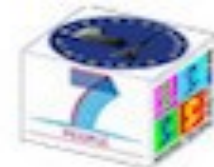




**European/International Joint PhD
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**The “Anthropological”, “Narrative”, “Dialogical” and
“Subjective”
paradigmatic approaches to Social Representations**

**at the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations &
Communication
Research Center and Multimedia LAB**

26th - 29th April 2015



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Narrative Approach to Social Representations through Media.

Narrating terror: intergenerational social representations of the “Anni di Piombo” (Years of Lead) in televised communication. Key epistemological premises for modeling empirical researches

G. Leone

**DIPARTIMENTO DI COMUNICAZIONE
E RICERCA SOCIALE**



SAPIENZA
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA

giovanna.leone@uniroma1.it

The issue at stake: Social representations of in-group history

- Another theoretical track: from Halbachs' work on social frames of memory (1925; 1950) to SRT
- Social representations of the in-group past could be studied as a specific kind of narratives (Laszlo, 2008)
- This field of study links observations of how SRs change in time with the problem of intergenerational communication

SRs of the history: weight or resource?

- The more explored facet of SRs of the in-group history shows how the past weights on the present (Liu & Hilton, 2005)
- How intergenerational narratives of the past could be a resource for present- time challenges is a less explored aspect
- This second theoretical tradition may be traced back to Halbwachs', Bartlett's, and Arendt's works (Leone, 2008)

Natality and reconciliation: How SRs of in-group history may change hostility and fear into trust

- Intergenerational narratives of intergroup violence: a slow and fragile change (Bar-Tal, 2002) (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008)
- From self-serving narratives to recognition of facts
- We propose to observe how narratives of violence change in a 3 generations period
- Natalty (Arendt, 1958) imposes in fact a temporal constraint on SRs of violent past: in 3 generations' time, the «lived history» cannot be able anymore to side the «teaching of History» (Halbwchias, 1950)

Breaking down the self-serving illusions: The importance of historical parrhesia on intergroup violence

- Studying how in-group violence is narrated to new generations, we observed that war crimes committed in Ethiopia were silenced in Italian history manuals since recent years (Leone & Mastrovito, 2010; Cajani, 2013)
- We propose that historians frankly breaking this social silence could be named as parrhesiastes (Foucault, 2001) (Leone, 2012)
- Factual narratives on in-group past open up new possibilities to reconcile, both between generations and between groups, but only if making room for negative emotions to be re-enacted and successfully regulated (Leone & Sarrica, 2014)



What happens when narrating a massive social violence? The case of Italian «Years of Lead»

- A brief resumé of historical facts
- A longitudinal comparison of documentaries broadcast by Italian public television (RAI) from 1979 to 2013
- An in-depth analysis of two examples combining a multimodal analysis of communication (Poggi, 2007) and FACS (Ekman & Friesen, 1978)
- Some conclusive remarks



From Seventies to the beginning of Eighties: the Italian Anni di piombo (Years of lead)

- A severe clash of opposed ideologies generated different kinds of violence
- This violence disrupted and somehow froze the highly positive social developments achieved in those same years in the field of civil rights (G. Moro, 2007)



IL FUTURO È PASSATO QUI



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Political violence *and* terrorism

- Political violence targeted people prominent in democratic institutions (journalists, university professors, trade-union leaders, political leaders)
- Terrorism killed ordinary people, caught in everyday situations of their lives
- Our study focus on *victims of political violence* since *victims of terrorism* gradually disappear in documentaries



Two different kind of perpetrators

- Perpetrators of political violence took responsibilities for their violence, using it to ask people to join their “revolution”
- Perpetrators of terrorism were unknown; some of them seem bound to remain unknown
- While factual historical evidence seems far to be reached and family recollections of this period are scarce, media often presented young generations with narratives of these years



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The “turn to the victims” in RAI documentaries

- We analysed 132 documentaries referred to the Anni di piombo, broadcast from 1979 up to now by the Italian public television (Rai) (Leone, Del Conte, Roseti, *submitted*)
- From 2000 until today, a «turn to the victims» is evident
- Before 2000, space was mainly devoted to perpetrators of political violence
- A similar “turn to the victims” was found in other Italian cultural artifacts (Glynn, 2013)
- Victims interviewed were mostly victims related to political violence (while victims of terrorism kept on being avoided in TV documentaries)
- How this “turn to the victims” and its timing may be explained?
- Is this “turn to the victims” a real empowerment ?

The “turn to the victims” on TV documentaries: elaboration or dismissal?

- The Italian turn to the victims could be a signal of the breaking of avoidance until then characterizing the social discourse on this traumatic past (Nadler, 2014) (stages: 1. avoidance; 2. confront; 3. turning the page)
- However, it is a *difficult* and *controversial* passage to this second stage (De Luna, 2011)
- Therefore it seemed appropriate to further whittle down the material gathered. After reviewing 56 documentaries focusing on victims of Red Brigades, we chose to analyse in depth, as a meaningful example, an informative window (lasting 15 min approx.) of the Rai 2 news, broadcast in April 2011, commenting on the release from prison of Vincenzo Guagliardo, one of the three Red Brigade members who killed in 1979 Guido Rossa, a worker and trade unionist

Rai2 TV news Viewpoint “Another Red Brigade Member Freed”

- Sabina Rossa
- Giovanni Berardi
- The journalist asks to both the same three questions:
- Why the Red Brigades killed your father?
- It is right to turn the page?
- How will you narrate these years to young people born after them?
- Victims expressed two main stances (Goffman, 1981; Du Bois, 2007; Jaffe, 2009); resentment vs. will to turn the page

Giovanni Berardi Timeline: 10:40 – 10:50

- *“These are the characters that we still have in circulation, as I said earlier, they live almost like vampires of the blood spilt in the past.”*
- Verbal communication: dehumanization (Volpato et al., 2010), embrayage (Greiman, Courtés, 1979) representing the past terroristic threaten as still inserted into current social life



Resentment

(Giovanni Berardi)

Timeline: 10:40 – 10:50

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Giovanni Berardi Timeline: 10:40 – 10:50

- *“It was a period where the absence of the State gave space to a lobby of crazy people who plunged our country in bloodshed, lying shamelessly about their intentions .”*



Resentment (Giovanni Berardi) Timeline: 12:20 – 12:35



Sabina Rossa Timeline: 10:40 – 10:50

- *“Justice is not just prosecuting the one responsible for a crime, rightly sentencing them to jail, but also recognizing at a distance of many years, we are talking about thirty years of jail, that a person can also change .”*
- Calling her father’s murderer “a person” she re—humanizes him (Volpato, 2010), putting a distance between her and this past violence (debrayage: cfr. Greiman, Courtés, 1979)



Tourning the page (Sabina Rossa) Timeline 4:12 – 4:28



Two stances, different emotions

- The combined in-depth analysis allowed us to better understand how the two stances of victims differ.
- Rossa's stance is characterized by a *regulation* of emotions shown: sadness, anger, fright as an empathic reaction to the sufferings of his father's murderer. Although in a proud posture (Poggi & D'Errico, 2012) she adds an *unrequested justification* of her stance
- Berardi's stance is characterized by a posture oriented backwards and an *accentuation* of emotions shown: anger, contempt.

The victims and the journalist

The journalist pays greater attention to Rossa, leaving her more space and often urging Berardi to be brief or interrupting him.

However, the two victims dialogue in spite of him, so introducing relevant issues: about different concepts of justice, the lack of truth on past violence, the moral dilemma between empathy and resentment towards perpetrators after thirty years.

We propose that only this debate spontaneously arousing between different stances of victims and their emotional regulation (Frijda, 2009) may help the audience (especially the younger ones) to move away from the avoidance currently characterizing the memory of this difficult period (Regalia, 2014).

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The methodological point: speaking of “victims” is not enough

- In media exposure, verbal contents and nuances of body communication of interviewed have to be taken *simultaneously* into account
- In our research, we combined a multimodal analysis of communication (Poggi, 2007) and FACS (Ekman & Friesen, 1978)
- A special attention has to be devoted to facial action units expressing their different emotions, either regulated or not regulated (Frijda, 2009)
- It is the joint action of all these different modalities of communication that signals to the audience that these old memories are still alive and meaningful
- The mediating role of journalist has to be observed too, either accepted or defeated by interlocutors.

GRAZIE !

To you, for your kind attention

To colleagues of the Italian PRIN 2009 devoted to the Anni di piombo

To Livia Serlupi Crescenzi, Francesca di Murro, Stefano Migliorisi, Isora Sessa, Monica Maietto, Marta Tedesco, Alice Roseti, Nicolo' Conte

