	Period	Words
<i>Corriere della Sera</i>	November 1969 – February 1972	258,507
<i>L'Unità</i>	November 1969 – February 1972	247,675

### News categorisation November 1969-December 1975:

Table A.B.2: Criteria for news categorisation.

Main categories	Subcategories
Italian civic institutions – articles concerning problems, function and duties of Italian civic institutions	Law enforcement agencies – Police, <i>Carabinieri</i> , Financial Police, Municipal Police
	Judiciary
	Conflicts between the police and the judiciary
	The secret service (SIFAR; SID)
	Law enforcement agents' fatalities
Politically driven street clashes	Clashes between the police and left-wing militants
	Clashes between the police and right-wing militants
	Clashes between the police and politically unspecified actors or other political formations
	Clashes between left- and right-wing militants
Terrorist actions (bombings, attacks against persons or properties)	Alleged actions by left-wing militants
	Alleged actions by right-wing militants

	Unclaimed or politically unspecified actions
	Actions claimed by international organisations
Investigations and trials	Investigations or trials against law enforcement agents
	Investigations or trials against the judiciary
	Investigations or trials against left-wing militants
	Investigations or trials against right-wing militants
	Investigations against members of the Secret Service (SIFAR/SID)
	Political corruption
	Other (Economic crimes, pollution, industrial espionage, building speculation)
Criminality	Crimes against persons and properties (homicides, robberies)
	Kidnappings
	Drug traffic
	Mafia
General media discourses	Justice
	Repression
	Public Order – Articles concerning new measures to contrast criminality and political violence. It also comprehends articles generally talking about the turmoils in the country and the necessity of governing them.
	<i>Strategia della Tensione</i>
Themes relevant to the <i>Poliziottesco</i>	Neo-fascist Paramilitary training camps
	Manipulation of evidence (wiretappings)
	The prison system
Special events	Death of Agent Antonio Annarumma (November 19, 1969)
	Massacre of Piazza Fontana (December 12, 1969)

	Riots of Reggio Calabria (July 1970-February 1971)
	Assassination of the <i>Procuratore Generale di Palermo</i> Pietro Scaglione (May 5, 1971)
	Investigations on the attempted coup d'état of Junio Valerio Borghese (December 7-8, 1970; revealed by newspapers in March 1971)
	Revelation of the investigation against neo-fascists for Piazza Fontana (March 1972)
	Death of the Communist Publisher Giangiacomo Feltrinelli (March 14, 1972)
	Assassination of <i>Commissario</i> Luigi Calabresi (May 17, 1972)
	Death of Agent Antonio Marino (April 12, 1973)
	Investigations on the organisation <i>Rosa dei Venti</i> (revealed by newspapers in November 1973)
	Massacre of Piazzale della Loggia, Brescia (May 28, 1974)
	Bombing on the Italicus train, San Benedetto Val di Sambro (August 4, 1974)
Kidnapping of Judges	Mario Sossi (April 18-May 23, 1974)
	Giuseppe di Gennaro (May 6-May 11, 1975)

## Appendix C – Film plots

*Banditi a Milano*, Carlo Lizzani, 1968.

Milan, 1967. A group of bandits led by Pietro Cavallero (Gian Maria Volonté) commits a robbery. During the escape, the bandits kill and wound several persons, but the police manage to arrest one of them. *Commissario Basevi* (Tomas Milian) interrogates him, reconstructing the events that led to the robbery. Through flashbacks, television and newspaper reportages, the film describes the background of the criminals while depicting the consequences of their violent action over the victims of the robbery.

*Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto*, Elio Petri, 1970.

The chief of the homicide squad of the police (Gian Maria Volonté) kills a prostitute and spread evidence about his culpability to prove that his position protects him from any accusation. He is promoted to the head of the political office but continues to tease his former colleagues to direct their investigation towards him. Facing the impossibility of being convicted for his crime, the policeman starts to desire his punishment. Thus, he decides to confess his culpability, submitting a letter to his chief. The last sequence is a dream in which Volonté's character receives his bosses, who humiliate him and force him to retract his confession. When he wakes up, his bosses are entering his house, but the movie ends without establishing the consequences of his actions.

*In nome del popolo italiano*, Dino Risi, 1971.

Judge Bonifazi (Ugo Tognazzi) investigates a ruthless entrepreneur, Santenocito (Vittorio Gassman), for the death of a young girl. The evidence, however, exonerates Santenocito. Nonetheless, Bonifazi, moved by the hatred for the system of dishonesty that Santenocito represents, decides to destroy the evidence, condemning the entrepreneur to an unjust verdict.

*Confessione di un commissario di polizia al procuratore della repubblica*, Damiano Damiani, 1971.

In Palermo, *Commissario Bonavia* (Martin Balsam) attempts with dubious means to help a man, Li Puma, killing a *mafioso*, Lomunno (Luciano Lorcas), who Bonavia has been struggling to arrest for many years clashing against the web of protection that favours the boss. Lomunno is warned about the attempted murder, and Li Puma only

manages to kill three subordinates of the *mafioso*. *Sostituto Procuratore* Traini (Franco Nero) is assigned to the investigation on this triple murder and starts to question the behaviour of Bonavia. The *commissario* finds an important witness that could help him to incriminate Lomunno, but Traini officially accuses him of the attempted murder of Lomunno. Knowing that he will be arrested, Bonavia decides to kill Lomunno and turns himself in to the police. Traini gets in contact with the witness, but killers sent by Lomunno murder her. In prison, Bonavia convinces Traini that his boss, *Procuratore Generale* Malta, is the mole that is helping the *mafioso*. Initially, Traini does not want to believe the policeman but gets convinced after Bonavia is killed in prison. The film ends with Traini looking at Malta, implying that he will continue his investigation even if it leads to the incrimination of the high judge.

*Abuso di potere*, Camillo Bazzoni, 1972.

In Palermo, the journalist Enrico Gagliardi is killed. *Commissario* Luca Miceli (Frederick Stafford), known for his violent methods, conducts the investigation. An anonymous phone call reveals the alleged culprit to the *commissario*. However, the policeman is not convinced by the phone call and decides to continue the investigation. Miceli discovers the real killer in a *mafioso* involved in drug traffic. Despite the web of protection that, within the ranks of the state, favours the *mafioso*, the *commissario* arrests him. However, the boss is released from prison and, before escaping abroad, kills Miceli with a burst of shots.

*La polizia ringrazia*, Stefano Vanzina, 1972.

*Commissario* Bertone (Enrico Maria Salerno) is struggling to contain the wave of criminality in Rome. The press accuses the police of inefficiency while *Sostituto Procuratore* Ricciuti (Mario Adorf) accuses Bertone of brutality. When a group of vigilantes starts to target criminals that were able to escape justice, Bertone begins to suspect an attempt to orient public opinion in favour of authoritarian measures. He discovers that actual and retired policemen hide behind the group of vigilantes, aiming at overturning democracy. After confronting the leader of the organisation, the former *questore* Stolfi (Cyril Cusack), Bertone is killed. *Sostituto Procuratore* Ricciuti, finally convinced of Bertone's suspicions, decides to continue the investigation of the *commissario*.

*Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina*, Marco Bellocchio, 1972.

The chief-editor of the newspaper *il Giornale*, Bizanti (Gian Maria Volonté), exploits the murder of a young girl to blame a member of a leftist extra-parliamentary group, Mario Boni (Corrado Solari). Bizanti fabricates the evidence against Boni, influencing police investigations, with the aim of criminalising leftist groups that are opposing the reactionary owner of the newspaper, accused of financing neo-fascist terrorist groups. The progressive journalist Roveda (Fabio Garriba) discovers that the real culprit is the janitor of the school of the girl, but Bizanti convinces him to keep the secret. He wants to wait for the results of the upcoming election to see how to exploit the news at his favour.

*La polizia sta a guardare*, Roberto Infascelli, 1973.

*Questore* Cardone (Enrico Maria Salerno) starts his new job in Brescia, where a wave of criminality is terrorising the quiet province. The press and the *procuratore* (Jean Sorel) impede his action against a gang of kidnapers targeting the children of the local bourgeoisie. At the end of the movie, Cardone discovers that the former *questore*, Jovine (Lee J. Cobb), is the brain of an organisation that was planning to exploit the chaos in the country and establish a new government. The plot insists on the *opposti estremismi*. In the final dialogue with Cardone, Jovine says that the money of the ransoms goes to extra-parliamentary right and left parties, the agents of chaos. Not without ideological confusion, however, the dialogue concludes with Jovine stating that “Order is just one, and it’s just on one side”, leaving the space to interpret him as a fascist.

*Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia*, Sergio Martino, 1973.

*Commissario* Del Buono (Chris Avram) redacts a dossier evidencing the link between bank robberies and the activities of a political organisation in Milan. When Del Buono is killed under his house, *Commissario* Caneparo (Luc Merenda) continues the investigation. With the help of a young and idealist girl, Caneparo infiltrates a gang of criminals led by a publisher, Padulo (Richard Conte). The gang is deliberately committing heinous crimes to convince the population of the need of a stronger government. Caneparo finally discovers that, behind Padulo, operates a colleague, *Commissario* Gianni Viviani (Silvano Tranquilli), who is preparing the ground for a reactionary coup d’état. Caneparo confronts Viviani, who escapes with his car and dies after crashing in a quarry.

*La polizia incrimina: la legge assolve*, Enzo G. Castellari, 1973.

*Commissario* Belli (Franco Nero) and his boss, *Commissario* Scavino (James Whitmore), investigate the activities of a new gang of drug traffickers in Genoa. They discover the connection of the gang with a family of wealthy entrepreneurs, the Grivas, which is trying to replace the old *mafioso* Cafiero (Fernando Rey). Scavino decides to submit to the judge a dossier with evidence against the Grivas but gets killed under his house. Belli continues the investigation dismantling the new organisation. However, he is not able to produce evidence against the Grivas, who benefit from the protection of influential personalities.

*Milano odia: la polizia non può sparare*, Umberto Lenzi, 1974.

Giulio Sacchi (Tomas Milian) is a psychopath criminal who commits violent crimes with the aim of uplifting his social status and reaching an influential position in the Milanese underworld. With his gang, he assaults the villa of a wealthy family, killing everybody including an infant. *Commissario* Grandi (Henry Silva) investigates on Sacchi. When the gang kidnaps the daughter of an influential entrepreneur, the situation goes out of control, leading Sacchi to the killing of his accomplices and the girl. *Commissario* Grandi manages to arrest the criminal, but his violent methods give Sacchi the possibility of exploiting the quibbles of the law, granting his release. Hence, Grandi decides to kill Sacchi and turn himself in to the police.

*Processo per direttissima*, Lucio De Caro, 1974.

The story follows the investigation on an attack to a train. The police take into custody a leftist worker, Stefano Baldini (Michele Placido), who dies mysteriously after three days of interrogation. A journalist, Cristina Visconti (Ira von Fürstenberg), who can be considered the embodiment of Camilla Cederna - the journalist's book *Pinelli. Una finestra sulla strage* (2009), contributed to fuel the scandal about the death of the anarchist Pinelli - helps the sister of the dead worker to find the truth about his death. She fights against the resistance that comes from the judiciary and the police to admit institutional responsibilities in the matter. The journalist decides to publish her accusation against the police without evidence in order to be sued by the policemen and bring them to court, where she aims at forcing them to answer precise questions.

*Il testimone deve tacere*, Giuseppe Rosati, 1974.

The movie narrates the misadventures of doctor Giorgio Sironi (Bekim Fehmiu) that recognises the murderer of a *commissario* in an influential engineer, related to an influential politician colluded with the mafia. From the moment Sironi denounces the crime to the police a series of pressures from different institutions (from the National Healthcare System to the *procuratore generale*) makes his life a hell on earth, concluding with the rape of his wife in front of his face.

*Ordine firmato in bianco*, Gianni Manera, 1974.

The film narrates the misadventures of a gang of Italian American criminals. The gang commits a robbery killing one worker and goes to the central region of Abruzzo to let the dust settle. Unfortunately, a killer chases and murders all of them. The murderer connects the mafia with the *trame nere*, being the *procuratore* identified as a *mafioso* that conspires against the democratic system. The link between the mafia and politics, expressed by the conspiracy plot, is left unexplained. At the end of the movie, the *procuratore* is arrested but commits suicide after declaring the invincibility of the mafia.

*Il giudice e la minorenne*, Franco Nucci, 1974.

Judge Serra (Chris Avram) has to deal with cases of minor prostitution. During his investigation, he realises that the perversion that characterises the suspects encompasses the whole Italian society and his family alike. The judge is seduced by his daughter's best friend, and he discovers that his daughter is part of an organisation planning to take over the country. He also discovers that his wife is betraying him with an aeroplane captain. He follows the two up to an abandoned cave. Disgusted by his vices and by the moral corruption he sees around him, he decides to kill them and himself launching his car against the one in which the wife is having sex with the pilot.

*La polizia chiede aiuto*, Massimo Dallamano, 1974.

*Commissario Silvestri* (Claudio Cassinelli) investigates on the alleged suicide of a young girl, discovering a child prostitution ring in Brescia. *Sostituto Procuratore Stori* (Giovanna Ralli) presses him for the respect of the code while a serial killer starts to murder the witnesses. Silvestri and Stori discover the link of the minor prostitution ring with an organisation comprised of influential personalities such as ministers and politicians. The two state servants manage to kill the serial killer and dismantle the ring.

However, when they ask to incriminate the personalities involved in the traffic, their superiors demand the closure of the investigation.

*Squadra volante*, Stelvio Massi, 1974.

Interpol Inspector Ravelli (Tomas Milian) investigates on the activities of the criminal gang led by *il marsigliese* (Gastone Moschin), who has killed Ravelli's wife. After a robbery that caused the death of a policeman in Pavia, the police start to hunt the gang in the countryside. Ravelli finds the criminals following the traces left by the young idealist Rino (Ray Lovelock), a leftist student that joined the gang to finance his political activity and gets accidentally killed after a fight with another member of the group. In the final confrontation with *il marsigliese*, Ravelli kills him and resigns from the Interpol.

*La polizia ha le mani legate*, Luciano Ercoli, 1975.

A bomb explodes in the hall of a hotel. *Commissario* Rolandi (Claudio Cassinelli) is in charge of the investigation. He has to face *Procuratore Generale* Di Federico (Arthur Kennedy), who demands from him to abide by the legal procedure. All suspects, however, are mysteriously killed. Rolandi discovers that the source of the leaks concerning the investigation is *Sostituto Procuratore* Bondi (Francesco D'Adda), linked to a secret group of faceless people sponsored by politicians and the secret service, aiming at manipulating public opinion. In the end, the *procuratore generale* abandons the investigation leaving Rolandi to his own. Rolandi follows the *sostituto procuratore*, and the movie ends suggesting that the *commissario* kills the corrupt magistrate.

*La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide*, Sergio Martino, 1975.

*Commissario* Solmi (Luc Merenda) investigates a series of mysterious deaths of influential Army officials. After a man breaks in the house of one of the victims, the police discover a roll of wiretappings exposing the preparation of a coup d'état. The man declares to be a member of the secret service but a high official of the service, *Capitano* Sperli (Tomas Milian), contradicts him. Witnesses are killed, and the roll of wiretappings gets tampered with while guarded in the office of Judge Mannino (Mel Ferrer). Finally, Solmi discovers the implication of a reactionary entrepreneur, Martinelli (Claudio Gora), who is sponsoring neo-fascist terrorists with the help of Sperli. While Martinelli escapes abroad, Solmi arrests Sperli in a neo-fascist

paramilitary training camp. However, while approaching the prison, Sperli is killed by Solmi's deputy and the *commissario* is murdered down by his house. The film concludes with Mannino entering the prison unaware of the fact that he has lost the only witnesses he could use to find out the truth.

*Perché si uccide un magistrato*, Damiano Damiani, 1975.

Giorgio Solaris (Franco Nero) is the director of a controversial movie about the connection between the *procuratore generale* of Palermo, Judge Traini (Marco Guglielmi), and a mafia boss (Vincenzo Norvese). The movie starts with the *procuratore* visioning the movie to decide if it is the case to confiscate it as an offence to the honour of the judiciary. The judge, however, is killed in an ambush. Solaris has to deal with his sense of guilt, not understanding the reason for the murder. At the end of the movie, however, it is discovered that the murder was related to personal matters. The killers planned to exploit the controversies of the movie that would have masked the killing as an act of mafia. Solaris discovers the fraud and decides to denounce the murderers – the judge's wife and her lover.

*I ragazzi della Roma violenta*, Renato Savino, 1976.

The film follows two gangs of violent young people. The first is led by the rich neo-fascist Marco (Gino Milli), the second is comprised by lower-class thugs. While the first group is devoted to violence, targeting political opponents, and enjoys in inflicting pain, the second is led by the will to emulate the wealthier kids. The two gangs perform a series of heinous crimes including murder and rape. Hunted by the police, Marco attempts to escape abroad but dies in a car accident.

*Quelli della calibro 38*, Massimo Dallamano, 1976.

*Commissario Vanni* (Marcel Bozzuffi) kills the brother of a *mafioso*, *il marsigliese* (Ivan Rassimov). The gangster takes his revenge killing the wife and the son of the *commissario*. The *questore* puts Vanni in charge of a special squad to stop the wave of criminality. The squad investigates a theft of dynamite. The explosive has been stolen by *il marsigliese*, who threatens the city of Turin with random attacks, aiming at securing a safe escape from Italy and a valuable lot of diamonds.

*Poliziotti violenti*, Michele Massimo Tarantini, 1976.

*Maggiore* Alfieri (Henry Silva) gets transferred to Rome to impede his investigation on a case of corruption in the army. In Rome, Alfieri foils the kidnapping of a child, noticing that the bandits were using weapons available to the army. Suspecting illegal trafficking of weapons, Alfieri investigates, but he is severely beaten by the bandits. With the help of *Commissario* Tosi (Antonio Sabato), Alfieri discovers that influential personalities of the army, together with lawyers and politicians, are aiming at destabilising the country and favour a coup d'état. As retaliation for Alfieri's investigation, the organisation kills his girlfriend. The soldier goes on a rampage, killing several of the group's members. In the end, *Commissario* Tosi has to take down Alfieri to prevent the killing of the leader of the organisation, which would have compromised the entire investigation. However, Tosi decides to resign from the police.

## Appendix D - Equating political violence, criminality, and madness in *l'Unità* and *Corriere della Sera* (1969-1975)

Table A.D.1: extracts from *l'Unità* and *Corriere della Sera* (1969-1975) equating political violence, criminality, and madness.

Extract	Event	Date	<i>Corriere della Sera</i> (C)	<i>l'Unità</i> (U)
C.1 U.1	Death of Agent Antonio Annarumma during the general strike in Milan.	19/11/1969	“It is necessary to recognise that <b>we are facing a criminal act</b> that leaves in the country a feeling of pain and anguish.” (E. Mel. 1969, p. 1; <i>Corriere della Sera</i> 20/11/1969)	---
C.2 U.2	Massacre of Piazza Fontana.	12/12/1969	“[...] we face a <b>wild and criminal</b> challenge against the values of tolerance and mutual respect. In one word, <b>it is a challenge to civilisation.</b> ” (Anon. 1969h, p. 1; <i>Corriere della Sera</i> 13/12/1969)	“Tomorrow at 11 am, Milan will give the last farewell to the fourteen victims of the <b>criminal attack</b> of the other day.” (Anon. 1969k, p. 1; <i>l'Unità</i> 14/12/1969)
C.3 U.3	Death of Giuseppe Malacaria, worker, killed by a bomb in Catanzaro in the framework of the riots of Reggio Calabria.	04/02/1971	“During the event, the president of the regional council, the socialist Mario Casalnuovo, said that the bombs are an attack on the regional institute in a pre-ordered <b>criminal plan</b> against democracy and republican legality.” (Madedo 1971a, p.1; <i>Corriere della Sera</i> 06/02/1971)	“ <b>A criminal attempt</b> of a massacre, which cost the life of a worker, was implemented in the late afternoon by the <b>thugs of the MSI</b> of Catanzaro, who threw four bombs from their headquarters against a crowd of citizens who came from an anti-fascist demonstration.” (Dardano 1971, p. 1; <i>l'Unità</i> 05/02/1971)
C.4 U.4	Revelation of the attempted coup d'état by Junio Valerio Borghese.	18/03/1971	“[...] the republican legality is not at risk, the democratic state is solid enough to resist the waves of <b>violence and irrationalism</b> that rise from the fringes of	“The projects of the Borghese group are another example of the plots and conspiracies - preceded by the <b>criminal acts</b> in Milan [Piazza Fontana] and

			<p>this <b>delusional</b> extra-parliamentary right, [...], which deludes itself to replicate with <b>criminal recklessness</b> the fascist adventures of other countries, [...].” (Anon. 1971b, p. 1; <i>Corriere della Sera</i> 18/03/1971)</p>	<p>in Catanzaro, that aim at creating the opportunity for more radical interventions; they aim at determining, <b>through provocation and crime</b>, a state of affairs that gives space to the ‘pacifying’ initiative of self-proclaimed forces of ‘order’.” (Pavolini 1971, p. 1; <i>l’Unità</i> 20/03/1971)</p>
C.5 U.5	<p>Attack at the hose of the <i>Sostituto Procuratore</i> Emilio Alessandrini.</p>	20/02/1972	<p>“The attack was directed against the house of the <i>Sostituto Procuratore della Repubblica</i> Dr Emilio Alessandrini, one of the magistrates who leads the investigation against the neo-fascists arrested recently and considered to be involved in previous <b>criminal enterprises</b>.” (Anon. 1972e, p. 1; <i>Corriere della Sera</i> 21/02/1972)</p>	<p>“The judge, together with the other <i>sostituto procuratore</i>, Dr Fiasconaro, is in charge of the investigation about the <b>three criminal fascist attacks</b> of the other week.” (w. g. 1972, p. 1; <i>l’Unità</i> 21/02/1972)</p>
C.6 U.6	<p>Assassination of <i>Commissario</i> Calabresi.</p>	17/05/1972	<p>“When we feel at the mercy of occult forces, which arrogates the right to decide in the dark the fate of the citizen, it is difficult, we must recognise it, to keep calm. But if we lose the calm, we will only play into the hands of <b>these criminal ‘Tupamaros’</b>, and we will <b>reduce our country to a jungle, as they wish</b>.” (Montanelli 1972b, p. 1; <i>Corriere della Sera</i> 18/05/1972)</p>	<p>“<b>Another criminal provocation</b>, another dead, again in Milan: this morning at 9.15, Luigi Calabresi, <i>commissario capo di polizia</i>, [...] was killed by gunshots under his house, in via Cherubini 6, in the Porta Magenta area.” (Elena 1972, p. 1; <i>l’Unità</i> 18/05/1972)</p>
C.7 U.7	<p>Death of Agent Marino during a neo-fascist demonstration in</p>	12/04/1973	<p>“Another victim of political intolerance by men who declare to be carriers of ideology but</p>	<p>“Milan stopped this morning for the anti-fascist strike called by the unions: the city,</p>

	Milan.		in facts <b>prove to be only criminals.</b> " (Pieroni 1973a, p. 1; <i>Corriere della Sera</i> 13/04/1973)	shaken by a wave of <b>disdain for the infamous Fascist crime</b> that caused the death of a young police officer." (Anon. 1973g, p. 1; <i>l'Unità</i> 14/04/1973)
C.8 U.8	Arson of Primavalle. Arson of the local MSI party section.	16/04/1973	"Vittorio Loi [suspect of the killing of Agent Marino] and the <b>criminal pyromaniac</b> of Rome are <b>psychiatric cases</b> [...]." (Pieroni 1973c, p. 1; <i>Corriere della Sera</i> 17/03/1973)	"Monday at dawn, <b>unknown criminals</b> set fire to the house of the secretary of the MSI of the neighbourhood: [...]" (Anon. 1973j, p. 1; <i>l'Unità</i> 17/04/1973).
C.9 U.9	Bombing of the Police headquarters in Milan during the commemoration of the death of <i>Commissario Calabresi</i> .	17/05/1973	"Bertoli had been filed in the archives of the police <b>both as a criminal and as a political terrorist</b> : he had frequented environments, <b>both shady and fanatical</b> ; he certainly had many friends and perhaps some interested protector." (Anon. 1973l, p. 1; <i>Corriere della Sera</i> 19/05/1973)	"So far, the bloody balance of <b>the new criminal attack</b> is of a young woman killed and 35 wounded [...]" (Palumbo 1973, p. 1; <i>l'Unità</i> 18/05/1973)
C.10 U.10	Revelation of the conspiracy of the neo-fascist group <i>Rosa dei Venti</i> .	November 1973	"These rough conspirators, [...], could be a mixed group of <b>nostalgic madmen and criminal adventurers</b> . The group certainly is not capable of resuscitating the Republic of Mussolini ended up in Dongo, but it is capable of <b>isolated madness, of sudden crimes</b> : an attack, or a murder, or a series of kidnappings." (Anon. 1973p, p. 1; <i>Corriere della Sera</i> 15/11/1973)	"The investigation on the ' <i>Rosa dei Venti</i> ', however, seems to be currently oriented to establish [...] the role of Genoese entrepreneurs in many of the <b>criminal events of the trame nere</b> ." (Anon. 1973q, p. 1; <i>l'Unità</i> 01/12/1973)
C.11 U.11	Kidnapping of Ettore Amerio by the <i>Brigate Rosse</i>	10/12/1973	"Once again, it is emerging [...] <b>the alliance between self-</b>	"The provocative activity of the self-proclaimed <i>Brigate</i>

			<p><b>proclaimed political forces violating the rules of the game and ordinary criminals,</b> who try to hide behind the ideology, even the <b>ranting</b> ideology of the <i>Brigate Rosse</i>.” (Sensini 1973, p. 1; <i>Corriere della Sera</i> 12/12/1973)</p>	<p><i>Rosse</i> added new episodes to the sensational and <b>criminal action</b> of Turin.” (Anon. 1973r, p. 1; <i>l’Unità</i> 15/12/1973)</p>
C.12 U.12	Kidnapping of <i>Sostituto Procuratore</i> Sossi by the <i>Brigate Rosse</i> .	April 18- May 23, 1974	<p>“Do we want to give an armed escort to all the magistrates of the Republic? Such a measure would be impossible on an operational level (the police cannot even control all the banks) and <b>would be morally equivalent to an unconditional surrender to crime. Because it is a matter of pure criminality.</b>” (Sensini 1974a, p. 1; <i>Corriere della Sera</i> 20/04/1974)</p>	<p>“Once again, one of the most delicate moments in the life of the country is deeply disturbed by a <b>provocative criminal episode.</b>” (Anon. 1974b, p. 1; <i>l’Unità</i> 20/04/1974)</p>
C.13 U.13	Bombing in piazza della Loggia (Brescia) during an anti-fascist demonstration.	28/05/1974	<p>“However, it is possible to state that Italians have responded with great responsibility to a <b>criminal act</b> that has a precise neo-fascist signature [...]” (Sensini 1974b, p. 1; <i>Corriere della Sera</i> 30/05/1974)</p>	<p>“The Directorate of the PCI has learned with emotion and indignation the news of the new <b>barbaric massacre</b> carried out in Brescia by fascist groups against workers and democratic people gathered in a meeting to protest jointly against the succession of <b>criminal fascist enterprises</b> in the city.” (La Direzione del PCI 1974, p. 1; <i>l’Unità</i> 29/05/1974)</p>
C.14 U.14	Bombing on the Italicus train.	04/08/1974	<p>“Today, the danger is that the <i>trama nera</i>, [...] <b>could stabilise as a phenomenon of political criminality on the type of the Mafia and</b></p>	<p>“We are facing aberrations that are manifestations [...] of <b>‘murderous madness’</b>: [...]. The <b>criminal plot</b>, the murderous</p>

			<b>gangsterism.”</b> (Calvino 1974, p. 1; <i>Corriere della Sera</i> 06/08/1974)	determination, the cold and vile <b>ferocity</b> , the will to destroy the Italian democracy, from the bombs on the trains in 1969 [...] to <b>the monstrous crime of today</b> , comes from a single source.” (Tortorella 1974, p. 1; <i>l’Unità</i> 05/08/1974)
C.15 U.15	Killing of two police agents by neo-fascist Mario Tuti.	24/01/1975	“Agents Leonardo Falco and Giovanni Ceravolo are dead, [...] without having the time to understand that the mask of the model employee had fallen, revealing in a moment <b>the criminal face of fascist violence.”</b> (Monti 1975a, p. 1; <i>Corriere della Sera</i> 28/01/1975)	<b>“It is possible that some of these fugitive killers are professionals of the murder.</b> Others, certainly, consider the massacre as a political action, according to the school of Nazism. However, <b>they are just criminals</b> willing to do whatever is necessary.” (Tortorella 1975, p. 1; <i>l’Unità</i> 26/01/1975)
C.16 U.16	Kidnapping of Judge Gennaro.	May 6-May 11, 1975	“[...] it would make sense if NAP were what they claim to be: a radical leftist group that chose the path of armed struggle, [...]. But today the ‘real’ face of <i>nappisti</i> seems another: <b>a group of ordinary criminals with provocative functions</b> , which can trigger a gigantic witch-hunt against the dissent of the left and extra-parliamentary groups, and perhaps not only in that area.” (Pansa 1975, p. 1; <i>Corriere della Sera</i> , 12/05/1975)	“The kidnapping was claimed by <b>the criminal gang</b> last night in conjunction with a bloody revolt in the prison of Viterbo, organised by the same group.” (Anon. 1975d, p. 1; <i>l’Unità</i> 10/05/1975)
C.17 U.17	Killing of student Alberto Brasili by neo-fascist militants.	25/05/1975	“The young man has been assaulted from behind <b>by five criminals.”</b> (Anon. 1975e, p. 1; <i>Corriere della Sera</i> 26/05/1975)	<b>“The six criminals</b> have hit him from behind with a determined will to kill” (Anon. 1975f, p. 1; <i>l’Unità</i> 27/05/1975).

C.18 U.18	Death of Margherita "Mara" Cagol, member of the <i>Brigate Rosse</i> .	05/06/1975	"The identification [of Mara Cagol] was a major step forward in the investigation on the <i>Brigate Rosse</i> and <b>its criminal plans</b> of 'expropriation for self-financing' through kidnapping for ransom." (Giuliani 1975, p. 1; <i>Corriere della Sera</i> 07/06/1975)	<b>"The criminal actions</b> of this group contribute to a widespread climate of disorientation and insecurity." (Anon. 1975g, p. 1; <i>l'Unità</i> 07/06/1975)
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## Appendix E - Relevant extracts for qualitative analysis

Table A.E.1: relevant extracts from *l'Unità* and *Corriere della Sera* (1969-1975).

Extract	Theme/Event	Date	Newspaper	Text
U.19	Representation of policemen.	22/11/1969	<i>l'Unità</i>	<p>“[T]hose masses of poor people of Southern Italy, in which Gramsci and Salvemini identified an inexhaustible reservoir of cheap labour; labour apt to work, and to fire on workers. Their condition of ‘enlisted men’, serving the bosses more than the State, brings the contradiction and, often, the tragedy. It is an ancient tragedy: that of the <b>poor in uniform that oppresses the poor in overalls, to the advantage of the bosses that oppress both of them.</b> [...] The protests in the police barracks of Milan and Turin carried forward claims against a barrack regime typical of the Bourbon period: unsustainable working conditions, an anti-democratic and anti-workers mission, <b>fomented by the higher ranks and made mandatory by fascist officials.</b>” (Ferrara 1969, p. 1)</p>
U.20	Bosses’ newspapers.	03/12/1969	<i>l'Unità</i>	<p>“There is no doubt that the criminal act of the mayor should be read in relation to the reactionary and anti-worker mentality of Cantone, who has already been the protagonist of serious provocations, to the ‘confindustrial’ [General Confederation of Italian Industry] climate. However, it should also be read according to <b>the anti-worker campaign fed by bosses’ newspapers,</b> and to the passive attitude held by the police towards the numerous serious terrorist attacks carried out in recent weeks by fascist thugs.” (Anon. 1969e, p. 1)</p>

C.19	The message of condolence from the <i>Presidente della Repubblica</i> in the aftermath of the bombing in Piazza Fontana.	13/12/1969	<i>Corriere della Sera</i>	“The horrendous attack that sowed death in Milan leaves the nation dismayed by the <b>brutality of the crime</b> , by its <b>monstrous enormity</b> , for its <b>bestial irresponsibility</b> . The Milan bombing is <b>a link in a tragic chain of terrorist acts</b> that must be broken at any cost <b>to safeguard the life and freedom of citizens.</b> ” (Anon. 1969i, p. 1)
U.21	Infiltration of fascists in the Anarchist group <i>22 Marzo</i> .	21/12/1969	<i>l'Unità</i>	“On Friday evening, the Roman <i>questura</i> confirmed what <i>l'Unità</i> had written: Merlino, a ‘ <i>picchiatore</i> ’ [thug] from extremist groups close to the MSI, had recently made a trip to Greece, hosted, as an ‘award’, by the colonels of Papadopoulos.” (Anon. 1969n, p. 1)
U.22	<i>L'Unità</i> theorising a link between the government and the actions of the police and the judiciary.	28/12/1969	<i>l'Unità</i>	“ <i>Questori</i> and <i>commissari</i> seem more occupied with making political statements and, taking advantage of the extraordinary moment, to denounce alleged opinion crimes, than with protecting citizens’ lives and defend the Constitution. Some magistrates, in the meantime, are suddenly severe in applying what fascist has remained in the codes. Others are indulgent, from Agrigento to Vajont, to what has remained fascist in the social structure of our country. [...] What we must look at, immediately and thoroughly, is the government. Indeed, the government needs to be formed not through a formula that arises from fear of the unions, the intention to give more power to the police, and guarantees to the bosses.” (Macaluso 1969, p. 1)
U.23	Newspapers manipulating facts.	17/01/1970	<i>l'Unità</i>	“The confrontation in prison between Valpreda and Merlino did not happen. The <i>Procura</i> of the Republic has denied (as we anticipated) the news, totally

				<p>invented by certain newspapers. For instance, <i>Il Tempo</i> and <i>Il Messaggero</i> ‘enriched’ their reports with <b>dramatic details</b>, such as Valpreda bursting into tears and desperately rejecting the accusations. Is this just a resounding journalistic blunder? Rather, it seems an episode that fits perfectly into the ‘climate’ that the newspapers are trying to create around the defendants. <b>Newspapers are willing to resort to fake news to ‘condemn immediately’ the suspects, at least in the face of the public opinion, without waiting - as we ask - for the evidence, or that the judge performs his work serenely.</b> The public opinion does not want scoops but demands the discovery of the authors and instigators of the Milanese massacre, without regard for anyone.” (Anon. 1970b, p. 1)</p>
U.24	Strikes.	29/10/1970	<i>l’Unità</i>	<p>“<b>Hundreds of thousands of workers</b> are fighting <b>across the country</b> for new contracts, better living and working conditions, against repression, and for political and trade union freedoms. <b>In factories, as in offices and in the countryside</b>, [...] an intense debate develops, and <b>the unity of the unions progresses</b> through mass action and initiative.” (Anon. 1970j, p. 1)</p>
U.25	Death of Agent Bellotti in Reggio Calabria.	20/01/1971	<i>l’Unità</i>	<p>“If it was considered possible to use the name of Annarumma as a victim of red barbarism [...], Bellotti’s name does not lend itself to such speculation. It is certain, in fact, that a fascist hand killed him. Silence appears to be mandatory, and, therefore, no resolute telegrams telling the magistrate what to do, no televised mobilisation intended to make the crowds cry, no ranting of the official</p>

				bards of democracy, as Spadolini [director of <i>Corriere della Sera</i> ] and Mattei.” (Anon. 1971a, p. 1)
C.20	<i>Corriere</i> using <i>l’Unità</i> to attack the PCI.	12/02/1971	<i>Corriere della Sera</i>	“Communists - and in part also the Socialists – only denounce neo-fascist terrorism. <i>L’Unità</i> wrote this morning: ‘It should be remembered that, by the 1952 law, the government has full power to strike down fascist organisations and to hunt down <i>squadristi</i> and provocation groups’. However, tonight, Christian Democrats have added the request to fight left-wing violence to the request of Communists to pursue and put an end to neo-fascism.” (Bianchi 1971, p. 1)
C.21	Kidnapping: police operations.	05/04/1971	<i>Corriere della Sera</i>	“Today, hundreds of <i>carabinieri</i> and policemen have carried out extensive mopping operations in the mountains of Barbagia. Many helicopters and dozens of police dogs took part in the operations.” (F. P. 1971, p. 1)
U.26	Clashes between the police and leftist students.	13/05/1971	<i>l’Unità</i>	“ <b>Instead of arresting the fascists, the police unleashed</b> against the young [leftist] militants, beating them and firing tear gas candles at a man’s height. Subsequently, <b>the charges of unprecedented brutality, a real ‘punishment’ against Bologna</b> , moved to the city centre and lasted for a long time.” (Anon. 1971c, p. 1)
C.22	<i>Corriere della Sera</i> responding to <i>l’Unità</i> about the accusation of being lenient towards the fascist origins of the Reggio Calabria riots.	03/07/1971	<i>Corriere della Sera</i>	“We were vehemently attacked by <i>l’Unità</i> and <i>Avanti!</i> <b>for not having accepted the liberating cliché of the Fascist rebellion</b> and for refusing to invoke the consequent simplistic response of an anti-fascist front on the model of the CNL.” (Anon. 1971f, p. 1)
U.27	Blaming civic institutions for	15/10/1971	<i>l’Unità</i>	“[...] the behaviour of national and international police and

	the escape of Borghese.			<p>certain governmental authorities concerning the attempted coup of last year was objectively that of ‘covering-up’ the head of the <i>Fronte Nazionale</i>. [...] It was not difficult to discover the hideout of Borghese, but neither the Italian police nor the Interpol had found a way to search for him in Madrid. This is a serious matter. The fact that the Roman police did not consider appropriate to withdraw Borghese’s passport as soon as they discovered his reactionary <b>plot gives rise to any hypothesis on the ‘diligence’ of certain policemen.</b> What happened in Madrid is simply scandalous. The news came to the attention of journalists and therefore of public opinion only by chance, but it is certain that the Italian government knew about the presence of the head of the <i>Fronte Nazionale</i> in Madrid at least ten days ago. However, a veil of silence has been drawn over this fact.” (p. g. 1971, p. 1)</p>
U.28	The subdivision of the judiciary into “good” and “bad” state servants.	06/01/1972	<i>l’Unità</i>	<p>“Faced with the immediate denunciation by the socialist and democratic press, a Roman para-fascist newspaper, owned by an important oilman (the same man who owns <i>la Nazione</i> of Florence and <i>il Resto del Carlino</i> of Bologna) wrote that there would be a ‘campaign of the left against the judiciary’. Naturally, it is a shameful lie. For example, Bianchi d’Espinosa, which has been warned and threatened by fascists with bombs and threatening letters, is part of the judiciary. No. <b>We have denounced the existence, even in the judiciary and in other apparatuses of the state, of persons and groups who have a clear and decidedly reactionary, or openly pro-fascist</b></p>

				<b>orientation.”</b> (Tortorella 1972, p. 1)
C.23	Description of the attack at <i>Corriere della Sera</i> .	12/03/1972	<i>Corriere della Sera</i>	“The wild aggression at <i>Corriere della Sera</i> is a new and intolerable attack to the freedom of the press, the most important of all kind of freedoms. The left-wing extra-parliamentary ‘ <i>gruppuscoli</i> ’ [little groups] attacked the headquarters of the newspaper at the hour of most intense work: an assembly of all editors was in progress. It was discussing, with democratic and civil debate, the conquests of the whole category decided to defend its rights against any abuse and establish its functions within the company and within a pluralist and western conception of rights and duties of the press. [...] even the <i>squadristi</i> [fascist squads] inspired by Farinacci stopped in 1925 in front of the windows of Via Solferino. It was a wild, unmotivated, and senseless attack with the use of Molotov cocktails and explosive sticks. It was as if they were refining the more artisanal technique of 1968 when there were the first aggressions to <i>Corriere</i> [...].” (Anon. 1972g, p. 1)
C.24	Blaming for the assault at <i>Corriere</i> .	12/03/1972	<i>Corriere della Sera</i>	“The concomitance of the demonstrations, and the support that the opposite extremes - the so-called ‘ <i>maggioranza silenziosa</i> ’, now in the service of the MSI, and the small groups of anarchists, Maoists, and leftist extremists - are giving one to each other, [demonstrate that] <b>the violence of the pseudo-political protest can be interpreted only as pure and simple provocation.</b> ” (Anon. 1972g, p. 1)
U.29	Description of the assault at	12/03/1972	<i>l’Unità</i>	“ <b>Serious acts of provocation</b> took place this afternoon in the

	<i>Corriere.</i>			centre of Milan. During prolonged clashes, <b>the police violently attacked groups of young extremists</b> (an elderly passer-by, the sixty-years-old Giuseppe Tavecchio, hit by a tear-gas candle in the forehead, is fighting for his life at the hospital). During a demonstration of the ‘anti-Communist committee’ of the ‘ <i>maggioranza silenziosa</i> ’, a journalist and a photographer of <i>il Giorno</i> were attacked by fascist thugs; finally, <b>groups of provocateurs belonging to left-wing extra-parliamentary organisations</b> have carried out acts of delinquency in various areas of the city and at the headquarters of <i>Corriere della Sera</i> .” (Anon. 1972h, p. 1)
U.30	Approach of <i>l’Unità</i> towards the groups of the extra-parliamentary left.	13/03/1972	<i>l’Unità</i>	“ <b>The extra-parliamentary groups</b> that caused the episodes of vandalism on Saturday <b>have been created and exploited</b> since then by those whose only interest was <b>to stop the struggles of the workers and their unity</b> . The existence of <b>these groups</b> and their hooligan actions <b>are today one of the elements of that <i>strategia della tensione</i> and provocation that sees on the same side people as Pino Rauti [neo-fascist], sectors of the police, and forces within Andreotti’s government.</b> ” (Anon. 1972i, p. 1)
C.25	Death of Giuseppe Tavecchio.	15/03/1972	<i>Corriere della Sera</i>	“The pensioner Giuseppe Tavecchio, wounded in the head during the clashes occurred Saturday afternoon in the centre of Milan between demonstrators of the groups of the extra-parliamentary left and the police, died yesterday, after three days of agony. The pensioner was hospitalised in serious conditions.” (Anon. 1972j, p. 1)

C.26	Death of Feltrinelli.	18/03/1972	<i>Corriere della Sera</i>	<p>“We have nothing to object to the hypothesis made by many, of a staging skilfully devised by fascist provocateurs, or even by the police, or at least with its cooperation, to discredit leftist subversive forces, of which Feltrinelli was undoubtedly an exponent, and raise resentment against him. That is, we would have nothing to object if this hypothesis were foreshadowed as a hypothesis. Why not? Considering the times in which we are living, we cannot, and therefore we must not, reject it a priori.” (Montanelli 1972a, p. 1)</p>
C.27	<i>Giovedì Nero:</i> Death of Agent Antonio Marino by neo-fascist militants.	14/04/1973	<i>Corriere della Sera</i>	<p>“<b>A painful and disdainful echo</b> in the country after the tragic march of the ‘black squads’. <b>ANDREOTTI TODAY IN MILAN FOR THE FUNERAL OF THE AGENT KILLED IN THE CLASHES WITH MSI MILITANTS. The Prime Minister, Rumor and the Chief of Police will assist the solemn funeral rites - The <i>Presidente della Repubblica</i> identified the spirit of self-sacrifice of the guardians of public order in the figure of Antonio Marino:</b> ‘We entrust these young people with confidence to the defence of freedom against violence and the oppression of small minorities, and against the ambitions of Fascism that should not come back’ - <b>Eleven arrests, sixty-four allegations:</b> the judiciary proceeds for the crime of massacre” (Anon. 1973e, p. 1).</p>
C.28	Contrasts between the judiciary and the police after the death of Agent Marino.	16/04/1973	<i>Corriere della Sera</i>	<p>“The police claim that the sterility of certain investigations is the product of the inexperience of magistrates. Police and Carabinieri cannot proceed to interrogations, according to</p>

				<p>current regulations [...]. The interrogators, moreover, require precise techniques, the knowledge of the precedents, and profound knowledge of petty or political criminality. The magistrate who is entrusted with this task [...] may have been assigned to the task by his legal preparation, certainly not by his knowledge of police procedure; [...]. In Milan [...] <i>sostituti procuratori</i> are usually young, because the most sought-after locations are in the South, from which the vast majority of judges come from, and those just entered in the career are sent to the North. <b>To each his profession; this is the criterion enunciated by the police: to us, the investigation; to the magistrate, the control.</b>" (Anon. 1973i, p. 1)</p>
C.29	Reports of law and order activities after the arson of Primavalle.	18/04/1973	<i>Corriere della Sera</i>	<p>"There is a lead. Police and <i>carabinieri</i> are looking for two people who would be responsible for the double murder of Primavalle. Probably, <b>the order of arrest has been signed by the judge this evening.</b> The research is carried out throughout the national territory because it is believed that the two left Rome to escape arrest." (Ghislanzoni 1973, p. 1)</p>
U.31	Message of solidarity and condemnation of PCI leaders after the bombing of the police headquarters in Milan.	18/05/1973	<i>l'Unità</i>	<p>"The Directorate of the PCI, moved and disdained by the terrorist act in Milan, expresses its deep condolences for the victims and its full solidarity with the families of those affected, and demands the identification and punishment of the perpetrators and the sponsors of this act." (The Directorate of the PCI 1973, p.1)</p>
C.30	Description of the physical consequences	29/05/1974	<i>Corriere della Sera</i>	<p>"Then, the nearest ones began to slowly return to the place of the massacre, towards the</p>

	of the bombing in Brescia.			series of mutilated bodies. At the foot of the fountain, a man and a woman with their heads close to each other; three metres away, another woman's body, torn apart; twenty meters away, a man, horribly crumpled up on himself. All around the groans of severely wounded people who begged for help." (Passanisi 1974, p. 1)
U.32	Bombing in piazza della Loggia, Brescia.	30/05/1974	<i>l'Unità</i>	" <b>A total strike and huge unitary demonstrations</b> have expressed the condemnation of <b>the Italian people</b> for the horrendous massacre of Brescia. <b>POWERFUL ADMONITION - CHANGE THE ROUTE AND CRUSH THE INFAMOUS FASCIST PLOT. Millions of workers in all Italian squares</b> – In Brescia assemblies in factories and a tribute to the victims <b>by all the people</b> – Tomorrow the solemn funerals – The investigation produced 2 arrests up to now – The massacre announced on a letter – Consultations of the Prime Minister" (Anon. 1974e, p. 1).
U.33	Bombing in piazza della Loggia, Brescia. Declaration of PCI leader, Berlinguer.	30/05/1974	<i>l'Unità</i>	"The massacre in Brescia is the last bloody episode of <b>a chain of criminal attacks that lasted since 1969</b> . Gathering the unanimous will of the workers, the people, and anti-fascist forces to crush the subversive plot against the democratic regime, we have expressed to the <i>Presidente del Consiglio</i> the need to move from condemnations and statements of principle against fascism to [...] a systematic and consistent action. We ask the government to provide the public opinion with all the information at its disposal about the events that have occurred in recent years, the size of the seditious organisations, their sponsors and the connivances they

				enjoy.” (Anon. 1974d, p. 1)
C.31	Message of condolence of the <i>Presidente della Repubblica</i> after the bombing of the Italicus Train.	05/08/1974	<i>Corriere della Sera</i>	“The <i>Presidente della Repubblica</i> , Leone, said: ‘Once again, the murderous madness of squalid gregarious violence and intimidation caused many innocent victims and tried to stimulate, with its brutal action, tension and fear in our country. While the responsible institutions continue the struggle against terrorism, I wish to express not only my profound sorrow but also a warning against these insane murders. The democratic state will not collapse under their blows because democracy is stronger than violence.’” (Anon. 1974f, p. 1)
C.32	The secret service and terrorism.	02/11/1974	<i>Corriere della Sera</i>	“Seen from Padua, and seen with the eyes of the citizen who wants to live in a free country, the story that led to the arrest of the former head of SID, General Miceli, is terrifying for its simplicity. In the last two or three years, groups of people have plotted to overthrow democracy in Italy, first through a series of criminal actions, then with a definitive intervention by the Army. These people are civilians and soldiers. They formed a secret association. They set up civilian and military hierarchies parallel to the legitimate ones and ready to replace them. They created subversive groups with men recruited in the extreme right. These groups, in contact with each other and with the top rankings of the conspiracy, had the task of creating disorders, carrying out violence, carrying out attacks to throw the country into chaos.” (Pansa 1974, p. 1)
U.34	The secret service and	02/01/1975	<i>l’Unità</i>	“The investigations conducted in Milan, Padua, and Turin

	terrorism.			have offered evidence that in the dependencies of the SID, introduced by the Chief of General Staff of the time, there was a group of 'informers' also composed by nazi-fascists suspected of complicity for the massacre of Piazza Fontana. Senior and general officers are charged with plotting against the Republic. Other conspirators acted in contact with public employees." (Malagugini 1975, p. 1)
C.33	Kidnappings and political violence.	12/01/1975	<i>Corriere della Sera</i>	" <b>Judges</b> are now dealing mainly with political crimes committed by the so-called ' <i>Movimento di Azione Rivoluzionaria</i> ' (MAR), which was headed by Carlo Fumagalli. It is known that there was no scruple about committing series of crimes to replenish the coffers of the neo-fascist organisation: from theft to robbery, to kidnapping." (Tamagnini 1975, p. 1)
U.35	Kidnappings and political violence.	09/05/1975	<i>l'Unità</i>	"We are at a turning point in the complex investigation that, departing from the ' <i>anonima sequestri</i> ' [a name invented by newspapers to theorise a single mind behind the series of kidnappings], is now focusing mainly on the banks linked to the Sindona group that, probably, served to clean the money of the kidnappings. <b>Judges</b> are also focusing on the links that have already emerged between financial groups linked to the DC, the Mafia and fascist terrorism." (Brutto 1975, p. 1)

## Appendix F - An example of a *telegiornale* report. Arson of Primavalle (Vespa, 1973)

“Under this sheet (Figure A.F.1) there is the body of Virgilio Mattei, 22 years-old, the eldest of the six children of Mario Mattei. His death left him with his arms outstretched. At his feet, not visible from these images, there is the body of his brother Stefano, 8 years-old. **His arms tighten Virgilio’s legs in a desperate and loving gesture that invokes impossible protection from his elder brother. Today his classmates laid flowers on his desk. ‘He’s a cheerful boy’, they said.**



Figure A.F.1: the sheet covering the body of Virgilio Mattei.

**Virgilio and Stefano Mattei are the innocent victims of a ferocious crime, an absurd example of the inhuman level reached by fanaticism and violence.**

Let’s go back at 3.20 AM. A first alarm arrives at the police headquarters: a building is burning in Primavalle. The memory of the tragedy of the building exploded in the Prenestino neighbourhood in December **triggers an exceptional emergency operation** (Figures A.F.2 and A.F.3). Ambulances rush to dozens in the district, but only six of them are used. The tragedy is smaller, but perhaps more shocking than expected.



Figures A.F.2 and A.F.1.3 ambulances and policemen on the crime scene.

[Interview with a neighbour describing the scene of terror and desperation (Figure A.F.4)]



Figure A.F.1.4: interview of a neighbour.

Mario Mattei, secretary of the MSI section of Primavalle, lived in the flat (Figure A.F.5) with his wife and six children: Virgilio 22 years-old, also a leader of the *Movimento Sociale*, Silvia, 19, Lucia, 15, Antonella, 9, Stefano, 8, and Giampaolo, 4.



Figure A.F.1.5 details of the house destroyed by the arson.

The wife, Anna Maria, was able to save herself, Antonella, and the little Giampaolo. Antonello and Miss. Mattei reported burns healable in 10 days. Giampaolo and Lucia had only a strong shock. Here, at the *Gemelli* hospital, Silvia, the eldest daughter, is hospitalised with a prognosis of 60 days. The father convinced her to throw herself out of the window, and the girl got severe fractures. Here at the *Sant'Eugenio* hospital instead, behind an aseptic curtain, there is Mario Mattei. The burns cover a fifth of his body. Some are serious, but doctors say that Mattei should recover soon if there will be no complications (Figure A.F.6).



Figure A.F.1.6: images of hospitals and doctors accompany the report of the injuries of the victims.

Already this morning he could speak two hours with the *Sostituto Procuratore Sica*, **who directs the investigations**. The content of the interview has not been communicated. The latest reconstruction of the event disconfirms the rumour that someone had rung the bell of Mattei's house. The attackers slid 10 litres of petrol under the door of the apartment and set it on fire. The lid of the fuel container was found near the entrance by the police (Figure A.F.7).



Figure A.F.1.7: the lid of the fuel container showed by the police.

Who carried out the attack? The police confirmed that, close to Mattei's apartment, it was found a sign with the words: 'Mattei and Schiavoncino hit by proletarian justice', composed partly with a marker and partly with red and black letters cut from cardboard. Schiavoncino, you can see him on video (Figure A.F.8), is another MSI official of the area. **The judge interrogated him; the police now protects his family.**



Figure A.F.1.8: the MSI official Schiavoncino, escorted by the police.

The investigators have also found that the technique used is the same that was implemented to set the fire, fortunately with little damage, to the home of the *sostituto procuratore* of the Republic, Paolino Dell'Anno. **The investigations move in different directions, but this morning they follow a track with more insistence than others. Investigators hope to trace useful clues from the adhesive cardboard, used by the attackers.**



Figure A.F.1.9: images of police operations comment on the investigation.

Primavalle is a popular area of the Roman suburbs. It is also a 'hot' area where other episodes of political intolerance have occurred. It was known that Mattei feared an attack and had a fire extinguisher at home. However, the fire extinguisher was insufficient to face 10 litres of gasoline on fire."



Figure A.F.1.10: aerial images show details of the poor neighbourhood of Primavalle and conclude the *telegiornale* report.

## Glossary

**Agente (s), agenti (p):** law enforcement agent(s).

**Anni di piombo** (years of lead): a label describing the season of terrorism started in 1969 and lasted until the early 1980s. The phrase derives from Margarethe von Trotta's film *Die Bleierne Zeit* (literally "the leaden time", *Anni di Piombo* in Italian, 1981). This denomination, however, is problematic. As Antonello and O'Leary write, "the transition from the German adjective 'bleierne', intended to connote the 'leaden' weight of history, to the Italian noun '*piombo*', with its clear metaphorical allusion to bullets, implicitly excludes the bombings characteristic of right-wing terrorism" (2009, p. 11 [n. 1]).

**Apparati deviati dello stato** (deviant state apparatuses): in the 1970s, this expression related to those sectors of the state that were considered by the press to sponsor neo-fascist terrorism.

**Autunno caldo** (Hot Autumn): a season of intense industrial conflict that characterised the autumn of 1969. As Lumley registers, the phrase "probably came from references made in the United States to the time of the race riots 'as the long hot summer'" (1990, p. 208). The massacre of Piazza Fontana happened at the peak of the so-called *Autunno Caldo*.

**Battaglia di Valle Giulia:** the so-called *Battaglia di Valle Giulia* (1 March 1968) was one of the first violent confrontations between students and the police in the faculty of Architecture of the Roman university *La Sapienza* (Crainz 2003, p. 261-262).

**Brigate Rosse** (Red Brigades): a Marxist-Leninist political formation devoted to armed struggle. It started to operate in October 1970 (Ginsborg 2003, p. 361) and lasted until 1987, when leaders of the group announced the conclusion of the experience of the *Brigate Rosse*. The group committed several actions including robberies and kidnappings for self-financing, murder, and the so-called *gambizzazione*, the practice of shooting their targets at their knee. The most dramatic action was the kidnapping and subsequent assassination of the president of the *Democrazia Cristiana* (Christian Democracy) party Aldo Moro in 1978.

**Cancelliere:** in the Italian legal system the *cancelliere* performs administrative work in the courts. The primary duty of the *cancelliere* is to help judges in the redaction of the reports of their activities.

**Carabinieri, Arma dei Carabinieri, CC:** Italian military force with police duties.

**Cinegiornale:** newsreel.

**Cinema di consumo impegnato** (cinema of committed entertainment): the term describes films produced at the turn of the 1970s that moved between Hollywood conventions and social critique concerning the exertion of power in Italy. Defined by Uva (2013) as “a form of political cinema that merged popular, politically committed and escapist dramaturgical modes”, cinema *di consumo impegnato* paved the way to the conspiracy mode of the *poliziottesco*. It proved the profitability of narratives centred on institutional misconducts and media manipulation of public opinion. Films *di consumo impegnato* are often defined in contrast with “militant cinema” (De Vincenti 1997, p. 270). Unlike the latter, *consumo impegnato* worked less on the experimentation of the film language and more on “subjects more connected with the average level of the new political awareness of the masses” (p. 270).

**Comitati di salute pubblica** (committees of public health): the citizens committees formed in 1969 to fight the advancement of the Communist Party in northern Italy. They were connected to the fascist Junio Valerio Borghese.

**Commissario (s), commissari (p):** *commissario* literally translates as police commissioner. However, the commissioner of Anglophone tradition performs different duties. While in the United States the police commissioner is the head of the police department, in Italy the *commissario* is a mid-rank official. Usually, in the 1970s, he or she was in charge of a police station or detachment (*commissariato*) of a small or medium town or a limited metropolitan area. Alternatively, the *commissario* had a management role in specific offices or divisions. However, the *commissario* is also and above all a policeman and, consequently, he can be assigned to operational activities and intervention.

**Conflitto di competenza** (conflict of competence): the conflict between different *procure* (the offices of inquiring magistrates) concerning the right to conduct an investigation. In the 1970s, it often happened that different *procure* investigated on the same crime, fragmenting the investigation and impeding a consistent and effective action by the Italian judiciary. This slowed down the investigations significantly. Conflicts of competence emerged when one *procura* claimed the exclusive right to investigate that same crime.

**Consiglio Superiore della Magistratura** (Superior Judicial Council): the organ of self-control of the Italian judiciary, deciding on disciplinary measures, assignments, employment, and transfers of judges. It guarantees the independence of the judiciary from the executive and legislative powers.

**Conspiracy mode of the poliziottesco**: a sub-strand of the *poliziottesco* that connected with the so-called *strategia della tensione*. The “conspiracy mode” (Fisher 2014, p. 173) exploited news media speculations concerning the implication of the state in reactionary manoeuvres, including state-sponsored political violence and attempted coup d’états. *La polizia ringrazia* (Vanzina, 1972) established a formula that was replicated and modified in subsequent movies such as *Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia* (Martino, 1975) and *La polizia accusa: il servizio segreto uccide* (Martino, 1975).

**Cronaca nera**: crime news.

**Democrazia Cristiana, DC** (Cristian Democracy): a political party that led Italian governments from 1948 to 1992, often in coalition with the Socialist Party (PSI) or with other parties of the centre.

**Eccellenza**: as established by the Regio Decreto of 1927, n. 2210 art. 4, the title of *Eccellenza* was accorded to different categories of state servants. Between these, it was accorded the first president or the *procuratore generale* of the court of Cassation, and to the presidents of the court of Appeal. The title was abolished in 1945, even if it continued to be used in relation to the roles listed above.

**Filone**: a “formulaic” expression of Italian film production (Wagstaff, 1992). The label defines a specific strand of Italian genre movies and the subcategories within these strands, which emerged as a result of the commercial exploitation of previously successful models. More specifically, it refers to the Italian genre production between

the 1950s and the 1980s, characterised by low-budget and fast-produced films often featuring violent and erotic themes.

**Fronte Nazionale** (National Front): the movement founded by Junio Valerio Borghese in September 1968. The objective of the group was to stop the advancements of the Communist party in Italy appealing to “old Fascists, especially veterans of the RSI [Repubblica Sociale Italiana], to conservative professionals, businessmen, and industrialists” (Ferraresi 1995, p. 117) tired of the political turmoil in the country. The group’s plan involved disruptive actions that “would create a widespread climate of distrust, alarm and anxiety, paralysing government and exposing the ruling class’ impotence and corruption. Moderate public opinion would raise its voice for law and order to be enforced at all costs” (Ferraresi 1995, p. 118). The primary outcome of the activities of the Front was the attempted coup on December 1970.

**Giangiaco­mo Feltrinelli**: coming from an aristocratic and wealthy family, Feltrinelli was a publisher and leftist militant. His activity as a publisher comprised the publication in Italy of Pasternak’s *Doctor Zivago* (1957), which attracted the criticism of Soviet Union and the PCI, and books on the activities of the Uruguayan Tupamaros, which, as reported by Ginsborg “became a sort of do-it-yourself manual for the early Red Brigades” (2003, p. 362). From 1969, he lived clandestinely, supporting extra-parliamentary groups and participating in different disruptive actions. During one of these actions, on March 1972, a charge of TNT that he placed on an electricity pylon in Segrate (Milan) exploded, causing his death. In the leftist milieu, the death of Feltrinelli was interpreted as a plot, sponsored by the CIA, to eliminate the leftist publisher, who had been supporting several leftist groups in South America (Colarizi 2000, p. 515). Others, as reported by Montanelli (1972a, p. 1), theorised the implication of the Italian police, accused of having staged his death with the support of neo-fascists. On the other hand, before and after his death, Feltrinelli was often accused of being the puppeteer manoeuvring extra-parliamentary groups and leading them into violent paths.

**Giudice**: judge. In the Italian judicial system, the judiciary comprises different roles. The *poliziottesco* presents only a limited number of these roles: *procuratore generale*, *sostituto procuratore*, *giudice istruttore*. The *procuratore generale* (see a more comprehensive definition of *procuratore generale* below in the glossary, p. 362-363) and his deputy, the *sostituto procuratore* (see a more comprehensive definition of *sostituto procuratore* below in the glossary, p. 365), were the civic authorities in charge

of investigations and decided about the start of the prosecution. The *procuratore generale* directed the judicial offices of the *procura* (see a more comprehensive definition of *procura* below in the glossary, p. 362), located at any Italian court (court of first instance, court of appeal, and court of cassation). The *giudice istruttore* was the judge that, under the supervision of the *procuratore generale* or the *sostituto procuratore*, collaborated with the police for the collection of evidence (see the next entry for a more comprehensive definition of *giudice istruttore*).

**Giudice istruttore** (judge of inquiry): the judge that, under the supervision of the *procuratore generale* or the *sostituto procuratore*, collaborated with the police for the collection of evidence. The *giudice istruttore* participated in the investigation and was in charge of redacting a report of the evidence against the suspects (*fascicolo dell'istruttoria*), which was kept secret from the defence. This report of the investigation had to be evaluated positively by other judicial bodies to proceed with the prosecution in court. This judicial figure was abolished in 1988.

**Giuseppe Pinelli**: a rail worker and anarchist. He died at 41 years old falling from the window of the office of *Commissario* Luigi Calabresi in the night between December 15 and 16 of 1969. He had been arrested on December 12 in relation to the massacre of Piazza Fontana and illegally held in the Milanese police headquarters beyond the limit set by law. Immediately after his death, *Questore* Guida declared to the press that the anarchist had committed suicide when Pinelli's alibi for the massacre had collapsed. Pinelli's wife refused to accept the official version and sued the *questore*. Several investigations were conducted to ascertain the responsibility for Pinelli's death, but an agreement on the facts was never reached. As documented by Foot, the last verdict, reached in 1975, established that "Pinelli had not committed suicide, but he had not been killed. He had experienced a 'sudden illness', partly due to police mistreatments, and had 'fallen' from the window" (2009, p. 407). Pinelli's death was used by the leftist milieu as a symbol of state repression, accusing Calabresi of murder. The last verdict did not satisfy the groups fighting for the truth concerning Pinelli, and the case continued to divide Italian public opinion in the years that followed.

**Golpe**: coup d'état.

**Junio Valerio Borghese**: a Roman aristocrat and submarine commander during the World War II. He led the infamous division X MAS for the Fascist Repubblica Sociale

Italiana (1943-1945). After the war, he was incarcerated and sentenced to life imprisonment for war crimes. However, “through a scandalous application of extenuating circumstances, pardons, and remissions, reduced the sentence to seven years” (Ferraresi 1995, p. 20). Considering pretrial incarceration, he was free in 1949. After the attempted coup of December 1970, Borghese escaped in Spain, where he died in 1976.

**Italicus:** the name of the train departed from Rome and directed to Munich in which a bomb exploded on August 4, 1974. The bomb exploded at the end of a tunnel in San Benedetto Val di Sambro, near Bologna, causing 12 dead and 48 wounded. The investigations were immediately directed at the neo-fascist organisation *Ordine Nero*. Starting from the attack at the Italicus train, even conservative constituencies started to demand a more rigorous intervention of the authorities to isolate the sectors of the state that were considered to favour neo-fascist terrorists (Crainz 2003, p. 483). However, leaders of the group were acquitted later on for insufficient evidence (Ferraresi 1995, p. 144). Neither the executors nor the instigators have been identified.

**Lotta Continua** (Unceasing struggle): an extra-parliamentary leftist group born in 1969. The group published a weekly magazine with the same name, which became a daily newspaper from 1972, characterised by “demagogic headlines and provocative picture stories” (Tarrow 1989, p. 271). Adriano Sofri initially led the group, who identified in conflict the means to develop workers’ revolutionary class-consciousness. Therefore, as Tarrow writes, “it was only by intensifying and diffusing the proletariat’s capacity for conflict that the process Sofri envisaged would be completed. [...] From the autumn of 1969 on, Lotta Continua undertook a series of mobilization campaigns, each constructed around a single theme, social actor and policy issue” (1989, p. 275-277), aiming at creating the impression of an endless mobilisation. One of these campaigns targeted *Commissario* Luigi Calabresi, accused of the killing of the Anarchist Pinelli. In 1997, Sofri and other leaders of the organisation were sentenced to 22 years of prison in relation to the murder of Calabresi.

**Maggioranza Silenziosa** (silent majority): a movement developed in major Italian cities, mostly formed by bourgeois irritated by the increasing rate of violent political demonstrations. These self-proclaimed “men of order” started to organise rallies to protest against this troublesome situation, asking a stronger action by state authorities. As reported by Colarizi, “[t]he rallies of the ‘*maggioranza silenziosa*’ predominantly

had symbolic value and appeared to be spontaneous to the point that, once young militants of the extreme right attempted to exploit it, the movement started to crumble” (2007, Chapter 3).

**Magistratura:** Judiciary.

**MAR** (*Movimento di Azione Rivoluzionaria*, Movement of Revolutionary Action): a neo-fascist organisation mostly active in Lombardy. The leader was a former partisan, Carlo Fumagalli, and the group “[in] 1970, and then again in 1972, [...] carried out a number of attacks against power pylons” (Ferraresi 1995, p. 129). The arrest of Fumagalli led to the discovery of “a vast arsenal of weapons, ammunition, and explosives, including a bazooka, military uniforms, forged documents, even two sound-proof cells in which possible kidnapping victims could have been imprisoned” (Ferraresi 1995, p. 128-129).

**MSI** (*Movimento Sociale Italiano*): a neo-fascist party present in parliament from 1948 to 1994. In the 1970s, it was led by Giorgio Almirante, former minister of the fascist Repubblica Sociale Italiana (1943-1945). MSI included in its ranks Pino Rauti, suspected and arrested in the 1970s for the massacre of Piazza Fontana, and later acquitted.

**NAP** (Armed Proletarian Nucleus): a leftist armed group operating in Italy between 1974 and 1977. The group was primarily focused on issues related to the prison system. One of the most significant outcomes of its activities was the kidnapping of Judge Di Gennaro, who was part of the management of the Italian prison system controlled by the Ministry of Justice.

**Opposti estremismi** (opposite extremes): it was a theory developed by the Christian Democracy party (DC) in the late 1960s. It theorised the existence of opposing extremes, the extreme left and right, framed as a menace to democracy that only the DC, placed in the centre of the political spectrum, was able to stop or contain (Satta 2016, Chapter 4).

**PCI** (*Partito Comunista Italiano*): Italian Communist Party.

**Pian di Rascino:** the location of the neo-fascist paramilitary camp near Rome where *carabinieri* killed Giancarlo Esposti, a member of the neo-fascist organisation *Avanguardia Nazionale*, on May 30, 1974.

**Piazza Fontana:** the massacre in the Bank of Agriculture in the Milanese *piazza* Fontana on December 12, 1969. It caused 17 dead and 87 wounded. The same day an unexploded bomb was found in Milan in the Italian Commercial Bank, and another exploded in Rome at the *Altare della Patria* in Piazza Venezia. Initially, the investigations were directed against the anarchist group *22 Marzo* arresting Pietro Valpreda and other members of the group. In 1972, newspapers revealed the existence of an investigation against the neo-fascists Franco Freda and Giovanni Ventura. The Court of Cassation pronounced the last verdict in 2005, which recognised in Freda and Ventura the organisers of the attack. However, the two had been acquitted in a previous trial, concluded in 1987 and could not be legally prosecuted (Satta 2016, Chapter 7).

**Pista nera:** the phrase identifies the investigation against neo-fascists for the bombing of Piazza Fontana. On March 2, 1972, Judges Stiz ordered the arrest of Pino Rauti (MSI), and Franco Freda and Giovanni Ventura, members of the neo-fascist organisation *Ordine Nuovo*, for the massacre.

**Polizia, PS:** police.

**Poliziottesco (s), poliziotteschi (p):** Italian Crime films mostly produced in the 1970s. Usually, they focus on the action of a violent *commissario* struggling to find connections between the increasingly violent criminality and political and economic elites.

**Poliziotto (s), poliziotti (p):** policeman, policemen.

**Presidente del Consiglio:** the President of the Council of Ministers of the Italian Republic, appointed by the *Presidente della Repubblica*, is the head of government, directing and coordinating the activities of the ministers.

**Presidente della Repubblica:** the head of the Italian state. The president is elected by the Parliament every seven years. He or she is the guarantor of the Italian constitution. The president's duties, between many, comprise presiding over the *Consiglio Superiore della Magistratura* (Superior Judicial Council), naming the prime minister, presiding

over the *Consiglio Supremo di Difesa* (Supreme Defence Council), and commanding the armed forces.

**Procura (s), procure (p):** in the *procura* there are the offices of the *procuratore generale* and *sostituti procuratori* and is located at any Italian court (court of first instance, court of appeal, and court of cassation). As a judicial body, it starts the prosecution and collaborates with the office of the *giudice istruttore* (investigating magistrate) during the investigation. After the indictment, the *procura* supports the prosecution in court.

**Procuratore Generale della Repubblica:** in the 1970s, the *procuratore generale* (PG) directed the *procura* with the help of his or her deputies, the *sostituti procuratori*, and supported the prosecution in court. He was conventionally referred to with the title of *eccellenza*. The PG decided the start of an investigation. Subsequently, the office of the *giudice istruttore* (investigating magistrate) collaborated with the police for the collection of evidence. Despite the role of the *giudice istruttore*, the *procuratore generale* and *sostituti procuratori* were the judges in charge of the investigation. In the framework of the *poliziottesco* it needs to be observed that the figure of the *giudice istruttore* remains in the shadow despite the fact of being the closest collaborator of the police. Newspaper analysis, however, evidenced the prominence of *sostituti procuratori* and *procuratori generali* in the news concerning investigations. This can be linked to the fact that these civic authorities were in charge of the investigation and decided about the start of the prosecution. The *procura* opened the investigation and newspapers reported the decision of *procuratori generali*. An example is the decision by *Procuratore Generale* Spagnuolo to indict Almirante, the leader of the neo-fascist party MSI, for the reorganisation of the Fascist party. The headline of *l'Unità* commenting on the news stated: “Indicted the leader of the MSI. **The initiative of the *procura generale*** of Rome after two hours of interrogation - [...] – It continues the investigation **of** Bianchi d’Espinosa [the *procuratore generale* of Milan died in 1972]” (Anon. 1974a, p. 1; emphasis is mine). Vespa’s (1973) reportage on the arson of Primavalle is another example (Appendix F), stating that the *sostituto procuratore* is directing the investigation. As such, *procuratori generali* and *sostituti procuratori* can be considered to be more recognisable by Italian audiences.

**Provocazione (provocation), provocatore (provocateur):** a label used to define right-wing infiltrators (provocateurs) in leftist demonstrations and groups, causing and

arousing violent forms of protest in the crowd. Moreover, the label was used more generally to define the action of self-proclaimed leftist militants whose actions were considered to favour the right.

**Questore:** the *questore* is a law enforcement authority responsible for coordinating police work at a provincial level. He is the head of the *questura*.

**Questura:** a *questura* is a police institution that responds to the Ministry of the Interior. The offices of the *questura* are responsible for coordinating police work at a provincial level.

**Moti di Reggio** (riots of Reggio Calabria): the struggle in the city of Reggio Calabria for the attribution of the status of capital of the southern region of Calabria. In 1970, the Italian parliament ratified the disposition of the Constitution, approved in 1948, that established the subdivision of Italy into different local authorities called Regions. The parliament had chosen Catanzaro as the capital of Calabria, provoking the protest of the citizens of Reggio. The protest started on July 1970 and escalated quickly. Elements of the extreme right took control of the protest, which lasted until February 1971 with the intervention of the army. The riots were characterised by violent confrontations between the police and protesters. By September 1970, the Ministry of Interior declared that, since July 1970, there had been 13 bombings, 33 roadblocks with barricades, 14 rail blocks, and ten attacks to state offices. The Ministry reported also 231 wounded and 282 people arrested.

**Rogo di Primavalle:** the attack at the house of the secretary of a local section of the MSI in the Roman neighbourhood of Primavalle, Mario Mattei. During the night of the 16<sup>th</sup> of April 1973, Mattei's house was set on fire causing the death of two of his sons, Virgilio (22 years-old) and Stefano (8 years-old). Three members of the leftist organisation *Potere Operaio*, Achille Lollo, Marino Clavo, and Manlio Grillo have been sentenced to 18 years of prison in 1987.

**Rosa dei Venti** (The Weathervane): a right-wing organisation aiming at conquering the power in Italy through a military coup d'état. Italian newspapers revealed its existence in November 1973, reporting the investigation of Judge Tamburino to stop the activities of the group. As reported by Ginsborg, the *Rosa dei Venti* "was coordinating acts of terrorism as a prelude to a right-wing coup. [It] had members both in the Italian secret service and the armed forces, and appeared to be linked to a supra-national secret-

service organization established by NATO” (2003, p. 349). The investigation led to the arrest of the former chief of the SID, General Miceli, in November 1974. Nonetheless, the investigation was transferred to Rome and shortly dismissed, with the release of Miceli after a few weeks.

**SAM** (*Squadre di Azione Mussolini*, Mussolini’s Action Squads): a neo-fascist organisation that claimed several attacks in Italy during the early 1970s, including the bombing of the house of the *procuratore generale* of Milan, Luigi Bianchi d’Espinosa.

**Scippo**: a criminal practice consisting in robbing the purse of a woman by running or from a motorbike.

**SIFAR/SID**: Italian Secret Service; SIFAR (Service of Information of the Military Force) was active from 1949 to 1966, substituted by SID (Service of Information of the Defence), which lasted until 1977.

**Sostituto procuratore (s), sostituti procuratori (p)**: *sostituti procuratori*, directed by the *procuratore generale*, were in charge of investigations opened by the *procura*. They collaborated with the *giudice istruttore*, who aided the police in the collection of evidence, and they supported the prosecution in court.

**Squadre Speciali** (special squads): in 1974, the government created special squads to fight terrorism. These squads were the *Ispettorato Antiterrorismo* (Antiterrorism Inspectorate), responding to the police, and the *Nucleo Speciale Antiterrorismo* (Antiterrorism bureau), responding to *carabinieri*. Newspapers covered the actions of these anti-terrorism special squads extensively, also due to the success to these division in arresting important members of left- and right- wing organisations devoted to the armed struggle. These squads can be considered to have had an impact on the development of the narrative device of the special squad in the *poliziottesco*, originating in 1974 with Massi’s *Squadra volante*.

**Strage di Piazza della Loggia (Brescia)**: the bombing at a union demonstration in Brescia on May 28, 1974. As Ferraresi reports, “the bomb, placed in a garbage can, blew up at the height of the rally, killing four and injuring almost a hundred” (1995, p. 133). In 2017, the court of Cassation confirmed the 2015 verdict against Carlo Maria Maggi and Maurizio Tramonte, former members of the right-wing organisation *Ordine Nuovo*, for the bombing in Brescia (Del Frate, 2017).

**Strage di stato** (state massacre): a conspiracy theory that developed in the early 1970s mostly in the leftist milieu, which accused the state of sponsoring right-wing terrorism, considered responsible for the massacres of the decade. The phrase started to be used in relation to the massacre of Piazza Fontana, and it was used as the title of the counter-investigation on the massacre published by Samonà and Savelli in 1970 (Anon., 1970a).

**Stragismo** (*Massacrism*): an Italian noun that indicates the strategy of indiscriminate and unclaimed massacres started with Piazza Fontana in 1969. As reported by Cento Bull, “[o]n the basis of judicial evidence, it emerged that *stragismo*, at least until 1974, was part of a deliberate strategy to place the blame upon leftist groups, whereas extreme-right groups were in fact responsible for the massacres” (2012, p. 7).

**Strategia della tensione** (strategy of tension): a conspiracy theory developed from the massacre of Piazza Fontana. It theorised the sponsoring of terrorism from part of deviated apparatuses of the Italian State. As Cento Bull writes, the *strategia della tensione* “aimed at creating an atmosphere of terror in the country so as to promote a turn to an authoritarian type of government” (2012, p. 7).

**Telegiornale**: Television news.

**Trame nere** (black plots): the phrase was commonly used by Italian newspapers to identify reactionary manoeuvres in Italy in the first half of the 1970s. The label was mostly used from 1974 after the discovery of the *Rosa dei Venti* organisation. It mostly relates to activities of right-wing groups implicated in the massacres, acts of political violence throughout the country, and attempted coup d'états. Concerning the coups, the minister of Defence, Giulio Andreotti, submitted to the judiciary a dossier prepared by the secret service on September 1974. The document evidenced four attempted coups in previous years, starting from Borghese's and concluding with the last attempt on August 1974 (Crainz 2003, p. 483-484).

**X MAS**: the 10<sup>th</sup> division of the navy unit MAS (Motoscafi Anti Sommergibili, Antisubmarine PTBs) operating during the Second World War. As reported by Ferraresi, “Borghese gave the same name to the land-based band he led in the civil war after 1943” (1995, p. 208 [n. 13]). The unit became known for its “savage antipartisan tactics” (Ferraresi 1995, p. 20) in the fascist-led Repubblica Sociale Italiana (1943-1945).