

CRIMINAL ANTHROPOLOGY: AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL ESSAY ON REPRESENTATIONS, NAMING AND CONTEXT

Hatem BENZAOUZ

Lecturer Ph.D.

Department of Sociology,
Larbi Tebessi University, Tebessa (Algeria)

hatem.benzouz@univ-tebessa.dz

Abstract: *This article presents a variety of literature related to the vast field of criminology and more particularly to its epistemology. The content is focused on the emergence of this discipline, while tracing the path to its scientific aspect. This work, based on the history of criminology, aims to synthesise the scientific debates between criminologists from different schools. The latter raises two main points: the chronological order of the names proposed by "criminology", in particular the preliminary idea relating to "criminal anthropology", and the scientific trend, which underlines the origin of criminology, which has become a scientific discipline to date.*

Key words: *criminology; epistemology; anthropology; criminal anthropology.*

Introduction

Beyond the epistemological debate on the nature of the crime phenomenon, is it a normal or pathological social phenomenon? (Durkheim, 1970). Crime has always been a privileged object in the construction of knowledge in the social sciences and humanities, to the point that several academic disciplines, fields of research, corpus of knowledge and specialists of all kinds have marked its link with criminological scientific knowledge.

The designations and expressions that have been adopted to give rise to the expression "criminology" by authors, scientific, academic and State institutions are diversified. These proposed designations relate to criminal sciences, criminal sociology, criminal psychiatry, criminal anthropology etc.

In the context of criminal anthropology, several authors adopted this name in the second half of the 19th century. This reality appears clearly in the review of the "review of criminological literature". In books and studies, there are amalgams, "conceptual and contextual», which have adopted the notion of criminal anthropology. The latter, in turn, remains marked by great ambiguity.

The first criminologist to raise the issue of this amalgam was Alvaro Pires¹. Its epistemological exhibition on the history of criminology shed new light on this scientific field.

1. Various representations of criminology

This section presents the history of criminology, as well as its different representations. Indeed, since the birth of the Italian positive school (Lombroso, Ferri and Garofalo) at the end of the 19th century, at least three major representations² of criminology have been conveyed by different authors in this field.

1.1. First representation

This representation, probably the oldest, is the one that considers criminology as a branch of another science. The choice of "mother science" then depends on the theoretical preferences of each particular author.

In addition, this representation was conveyed, among other things, by at least two of the main representations of the Italian positive school (it should be mentioned that the Italian school at the time was indeed dominated by scientific debates) (Renneville, 1994 : 186).

For example, Lombroso once considered criminology as a subdivision of biology. On the other hand, Ferri saw it as a branch of sociology. It is for this reason that he entitled his book " The Criminal Sociology " (Pires, 1995 : 14). This representation is being more and more rejected today.

1.2. Second representation

This is an autonomous science of an interdisciplinary nature, in the same way as other human and social sciences. This autonomy was supported in two relatively different ways. Some authors have tried to demonstrate that criminology is like other human sciences (theories, concepts and methods are part of a field of their own). According to this view, criminology would not be confused, but would maintain close links with criminal law (Szabo,1967 : 41) and with three main sciences: biology, psychology and sociology. But the number of these supporting sciences changes according to the authors (Pires,1995 :13-14).

¹ Canadian criminologist, sociologist, epistemologist, lawyer and professor at the University of Ottawa in Canada. he is interested in the sociology of law and social control as well as in the methodology of research.

² The first three representations of criminology were previously indicated by Ellemberger (1965). He reports a fourth representations that was deemed less important by Alvaro Pires, who presented another recent representation of criminology, which became more important after the 1970s.

Other authors have argued that the scientific autonomy of criminology can be based on a kind of synthesis and integration of knowledge produced by basic disciplines such as biology (Llorca, 2005), psychology and sociology, that criminology has the task of synthesising rather than doing research (Pires, 1995: 15) In this context, the authors often use expressions such as "science-crossroads", "science-synthesis".

1.3. Third representation

This representation considers criminology as a "field of study" (field of criminology), or a "body of knowledge", composed of scattered knowledge, and yet dealing with a common theme.

1.4. Fourth representation

Alvaro Pires proposed a new representation. The author stated: "We will not strictly speaking retain any of these positions, but rather propose a new representation that integrates and goes beyond the last two...".

The author considers that criminology is not quite an autonomous science, but that it is not exclusively a field of study either. Indeed, it attributes to criminology a dual status: it is both and paradoxically a field of study and a complex activity of interdisciplinary knowledge, both scientific and ethical (Pires, 1995 : 16) by nature. The Table n°1 briefly summarises this dual image or status of criminology:

Table 1. Double status of criminology: field / knowledge activity

CRIMINOLOGY STATUS	DEFINITION	CRITTERS	ESTABLISHMENT DATE (OR LIMITS)
Study field	Various knowledge of deviance and social reaction.	Any contribution that is related or relevant to the theme of the field. E.g.: texts by classical lawyers and reformers, 19th century psychiatrists, statisticians such as Quételet, sociologists such as Durkheim etc..	In some respects undetermined and "negotiable"? unavoidable: from the 17th century onwards with classical thinking.
Knowledge activity	Idea for a special project of interdisciplinary knowledge (scientific and ethical) on the criminal issue (including the creation of a teaching discipline).	Only contributions that identify themselves or appear to be related to the major characteristics of the criminological knowledge activity.	In principle determined or determinable. With the Italian Positive School in the last quarter century.

Source: Pires , 1995, p 31.

2. Naming chronology

It is important to note that the term "criminology" has had a historical chronology of names. The latter were proposed by Bierne (1993) and Calerence (1959) and adopted for a relatively long period of time (more than a century), until the term (criminology) was finally adopted. The main names have been published in the following order: "criminal anthropology", "criminal sociology", "criminology" and "criminal biology", as well as the terms "criminal science" and "criminal policy" (Pires : Op.cit : 43)

3. Why a criminal anthropology?

With respect to this name, Alvaro Pires said: *"We found no reference, not even hypothetical, to a first use of this expression. This is the name that was first used in Western Europe from 1880 onwards to designate what is now known as criminology. While the term (criminal anthropology) was also used in the title of an article and some reports, it was less a general manual on criminology than the treatment of a particular issue."*

For example in the works of: D. Dortel, É. Laurent, C. Lombroso, this name, which also referred to the Italian positive school, is parallel to the "criminal anthropology" (Pires, 1995 : 46-47).

However, the tendency of this school was somehow linked to the thesis of heredity and biology (Gassin, Cimamonti and Bonfils, 2011 : 181). That is why Alvaro Pires considered that there was a change in "concept and meaning" regarding the term "criminal anthropology" at that time.

Ellemerger (1965) noted that "Lombroso occasionally referred to criminology as "criminal anthropology" (Baral, 2017). This one would be a branch of anthropology. However, it is not quite clear if the author defines the full meaning of the term.

At the time, beyond a series of shifts in meaning, anthropology was defined as the discipline that studied the human being physically or as an animal species (Pires, 1995: 14). This probably explains Ellemerger's approximation of biology.

Conclusion

For more than a century, criminology, as scientific knowledge related to criminal phenomena, has undergone several stages in its name. But it is important to stress that the adoption of these designations has been linked to the cultural and institutional tradition of each country, and to the intellectual journey of each author.

Most of these authors and criminologists agree that scientific criminology was born of a "criminal anthropology", which developed towards the end of the 19th century in Western Europe. However, the term "criminal anthropology" adopted by

these authors, as well as the context of these studies, seem to have slipped (a shift in the meaning of the word anthropology). A shift that will later be criticized by contemporary criminologists.

It should be noted that the context of these studies is not specifically anthropological, but rather that there is a strong presence relating to the penal question, as well as sociology, forensic medicine³, biology, the borrowing of psychiatry and psychology, which correspond to a fairly constant relationship with deviance. In other words, criminal anthropology is gradually developing around these scientific disciplines, which play an important role.

References:

1. Baral, Simone. 2017. *De la phrénologie à l'anthropologie criminelle* in Colloque International intitulé: *César Lombroso et la culture française, Débats, conflits et collaboration*, Turin, 4-6 décembre.
2. Beirne, Piers. 1993. *The invention of the term criminology. Inventing criminology: Essays on the rise of 'homo criminalis'* Albany. NY: State University of New York Press.
3. Calerence, Ray Jeffery. 1959. *The historical development of criminology in Journal of criminal law and criminology*, vol 50.
4. Dortel, Émile. 1891. *l'anthropologie criminelle et la responsabilité médico-légale* in *Archives de l'anthropologie criminelle et des sciences pénales*, Tome sixième, Lyon.
5. Durkheim, Émile. 1970. *Le crime, phénomène normal* in Szabó, D. *Déviance et criminalité*. Paris: Librairie Armand Colin.
6. Laurent, Émile. 1891. *l'anthropologie criminelle et les nouvelles théories du crime*. Paris.
7. Gassin, Raymond; Cimamonti, Sylvie; Bonfils, Philippe. 2011. *Précis de criminologie*, 7^{ème} édition. Paris: Edition Dalloz.
8. Llorca, Aurore. 2005. *La criminologie, héritière paradoxale de l'école d'anthropologie criminelle* in *Revue Raison Politique*, N° 17.
9. Lombroso, Cesare. 1890. *l'anthropologie criminelle ses récents progrès*. Paris: Félix Alcan.
10. Pires, Alvaro. 1995. *La criminologie d'hier et d'aujourd'hui* in *Christian Debrey et auteurs. Histoire des savoirs sur le crime et la peine, des savoirs diffus à la notion de criminel-né*, les presses de l'université de Montréal, les presses de l'université d'Ottawa et de Boeck université. Canada: *collection perspective criminologiques*, Tome 1, chapitre 1.

³ It is important to emphasize that the Medico-legal discourse on madness is much longer than the criminal anthropology, it already formalized in the work of Paolo Zacchia (1584-1659).

11. Renneville, Marc. 1994. *L'anthropologie de criminel en France* in *Revue de criminologie*, vol 27, N°02.
12. Szabo, Denis. 1967. *Criminologie, la presse de l'université de Montréal*. Canada.
13. Topinard, Paul. 1887. *L'anthropologie criminelle* in *Revue d'anthropologie*. Paris.