

Roberto Franzosi obtained a summa cum laude BA in Literature at the University of Genoa (Italy) (1975) and a PhD in Sociology at Johns Hopkins University (USA) (1981). After spending a year as a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Michigan, he taught for several years in the Sociology Department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. After a brief stay at Rutgers University (1994-1995), Franzosi held a lectureship in Sociology at the University of Oxford, with an official fellowship at Trinity College (1995-1999). From 1999 to 2006 he held an established chair at the University of Reading, serving as Head of Department til 2003 and holding a five-year Senior Researcher Fellowship which relieved him from all teaching and administrative duties. Franzosi came to Emory University in 2006 as Professor of Sociology and core faculty in the Linguistics Program.

Research agenda

The study of social protest has been at the heart of Franzosi's research agenda. His work in the field started as a doctoral dissertation on Italian strikes in the postwar period on the basis of official government statistics and time series models (econometrics, ARIMA, spectral analysis). By the end of his dissertation work Franzosi had come to realize that one-hundred years of quantitative strike research had been very effective in one respect: forget the role of social actors in industrial conflict. What do workers, employers, and the state do? In search of an answer to that question, Franzosi took two different paths. He took one path in the book *The Puzzle of Strikes: Class and State Strategies in Postwar Italy* (1995, Cambridge University Press). The solution Franzosi adopts there to the challenge posed by the poverty of available strike data and of methods of analysis is very simple: use whatever evidence is at hand (and whatever method is most appropriate for that evidence) to address empirically central substantive issues—in particular, the role of such social actors as workers, employers and the state.

He has taken the other path in his projects of quantifying narrative information on historical events. After identifying newspapers and police reports as rich sources of data on conflict events (who does what), Franzosi rejected traditional content analysis as a way to go "from words to numbers" (see his 4 volumes collection, *Content Analysis*, 2008, Sage). Instead, he developed a new linguistic and computer-based approach to narrative text for quantitative purposes. From linguistics, he borrowed the concept of "story grammar," the basic template of Subject-Action-Object and respective modifiers (e.g., time and space of action) that captures quite closely the linguistic structure of narrative. He then developed a computer software (PC-ACE, Program for Computer-Assisted Coding of Events; www.pc-ace.com), based on a RDBMS design (Relational Database Management System) to carry out computer-assisted parsing of narrative information. Franzosi has illustrated the methodological aspects of his approach in a series of articles and two books (e.g., *From Words to Numbers: Narrative, Data, and Social Science*, 2004, Cambridge University Press; *Quantitative Narrative Analysis*, 2009, Sage).

Franzosi's involvement in linguistics has equipped him with tools of investigation that go far beyond "story grammars" or semantic roles. In linguistics Franzosi found stringent analyses of the nature of narrative (e.g., see his paper "Narrative Analysis," 1998, *Annual Review of Sociology*). More broadly, in linguistics (and the neighboring disciplines of literary criticism and semiotics) Franzosi found powerful tools for the analysis of text (e.g., "master" tropes, forms of emplotment, openness/closeness of text). From there, it is a short step to look even at our

scientific texts in terms of their reliance on specific types of rhetorical devices. Whether there is or there isn't a "reality out there" whether science can or cannot attain an objective knowledge of that reality, science underscores its "noble dream" of objectivity via an array of specifically linguistic devices. Franzosi touches upon some of these themes in *From Words to Numbers: Narrative, Data, and Social Science*. But it is in another book, *A Trilogy of Rhetoric: The Rhetorical Foundations of Social Science Quantitative Work* (forthcoming, Cambridge University Press), that he fully develops these themes on the rhetorical aspects of scientific work (see also his commentary "On ambiguity and rhetoric in (social) science," *Sociological Methodology*, 1997). In *A Trilogy of Rhetoric*, Franzosi takes three once-popular strands of social science quantitative literature—strike models, union growth models, and wage inflation models—and analyzes *both* the statistical and linguistic conventions behind the argumentation adopted. In the book, he presents re-analyses of the original statistical models to show the variety of assumptions, shortcuts, and gross errors upon which our knowledge in those fields rests (work carried out with a grant from the Nuffield Foundation). The book also presents the analyses of the rhetorical structures found in this literature (work carried out with a grant from the British Academy).

Franzosi is further pursuing his explorations in epistemology and science in another book, *Triptych: Portraits of Art and Science*. He paints five portraits (Galileo, Newton, Goethe, Simmel, and Weber) to explore several issues in the history and sociology of science: the mathematicization of science, the quality vs. quantity debate, the relationship between art and science, the role of metaphor (e.g., book of nature, tree of life).

Franzosi is currently devoting his energies to the analysis of hard-won data on the rise of Italian fascism (1919-1922). With the use of PC-ACE, a team of coders, and several grants (the National Science Foundation, the University of Reading, the University of Trento, Provincia Autonoma di Trento, Emory University), Franzosi has collected systematic information from three newspapers of the time (the socialist *Il lavoro* and *Avanti!* and the fascist *Popolo d'Italia*) on the rise of Italian fascism (1919-1922). This has yielded a huge dataset of some 250,000 skeleton narrative sentences from over 50,000 newspaper articles. Although data analysis is on-going, preliminary analyses have produced interesting and novel results (see the papers: "Mobilization and Counter-Mobilization Processes ..." on the 1919–22 period, *Theory and Society*, 1997).

In 2008, with a grant from Emory University, Franzosi started a new project on lynching in Jim Crow South. Using newspapers as sources of data, the project aims to build a systematic catalogue of event characteristics (rather than event counts: number of lynchings) for the over 400 lynchings that occurred in the state of Georgia between 1875 and 1930 as narrated in newspapers. These event characteristics will then be analyzed with the help of cutting-edge network and geographic information system models. Just like Franzosi's project on Italian fascism, the project on lynchings combines quality and quantity, the narrative depth of case studies and the generalization afforded by large numbers.

Teaching

Over the years Franzosi has taught a variety of courses, both substantive and methodological, undergraduate and graduate, in several institutions: Political

Sociology, Industrial Sociology, Historical Sociology, Ideology, Mass Media; Network Analysis, Regression Analysis, Exploratory Data Analysis, Interior Analysis and Regression Diagnostics, Text and Content Analysis, Research Methods. In 1992 he was awarded "Best professors at the University of Wisconsin-Madison" based on a campus-wide survey of all professors. In 2003 he was nominated for the award "Best professor at the University of Reading." Internationally, Franzosi taught twice (2006 and 2007) in the ECPR Summer School in Ljubljana and at the Oslo Summer School in Comparative Social Studies (2008).

Service

Between 1993 and 1995, Franzosi acted as a Consulting editor for *The American Journal of Sociology*. He was managing editor of the *Journal of Historical Sociology* (1997–2003). He is a member of the editorial board of *Current Sociology*. Franzosi served as College Dean at Trinity College, Oxford (1998–99) and Department Chair in Sociology at the University of Reading (1999–2003). He served twice as ESRC assessor of Sociology graduate scholarship applications and was a member of the 2003 ESRC panel for the interim recognition of Sociology graduate programs. In 2005, he served as one of the five-member panel for the evaluation of Political and Social Sciences in the first government evaluation of all academic departments in Italy. Since 2003, he have served as a member of the Steering Committee of the ESRC-funded Oxford Spring School of Social Research.