



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI  
DI BERGAMO

Dipartimento  
di Ingegneria Gestionale,  
dell'Informazione e della Produzione

# Multimodal methods (visual and text) in family business research

June 16th, 2023

FERC PDW

*Doing more, different, and better?*

*Qualitative methods in family business research*

SPEAKER

**Mara Brumana**

University of Bergamo

[mara.brumana@unibg.it](mailto:mara.brumana@unibg.it)

# A brief introduction



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI  
DI BERGAMO

Dipartimento  
di Ingegneria Gestionale,  
dell'Informazione e della Produzione



**EuFBC**  
European Family Business  
Research Centers Network

ifera  
● ● ●

**WU**  
WIRTSCHAFTS  
UNIVERSITÄT  
WIEN VIENNA  
UNIVERSITY OF  
ECONOMICS  
AND BUSINESS



**CYFE**

Center for young  
and family enterprise  
UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI  
DI BERGAMO



JÖNKÖPING UNIVERSITY  
Jönköping International  
Business School

**CeFEO**  
Centre for Family  
Entrepreneurship  
and Ownership



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI  
DI BERGAMO

Dipartimento  
di Ingegneria Gestionale,  
dell'Informazione e della Produzione

# How can you bring novelty to your research design?

*Utilizing new tools in research*



Method &  
Analysis



Dataset



Research Problem

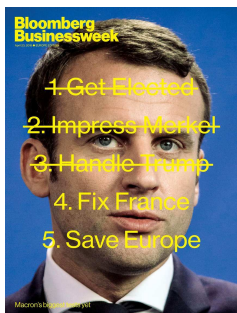


UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI  
DI BERGAMO

Dipartimento  
di Ingegneria Gestionale,  
dell'Informazione e della Produzione

# Finding new methods and analysis techniques to study your research problem

Paradox management



Visual/Multimodal analysis

Halgin, D. S., Glynn, M. A., & Rockwell, D. 2018. Organizational Actorhood and the Management of Paradox: A Visual Analysis. *Organization Studies*, 39(5-6): 645-664.

Literature Review



Topic modeling algorithm

Antons, D., Kleer, R., & Salge, T. O. 2016. Mapping the Topic Landscape of JPIM, 1984-2013: In Search of Hidden Structures and Development Trajectories. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 33(6): 726-749.

Governance Mechanisms



Fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA)

Misangyi, V. F., & Acharya, A. G. 2014. Substitutes or Complements? A Configurational Examination of Corporate Governance Mechanisms. *Academy of Management Journal*, 57(6): 1681-1705.

Optimal distinctiveness



Exemplar analysis

Zhao, E. Y., Ishihara, M., Jennings, P. D., & Lounsbury, M. 2018. Optimal Distinctiveness in the Console Video Game Industry: An Exemplar-Based Model of Proto-Category Evolution. *Organization Science*, 29(4): 588-611.



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI  
DI BERGAMO

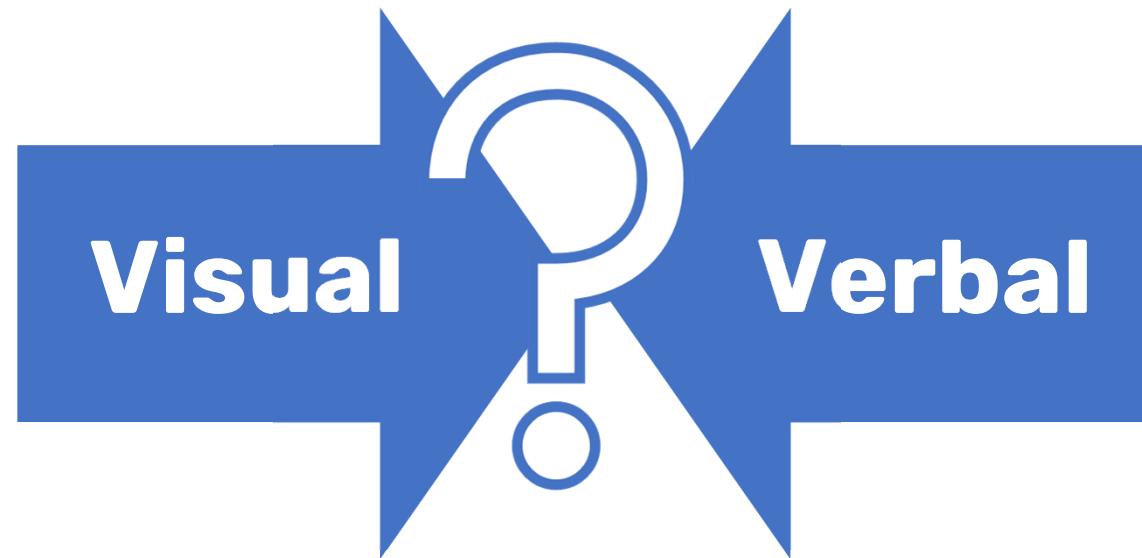
Dipartimento  
di Ingegneria Gestionale,  
dell'Informazione e della Produzione

---

# Multimodal analysis

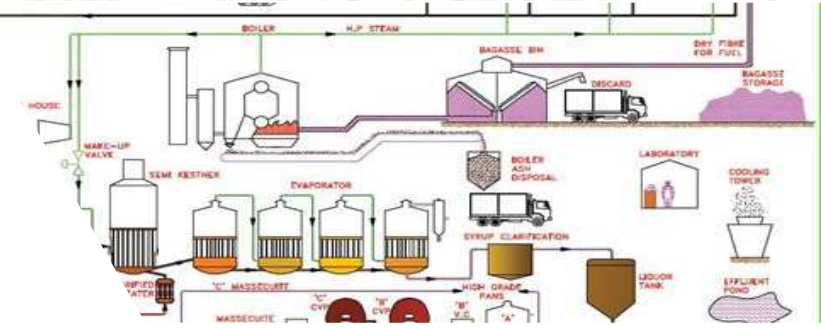
Multimodal analysis examines the interplay btw. **modal elements in a text**

- The **meaning** of the text depends on the **modes' joint contribution**
- (Bateman, 2014; Kong, 2006; Royce, 2013)



# The «visual turn»

- Visual turn in the sciences:
  - Like verbal texts, visuals also «make meaning» and require interpretation
- What is visual in organizational life?
  - Examples: pictures, images, posters, artefacts, architecture, etc.
  - Locus: internal newsletter, websites, company reports, buildings
- The visual turn acknowledges:
  - **Ubiquity** of the visual as a mode of communication other than language





# The «visual turn»

Höllerer, M. A., Jancsary, D., & Grafström, M. (2018). 'A picture is worth a thousand words': Multimodal sensemaking of the global financial crisis. *Organization Studies*, 39(5-6), 617-644.

Halgin, D. S., Glynn, M. A., & Rockwell, D. 2018. Organizational Actorhood and the Management of Paradox: A Visual Analysis. *Organization Studies*, 39(5-6): 645-664.

## EU leads the field with plan on bank capital



**Basel III**  
**Implementing rules aimed at averting another financial crisis will not be a painless process, writes Nikki Tait**

The European Union has become the first jurisdiction to begin to implement the so-called Basel III guidelines into law in an attempt to ward off any repeat of the 2008 financial crisis. Announcing in Brussels on Wednesday the implementation of the internationally agreed standards designed to make banks hold bigger and better levels of capital, Michel Barnier, the EU internal market commissioner, said: "We cannot let such a crisis occur again."

Under the proposals, known as the Capital Requirements Directive 4, the highest-quality capital, which banks must hold - labelled common equity tier one, or CET1 - will increase from 2 per cent to 4.5 per cent of risk-weighted assets. There will be 14 strict criteria to determine what can be counted as CET1.

In addition, there will be a "capital conservation buffer", amounting to 2.5 per cent of risk-weighted assets, also made up of the highest-quality capital - in effect making the ratio 7 per cent. If banks breach this buffer, they face limits on the bonuses and dividends they can pay. There will be further requirements in terms of lower-quality capital that they must hold.

On top of all this, national supervisors can introduce special "countercyclical buffers" if they fear that lending - to the property sector, for example - is getting out of hand. Again, this must consist of top-quality capital and will generally be up to 2.5 per cent of risk-weighted assets.

The plan is to apply the new rules to more than 8,000 banks in the EU, phasing them in from 2013 to 2018. In addition, Brussels plans to introduce from 2015 new liquidity requirements - that is, cash assets to meet, for example, sudden demands from withdrawing depositors.

Brussels will also consider introducing a binding leverage ratio from 2016, although there will be further review and discussion on this.

Most of these requirements are contained in a draft "regulation", which will need the approval of member states and the European parliament. Once this is secured, the rules will be binding across the union.

However, the capital buffers and some less technical measures - dealing with the make-up of bank boards and penalties for institutions which step out of line - are in a separate "directive", which member states will have to transcribe into their national laws.

At least six states - notably the UK - would like the new capital rules to be minimum standards only, and to have the flexibility to impose higher ratios if they wish.

But EU officials say the mandatory approach is necessary to establish a "single rulebook" for banks in Europe, which in turn will make the regulatory process more transparent and better able to adapt to changing market conditions. Brussels also argues that differing capital requirements in various countries would distort competition and encourage regulatory arbitrage.

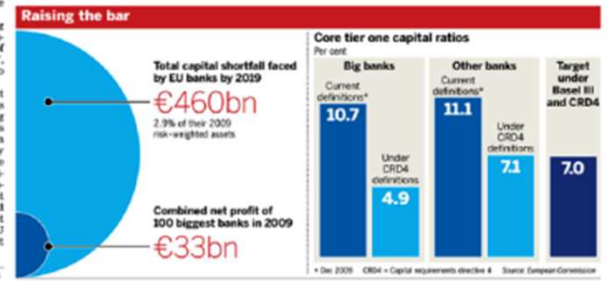
This issue is certain to lead to fierce debate when diplomats meet to consider the proposals. It will by no means be the only bone of contention. While the banks themselves generally favour the "single rulebook" approach, they claim the new rules could be dangerously onerous, putting Europe at a disadvantage if other jurisdictions, such as the US, were slow to follow.

The European Banking Federation said it was "concerned over the impact of the new requirements", especially with regard to liquidity.

The scale of that impact was fleshed out by Brussels on Wednesday. Assuming full implementation, banks will need an extra €38bn (57bn) of CET1 capital by 2018 and €50bn by 2019, the end of the eight-year transition period. That is equivalent to just under 3 per cent of the sector's risk-weighted assets. The combined net profit of the 100 biggest EU banks in 2009 was about €33bn.

**Michel Barnier: 'We cannot let such a crisis occur again'**

**Editorial Comment, Page 14**



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI  
DI BERGAMO



Dipartimento  
di Ingegneria Gestionale,  
dell'Informazione e della Produzione

# The «visual turn»

Drori, G. S., Delmestri, G., & Oberg, A. (2013). Branding the university: Relational strategy of identity construction in a competitive field. *Trust in Higher Education Institutions*, 134-147.

Drori, G. S., Delmestri, G., & Oberg, A. (2016). The iconography of universities as institutional narratives. *Higher Education*, 71(2), 163-180.

**Table 1** Categorizing University icons as institutional narratives

	Guild-Like classic narrative	Professional scientific narrative
Identity context of the University	Learning, along with reverence to the charter-granting authority	Enlightenment and erudition; science, technology, and professional practice
Exemplar University Iconography	 <p>University of Heidelberg (1386, Germany)</p>	 <p>Hashemite University (1992, Jordan)</p>
Common stylistic features	<p>Mostly seal design</p> <p>Literal rendering of images</p> <p>Commonly include name of university</p>	<p>Mostly seal or shield design</p> <p>Symbols of enlightenment</p> <p>Symbols of the sciences and profession</p>
Number of universities <sup>a</sup>	147 232	38








# The «visual turn»

Ravasi, D., Rindova, V., & Stigliani, I. (2019). The stuff of legend: History, memory, and the temporality of organizational identity construction. *Academy of Management Journal*, 62(5), 1523-1555.

**TABLE 8**  
Identity Evangelizing: Valorizing the Past through Commemoration

Case	Example	Description
<b>Alessi</b>	Exhibitions  <i>Super &amp; Popular</i> collection (2014) 	Beginning with <i>The New Domestic Landscape</i> from the Triennale Museum, in Milan, and <i>The Alessi Workshop</i> at the Centre Pompidou, Paris, over the years, Alessi has regularly promoted or supported exhibitions that draw on prototypes and other historical artifacts, as a way to “educate the public about Alessi’s unique approach to design.”  In 2014, Alessi gathered its most “iconic” pieces, considered landmarks in the contemporary design, in a new collection aimed at “representing the company’s approach to design.” The name mirrored a term coined by CEO Alberto Alessi in the 1990s to convey the essence of this approach. The new packaging and the communication campaign drew from the company’s archives and library.
<b>Alfa Romeo</b>	Museum concept 	In 2015, the museum was refurbished with a deliberate intent to support the relaunch of the brand. The new display highlighted the core values of speed (a reference to the glorious racing history, represented by historical racing cars, old videos, trophies, etc.) and beauty (expressed through a selection of historical and concept cars), alongside a timeline of noteworthy historical events and figures.



# The roles of visuals in research



*(adapted from Meyer et al. 2013)*



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI  
DI BERGAMO

Dipartimento  
di Ingegneria Gestionale,  
dell'Informazione e della Produzione



*An example from my own research*



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI  
DI BERGAMO

Dipartimento  
di Ingegneria Gestionale,  
dell'Informazione e della Produzione

# Research interest

## Multimodal studies assume that:

- Verbal and visuals have different structural properties and hence differently contribute to meaning making
- While verbal is lower in polysemy, visuals are highly polysemous
- This implies that verbal reduces cognitive ambiguity, while visuals increase it
- (Boxembaum et al. 2018; Halgin et al., 2018; Meyer et al., 2018)

**RQ:** How do visuals and verbal interact under cognitive ambiguity?

**Family Business** as a peculiar context in which to investigate cognitive ambiguity because of inherent tensions

- innovation/tradition,
- Econ./non econ. values;
- Universality/local embeddedness



# Research setting

## Barilla

- Founded in 1877
- Global player in the food sector
- Family owned and managed

## Barilla house organ “Gente Barilla”

- From 1991 to 2009
- Employees as the main audience
- Locus of organizational identity work

(Anteby & Molnar, 2012; Basque & Langley, 2018; Chreim, 2002; Heller & Rowlinson, 2020)



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI  
DI BERGAMO

Dipartimento  
di Ingegneria Gestionale,  
dell'Informazione e della Produzione





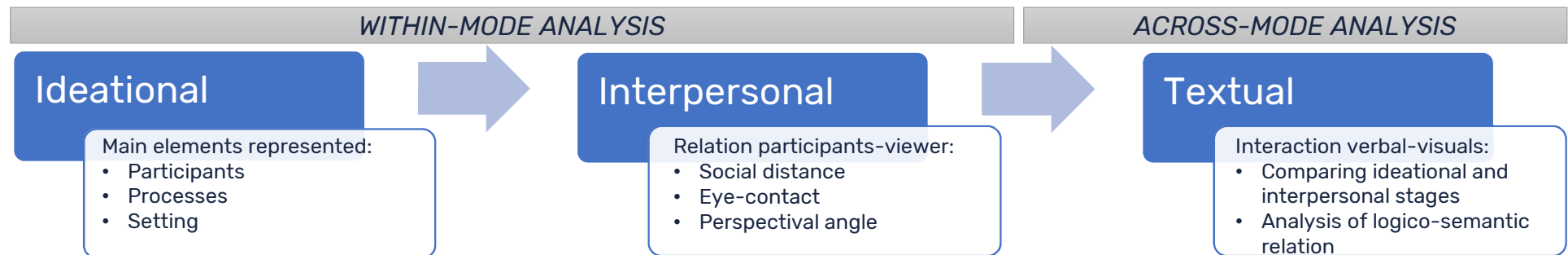
# Research method

Unit of analysis: “L’Inchiesta”

- Opening article in each issue of Gente Barilla
- Addressing a societal tension relevant for the organization:
- Treated as a single text comprising both verbal and visual elements

Analytical tool: Grammar for multimodal analysis (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006)

- 3 stage analysis:



# Exemplary application: Northern vs Southern Italy

## VISUAL

- *Sameness* in represented content
- *Mirror effect* in relation to the viewer



ARNALDO IMPERATRICE

MICHELE SALERA

che problemi avrà essendo meridionale...". Eravamo sotto elezioni. Bossi imperversava. Invece, nessun problema». Antonio Ciccarelli, ex-cattolico a Foggia, dalla sua visita a Pedriano ricorda soprattutto «la simpatia ed il calore con i quali siamo stati accolti dai nostri colleghi». E poi un'osservazione strana: «l'aria è sembrata bella».

## VERBAL

- *Heterogeneity* in represented content
- *Oppositional* vocabulary

*Guardare il lavoro degli altri dal Nord o dal Sud provoca letture che non si somigliano?*

### Gardini di

Rubbiano forse esagera quando dice: <La gente del Sud è diversa. Sono qui 30 di Melfi in addestramento. Alcuni sono meno disponibili; hanno meno voglia di piegare la schiena>.

### Mauro Di Leva,

macchinista reparto confezione, Melfi: <Non esistono grandi differenze. Quelle che sopravvivono dipendono dalla diversa mentalità. Qui siamo più conservatori; anche i giovani non tentano cose nuove. Ho vissuto a Bologna: lì ho respirato una maggiore inventiva>.

### <Una

differenza c'è: noi siamo accondiscendenti e subiamo con facilità. Al Nord i lavoratori sono più coscienti dei loro diritti e dei loro doveri>: **Arnaldo Imperatrice**, addetto alla confezione, Foggia.



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI  
DI BERGAMO

Dipartimento  
di Ingegneria Gestionale,  
dell'Informazione e della Produzione

---

# Preliminary findings and implications

## Verbal mode:

- *Expresses* tensions
- Gives voice to cognitive ambiguity

## Visual mode:

- *Addresses* tensions (tension resolution OR dissolution)
- Reduces cognitive ambiguity

## Implications:

- Semiotic modes' contribution to meaning making is context-dependent



---

# Some things to keep in mind when using new methods and analysis techniques

- Does your audience understand your analysis technique?
- Can reviewers actually check what you are doing, and challenge you?
- Does the analysis allow you to see things you did not see before?
- The type of analysis (and data sources) needs to fit to your research problem



# If you want to know more...



## ... ON THE ROLE OF VISUAL IN FAMILY BUSINESS RESEARCH

- Brumana, M., Ruzzene, A., & Vasilevska, K. (2020). Reasons, opportunities and methods for a visual analysis of organizational tensions in family business. In **Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods for Family Business**. Edward Elgar Publishing.

## ... ON THE VISUAL TURN IN MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION STUDIES

- Meyer, R. E., Höllerer, M. A., Jancsary, D., & Van Leeuwen, T. (2013). The visual dimension in organizing, organization, and organization research: Core ideas, current developments, and promising avenues. **Academy of Management Annals**, 7(1), 489-
- Boxenbaum, E., Jones, C., Meyer, R. E., & Svejenova, S. (2018). Towards an articulation of the material and visual turn in organization studies. **Organization Studies**, 39(5-6), 597-616.
- Bell, E., & Davison, J. (2013). Visual management studies: Empirical and theoretical approaches. **International Journal of Management Reviews**, 15(2), 167-184.555.

## ... ON MULTIMODAL ANALYSIS:

- Kress, G. R., & Van Leeuwen, T. (2006). **Reading images: The grammar of visual design**. Psychology Press.
- Bateman, J. (2014). **Text and image: A critical introduction to the visual/verbal divide**. Routledge.
- Royce, T. D. (2013). Intersemiotic complementarity: a framework for multimodal discourse analysis. In Royce, T. D., & Bowcher, W. L. (Eds.) **New directions in the analysis of multimodal discourse**, 63-109.







UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI  
DI BERGAMO

Dipartimento  
di Ingegneria Gestionale,  
dell'Informazione e della Produzione

# Thank you!

June 16th, 2023

FERC PDW

*Doing more, different, and better?*

*Qualitative methods in family business research*

SPEAKER

**Mara Brumana**

University of Bergamo

[mara.brumana@unibg.it](mailto:mara.brumana@unibg.it)