

punto org
General Editor Luigi Maria Sicca

32

GIUSEPPE BALIRANO

GARDAÍ & BADFELLAS:
THE DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION
OF ORGANISED CRIME
IN THE IRISH MEDIA

Editoriale Scientifica
Napoli

All rights reserved

© Copyright 2017 by Editoriale Scientifica s.r.l.
Via San Biagio dei Librai, 39 - 80138 Napoli
www.editorialescientifica.com info@editorialescientifica.com

ISBN 978-88-9391-164-1

Contents

ix	Acknowledgments
xI	Editorial Foreword <i>Luigi Maria Sicca</i>
1	0. INTRODUCTION
1	0.1 What this Book is about
5	0.2 A Problem of Linguistic Definition
8	0.3 'Organised Crime Syndicates': Definitions and Theories
19	1. UNDERSTANDING ORGANISED CRIME IN IRELAND
19	1.1 The Irish Perspective
27	1.2 Paramilitary Gangs and Terrorism
40	1.3 Organised Crime in Irish Law
48	1.4 Irish 'Folk Devils': a Textbook of Moral Panic
55	2. IRISH MEDIA DISCOURSE: IN SEARCH OF A HYBRID METHODOLOGY
58	2.1 Irish News Discourse
62	2.2 Qualitative or Quantitative Approaches to Media Discourse? A Modest Proposal
69	2.2.1 <i>The Representation of Social Actors</i>
74	2.2.2 <i>The Discourse-Historical Approach</i>
76	2.2.3 <i>Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis</i>
83	3. THE ATYPICAL MOBCORPUS
83	3.1 Corpus Design and Data Collection

88	3.2 MOB1: <i>The Irish Times</i> and the <i>Irish Independent</i>
94	3.3 MOB2: A Multimodal Sub-corpus
101	4. INVESTIGATING MOB1
101	4.1 Qualitative Data Exploration
111	4.2 A Corpus-based Analysis of MOB1
113	4.2.1 Gardaí as Social Actors
118	4.2.2 Badfellas as Social Actors
127	4.2.3 Victims as Social Actors
134	4.3 A Hybrid Approach to Irish Organised Crime
143	5. THE MULTIMODAL CONSTRUCTION OF ORGANISED CRIME ACTORS
143	5.1 Resemiotising Organised Crime
148	5.2 A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of MOB2
150	5.2.1 Focus on Criminal Identities
157	5.3 The Badfellas' Gaze
161	Conclusions
173	Appendix
177	References
197	Index
199	punto org book series

Editorial Foreword

*Luigi Maria Sicca**

The examination of the sources of knowledge, an essential issue at the core of the so-called humanities and social sciences, has also been a key line of enquiry that puntOorg research network has tenaciously investigated on. However, whether they are actual ‘sciences’ or rather ‘knowledge’ is still an open and wide epistemological question!

As we have often suggested throughout our various research studies, the humanities (i.e. anthropology, archaeology, literature, philosophy, history, religion, law, languages, linguistics, philology, semiotics, visual and performing arts, etc.) represent a powerful basin to draw water from with the aim of producing knowledge and perhaps, sometimes, even science. The image of the humanities as water-bearers becomes a central theme when engaging with the enduring innovation (of thought and practice). Indeed, the humanities have robust and ancient roots. Research is like a plant to nurture and cultivate. And just like every other plant, humanities will have a long life only if they are well rooted and wisely cultivated.

* * *

* Full Professor of Organization and HR Management at the University of Naples Federico II.

puntOorg is largely positioned within such a multifarious international epistemological debate concerning the sources, questioning the partition of cognitive work among the various forms of knowledge (e.g. economics, management, philosophy, literature, music, hard sciences, linguistics, etc.), both within and outside the Academia (through basic research). Particularly, we look at organizations (institutions, companies, social groups, etc.) that are, by definition, those 'places' which spontaneously produce forms of knowledge regardless of their theoretical stance.

We address this question head-on, not without doubts, and always well aware of the difficulties resulting from equally juxtaposing diverse disciplines, each one underlying its own history of meanings through its own idiosyncrasies, its specific ways of working on hypotheses, theses, demonstrations, narratives. We tend to question them and put them in crisis by enabling and rehabilitating them. Idiosyncrasies, however, are rich in wealth and opportunities (which are heterogeneously inflected by economists through the construct of 'resources' and 'value') to go deep, vertically, into the realm of understanding things.

The significance of this approach stems from the need to give voice to the hybridization between different areas of knowledge. Therefore, the point of departure to promote an interdisciplinary confrontation is on making consistency of the *intra*. The need for such a move from *intra* to *inter* arises from a real occurrence: the contemporary crisis of the system. The crisis that the entire industrialized West (and Europe, in particular) has been experiencing over the last years (the same ones characterizing the present research) requires attention. It needs to be investigated and understood by going to the very roots of the situation we are living now; by distinguishing between deep causes and epiphenomena that should be read, also, in their symptomatic dimension. Today's crisis is often dealt with as a financial crisis because it is read through the lens of the economy (and the neoclassical economic tradition) which is considered the backbone of all (as

previously said, so-called) 'Social Sciences'. Yet, perhaps, the only tools of economy, as conceived and dealt with by the mainstream economic thought, may not be able to explain everything.

* * *

Today, in 2017 – almost the 10th year of the Lehman Brothers' crisis – we publish the research of Giuseppe Balirano. Over the last ten years, we have witnessed a gradual depletion of that Middle-class which had marked the rise of modern Europe. A class which unconsciously consumed more than it could produce, partnered up with a far higher *pro-capita* income than in previous dramatic (but much shorter) critical periods, starting with 1929 (and, I am afraid, a novel *New Deal* is not visible on the horizon). A productive Middle-class unaware of its unproductiveness and, perhaps even more seriously, the unconscious protagonist of a crisis of thought, of theoretical structures, of innovative ideas based on ancient roots. This is why we need to 'work on' it. And this is one of the commitments of the puntOorg network. That is where the role of the above-mentioned humanities steps in.

The different areas of the humanities, including their several internal peculiarities, have in common at least two, however correlated, main features:

1) a strong anchoring to the *archetype*, which in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2005) is defined as "the original pattern or model from which all things of the same kind are copied or on which they are based; a model or first form or prototype";

2) they resist in time (sometimes in the millennia, albeit their internal evolutions) despite the evolution of worldly things and in spite of the paradigm shift – *à la* Khun – stating that science cyclically crosses some indicative phases of its operation.

In short, the humanities maintain their own language structures, in spite of the natural 'internal' evolution of each domain

of knowledge. This is so, for example, for Philosophy, as well as for Music, which in their millennial evolution have been able to keep their grammatical and syntactic structures firm, ultimately demonstrating that they resist the evidence of obsolescence inflicted by time wear.

* * *

puntOorg intends to bring in also the contribution that can stem from linguistic research, a relatively recent field of the humanities, which can have a strong influence on the development of organizational knowledge.

Linguistics was firmly established in the Eighteenth century, entrusting the concretion of its hypotheses to the Enlightenment-linked rationalism. The discipline largely developed in modern age, also in academic environments, particularly through the systematic study of the human language(s) that found a theoretical basis for understanding the dynamics of organizational action in historicism. Linguistics expanded to the point of aiming at accessing the 'truth'. This is what happened with the investigation of phonetic laws, the indicator of linguistic change, and later de Saussure's structuralism (through the logic of contrasts such as diachronicity in time, and synchronicity in space), followed by Leonard Bloomfield's taxonomy of meaning, and Noam Chomsky's transformational-generative grammar. All theories that recognize a plurality of linguistic analysis levels; the adoption of distinctive features; the use of formalized procedures and of logical and mathematical tools engrained in every language. Later on, thanks to the seminal studies of M.A.K. Halliday, who considered language as a social semiotics, we have assisted the transition from the analysis of the structures of the language to the critical analysis of discourse.

Giuseppe Balirano's scientific research falls within the scopes of this discipline. It demonstrates how the hypothesis that hu-

manities can be a powerful source of knowledge is, for us at puntOorg, a point that goes far beyond the mere *petitio principii*. It is, instead, militancy, empirically corroborated or even just supported field-work research. Balirano's work is, in fact, a work of intra-disciplinary research entrusted to those who can handle the codes of their own discipline. A dive into a 'story of meanings' in line with the work carried out in recent years even in fields that are completely different from language studies, such as when we did research with musicians and philosophers. However, keeping with the same methodological attitude: textuality is a sparring partner in the search for a balance between 'division of labor' and 'coordination', between reading and interpretation, between thought and action; between fidelity and betrayal, and thus between adherence to established structures and innovations deriving from the "odd"¹, a distinctive trait of all contemporaneity.

These are today's key terms in public institutions and private companies, yet epigones of ways of thinking and forms of organization of our society, which only recently (a few hundred years ago, at the dawn of industrial capitalism) have been considered as 'proper' or 'typical' themes, or texts, of organizational concern. In short, we must work on it, trying to understand 'what's behind' what we say, think and act. For this reason, the work on the media discourses of the Irish organized crime by Giuseppe Balirano has much to say about the understanding of the dynamics interacting with the construction of individual and organizational identities, through media representations both in journalism and the visual media.

¹ "And for this you prefer the odd" is the second line of *Ars Poetica* (inspired by the *Poetry* of Horace) by Paul Verlaine, in his manifesto of Symbolism, derived from a mistrust in the ability to always rationally describe life and the man. It is the invocation launched by puntOorg, seeking in the 'dissonance' the sources of innovation (Sicca, 2012).

* * *

The discursive construction of organized crime by the Irish media is at the heart of a timely *disputa questio*, increasingly appropriate and globalised, which brings to the fore a definitional dilemma: what is meant by organized crime and how this phenomenon refers to other forms of crime? And yet, using phenomena which (whether mistakenly or rightly) we consider 'liminal', how can we shed light on the dynamics of the action that crosses (in both theory and practice) all organizations? Is it possible, in other words, to investigate anomalous organizations under the lens of a microscope (Sicca, 2000), thus selling enlarged processes, logics, archetypal representative forms, to arrive – from the particular – to universal considerations?

Such questions are initially addressed through a linguistic lens that proposes an innovative point of view by investigating the media constructions of the criminal phenomenon in the Republic of Ireland.

Balirano argues that through a hybrid interpretative model for the critical analysis of discourse, which employs both qualitative and quantitative linguistic approaches, it is possible to highlight some discursive strategies constructed by the media in order to manipulate the knowledge of important events that characterize our contemporary society and, in this specific case study, the Republic of Ireland.

The book presents a corpus of approximately 2,000 newsprint articles published by two Irish national newspapers: *The Irish Times* and the *Irish Independent* – which from 1996 until now have continuously tackled the phenomenon of organized crime.

The corpus is investigated through the tools of corpus-based analysis, which is complemented by critical discourse analysis (CDA) in order to favor a discursive interpretation at different (textual, discursive and social) levels of the phenomenon as represented by the newspapers.

* * *

The year 1996 was Ireland's *annus horribilis* during which organized crime exploded in its utmost brutality. Police officer Jerry McCabe and investigative journalist Veronica Guerin were murdered by criminal gangs and their assassinations led to a real media battle setting a climate of terror in the population and bringing about social change through government awareness. This led to a series of legislative changes aimed at fighting organized crime. Balirano illustrates how the lack of a single definition has led to a series of faulty interpretations of the problem.

The results of the linguistic analysis are then compared to the analysis of a multimodal corpus, which incorporates different meaning-making resources such as language, images, gestures and sounds. The multimodal corpus incorporates filmic representations of the events that led to the death of journalist Guerin. The analysis highlights the way in which contemporary society interprets the phenomenon of organized crime through exposure to the continuous media message.

* * *

It is not possible to compare the phenomenon of Irish criminal gangs to criminal associations that have been terrorizing the whole world in these years of deep geopolitical movements, primarily because the history of Ireland is characterized by a long and bloody nationalisation process that has involved for several years paramilitary organizations affiliated to the IRA. Beginning in the 1970s, paramilitary bands went south of the country carrying weapons that turned gangs of young thugs into criminals thirsting for economic power. This is evident from the continuing reference to military terror practices in association with the criminal phenomenon emerging from the analysis of the newspapers. Moreover, Balirano's shows how the concept of globali-

sation, which is almost completely absent in the Irish newspapers, is necessarily a central one when examining the practices of organised crime syndicates such as the Mafia, the Camorra etc.

* * *

Along a dialectics between the analysis of the contexts and a look at generalising (universal) views, this volume discusses the question of the epistemological question that is called in the opening and that concerns the social knowledge (or sciences). Issues of fluidity and contamination of (*intra* and *inter*) disciplinary knowledge are thus raised through the contribution offered by the humanities, coupled with archetypal traditions and the resistance of theoretical structures in time, therefore the language. Balirano's current study is the result of an interdisciplinary and intradisciplinary approach to understanding, decoding, and experiencing the complex, fragmented, and sometimes incomprehensible world of organisations.

References

- Diana, Rosario 2016. *Disappartenenza dell'Io. Filosofia e Musica verso Samuel Beckett*. Napoli: Editoriale Scientifica.
- Musto, Renato 2013. *Novalis, l'Assoluto e le cose*. Napoli: Editoriale Scientifica.
- Piro, Francesco 2015. *Manuale di educazione al pensiero critico. Leggere e argomentare*. Napoli: Editoriale Scientifica.
- Sicca, Luigi Maria 2000. Chamber Music and Organization Theory: Some Typical Organizational Phenomena Seen Under The Microscope, *Culture and Organization*, 6 (2), 145-169.
- Sicca, Luigi Maria 2010. (Ed) *Leggere e scrivere organizzazioni. Estetica, umanesimo e conoscenze manageriali*. Napoli: Editoriale Scientifica.
- Sicca, Luigi Maria 2012. *Alla fonte dei saperi manageriali. Il ruolo della musica nella ricerca per l'innovazione e per la formazione delle risorse umane*. Napoli: Editoriale Scientifica.