

NEW(S) RACISM: A DISCOURSE ANALYTICAL APPROACH

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Introduction

In this chapter we critically study the way news in the press may contribute to what is sometimes called the 'new racism'. Since news reports are a type of text, our approach will be 'discourse analytical'. This means that we do not treat news as transparent 'messages' whose 'contents' may be analysed in a superficial, quantitative way. Rather, we examine the complex structures and strategies of news reports and their relations to the social context. In our case, the social context consists of the activities of journalists in newsmaking, as well as the interpretations of readers, in the increasingly multicultural societies of western Europe and North America. More specifically we want to know what role the media in general, and news in particular, play in the reproduction of 'racial' and ethnic inequality in these societies, and aim to do so through a systematic analysis of news discourse structures.

The new racism

In many respects, contemporary forms of racism are different from the 'old' racism of slavery, segregation, apartheid, lynchings, and systematic dis-

crimination, of white superiority feelings, and of explicit derogation in public discourse and everyday conversation. The *New Racism* (Barker 1981) wants to be democratic and respectable, and hence first off denies that it is racism. Real Racism, in this framework of thought, exists only among the Extreme Right. In the New Racism, minorities are not biologically

inferior, but different. They have a different culture, although in many respects there are 'deficiencies', such as single-parent families, drug abuse, lacking achievement values, and dependence on welfare and affirmative action – 'pathologies' that need to be corrected of course (for a characteristic example, see D'Souza 1995; and for a critical analysis of this book, see van Dijk 1998).

Both in the US and Europe, several variants of this kind of racism have been studied, for instance as 'symbolic racism' that is opposed to policies of affirmative action, such as busing (McConahay 1982; Dovidio and Gaertner 1986). From the point of view of a black scholar, Essed (1991) similarly analyses the many micro-inequities in the life of black women in terms of what she calls 'everyday racism'. Such and other forms of racism are typically indirect and subtle (Pettigrew and Meertens 1995). These are not limited to ordinary people, or the street, but are also practised by the elites, as we shall show in more detail for the media below (van Dijk 1993).

The role of discourse

Especially because of their often subtle and symbolic nature, many forms of the 'new' racism are 'discursive': they are expressed, enacted and confirmed by text and talk, such as everyday conversations, board meetings, job interviews, policies, laws, parliamentary debates, political propaganda, textbooks, scholarly articles, movies, TV programmes and news reports in the press, among hundreds of other genres. They appear 'mere' talk, and far removed from the open violence and forceful segregation of the 'old' racism. Yet, they may be just as effective to marginalize and exclude minorities. They may hurt even more, especially when they seem to be so 'normal', so 'natural', and so 'commonsensical' to those who engage in such discourse and interaction. They are a form of ethnic hegemony, premised on seemingly legitimate ideologies and attitudes, and often tacitly accepted by most members of the dominant majority group. This unique control of the majority over the prevalent forms of public discourse, policies and social conduct makes minority resistance (or white

dissidence) against such racism even more difficult and precarious. It needs no further argument that the consequences of these forms of discursive racism in the lives of members of minority groups are hardly discursive: they may not be let into the country, the city or the neighbourhood, or will not get a house or a job.

Discourse analytical approaches

Traditional approaches to the role of the media in the reproduction of racism were largely content analytical: quantitative studies of stereotypical words or images representing minorities (see, for example, Hartmann and Husband 1974; Deepe Keever *et al.* 1997; for review see Cottle 1992).

Discourse analytical approaches, systematically describe the various structures and strategies of text or talk, and relate these to the social, political or political context. For instance, they may focus on overall topics, or more local meanings (such as coherence or implications) in a 'semantic' analysis. But also the 'syntactic' form of sentences, or the overall 'organization' of a news report may be examined in detail. The same is true for variations of 'style', 'rhetorical devices' such as metaphors or euphemisms, 'speech acts' such as promises and threats, and in spoken discourse also the many forms of 'interaction' (for an introduction to the various levels and approaches of discourse analysis, see van Dijk 1997b). These structures of text and talk are systematically related to elements of the social 'context', such as the spatio-temporal setting, participants and their various social and communicative roles, as well as their goals, knowledge and opinions. During the 1990s work on racism increasingly made use of such discourse analytical notions (Smitherman-Donaldson and van Dijk 1987; Wodak *et al.* 1990; van Dijk 1991; Jager and Link 1993; McGarry 1994; Banon Hernandez 1996; van Dijk 1997a).

The discursive reproduction of racism

How is discourse involved in the reproduction of (or resistance against) racism? To answer that question, we must know what racism is. Summarizing a complex theory, we shall simply assume here that racism is a social system of 'ethnic' or 'racial' inequality, just like sexism, or inequality based on class. That system has two main components, namely a social and a cognitive one. The social component of racism consists of everyday discriminatory practices, on the micro-level of analysis, and organizations, institutions,

legal arrangements and other societal structures at the macro-level. Since discourses are social practices, racist discourse belong first of all to this social dimension of racism.

On the other hand, social practices also have a cognitive dimension, namely the beliefs people have, such as knowledge, attitudes, ideologies, norms and values. In the system of racism, thus, racist stereotypes, prejudices and ideologies explain why and how people engage in discriminatory practices in the first place, for instance because they think that the Others are inferior (less intelligent, less competent, less modern, and so on), have fewer rights, or that 'We' have priority for a house or a job. These beliefs or 'social representations' many members of the dominant (white) ingroup have about immigrants and minorities are largely derived from discourse.

That is, discourse as a social practice of racism is at the same time the main source for people's racist beliefs. Discourse may thus be studied as the crucial interface between the social and cognitive dimensions of racism. Indeed, we 'learn' racism (or anti-racism) largely through text or talk. Because they control the access to, and control over most public discourse, the political, educational, scholarly and media elites have a specific role and responsibility in these forms of discursive racism (van Dijk 1993, 1996). By their control over the crucially important power resource of public discourse, the various elites at the same time are dominant within their own ingroup (of which they are able to influence the prevalent ethnic opinions), as well as over minority groups, whose everyday lives they are able to control by their discourse, policies and decisions in positions of power.

The role of the media

There is no need to argue here the overall power of the media in modern 'information' societies. Together with other powerful elite groups and institutions, such as politicians, corporate managers, professionals and professors, they have – sometimes indirectly – most influence on the lives of most people in society. Whereas the power of corporate managers may have less impact on public discourse and opinion, and more on the economy, the market, production and (un)employment, the power of the media is primarily 'discursive' and 'symbolic'. Media discourse is the main source of people's knowledge, attitudes and ideologies, both of other elites and of ordinary citizens. Of course, the media do this in joint production with the other elites, primarily politicians, professionals and academics. Yet, given the freedom of the press, the media elites are ultimately responsible for the prevailing discourses of the media they control.

This is specifically also true for the role of the media in ethnic affairs, for the following reasons:

- Most white readers have few daily experiences with minorities.
- Most white readers have few alternative sources for information about minorities.
- Negative attitudes about minorities are in the interest of most white readers.
- More than most other topics, ethnic issues provide positive but polarized identification for most white readers, in terms of Us and Them.
- The media emphasize such group polarization by focusing on various Problems and Threats for Us, thus actively involving most white readers.
- Minority groups do not have enough power to publicly oppose biased reporting.
- The dominant (media) discourse on ethnic issues is virtually consensual.
- In particular there is little debate on the 'new' racism.
- 'Anti-racist' dissidents have little access to the media.

In sum, when power over the most influential form of public discourse, that is, media discourse, is combined with a lack of alternative sources, when there is a near consensus, and opponents and dissident groups are weak, then the media are able to abuse such power and establish the discursive and cognitive hegemony that is necessary for the reproduction of the 'new' racism. Let us now examine in some more detail how exactly such power is exercised in news and newsmaking.

Newsmaking

The role of the press in the system of racism is not limited to news reports or editorials, but already begins with the daily routines of newsmaking (Tuchman 1978; van Dijk 1988a). Minorities have less access to the media also because they do not control the many 'source discourses' on which daily newsmaking is based: press conferences, press releases, briefings, information brochures, documentation, interviews, and so on. Their opinions are less asked or found less credible or newsworthy, also because most journalists (and virtually all editors) are white.

News structures

Especially also on ethnic issues, for which alternative sources of information are scarce, news on TV or in the press often provides the first ‘facts’, but at the same time the first ‘definitions of the situation’ and the first opinions – usually those of the authorities or other white elites. We shall therefore systematically analyse the structures and strategies of news discourse, and see how they enact or contribute to everyday elite racism (for an introduction to these structures of discourse and news, see van Dijk 1988a, 1988b, 1997b).

Topics

Interestingly, whereas there are a large number of types of topic in the press, news about immigrants and ethnic minorities is often restricted to the following kinds of events:

- New (illegal) immigrants are arriving.
- Political response to, policies about (new) immigration.
- Reception problems (housing, etc.).
- Social problems (employment, welfare, etc.).
- Response of the population (resentment, etc.).
- Cultural characterization: how are they different?
- Complications and negative characterization: how are they deviant?
- Focus on threats: violence, crime, drugs, prostitution.
- Political response: policies to stop immigration, expulsion, and so on.
- Integration conflicts.

In each of these cases, even potentially ‘neutral’ topics, such as immigration, housing, employment or cultural immigration, soon tend to have a negative dimension: immigration may be topicalized as a threat, and most ethnic relations represented in terms of problems and deviance if not as a threat as well, most typically so in news about crime, drugs and violence minorities are associated with. On the other hand, many topics that are also part of ethnic affairs occur much less in the news, such as migrants leaving the country, the contributions of immigrant workers to the economy, everyday life of minority communities, and especially also discrimination and racism against minorities. Since topics express the most important information of a text, and in news are further signalled by prominent headlines and leads, they are also best understood and memorized by the readers. In other words, negative topics have negative consequences on the ‘minds’ of the recipients.

In general what we find is a preference for those topics that emphasize Their bad actions and Our good ones. However, Their good actions and Our bad ones are not normally emphasized by topicalization (and will therefore also appear less in headlines or on the front page, if reported at all). This gen-

eral strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation is prevalent in most dominant discourse about immigrants and minorities, not only at the level of topics, but also at the other levels to be analysed below.

Quotes

Given the way that news reports are constructed on the basis of many source discourses, we may expect that such source discourses and their authors also get explicitly cited, and their authors described more or less explicitly. Depending who has access to and control over journalists also will be able to influence whether or not they are actually quoted. What one would expect, and what one indeed finds, is that in general, even in ethnic news, minorities are quoted less, and less prominently than (white) elites. If sources are quoted, we may also expect that those are selected that confirm the general attitudes about the group in question. Minority representatives will seldom be allowed to speak alone: a white person is necessary to confirm and convey his or her opinion, possibly against that of the minority spokesperson.

Local meanings

Besides the overall meanings or topics of news reports, we also need to examine the 'local' meanings of words and sentences. Most traditional text and content analysis focused on the words being used in news about minorities. Derogatory words in racist discourse are well known, and need not be spelled out here. The new racism, as described above, however, avoids explicitly racist labels, and uses negative words to describe the properties or actions of immigrants or minorities (for instance, 'illegal'). Special 'code-words' (such as 'welfare mothers') may be used, and the readers are able to interpret these words in terms of minorities and the problems attributed to them. And it needs no further argument that attitudes about groups and opinions about specific events may influence the 'lexical choice' of such words as 'riot' on the one hand, or 'urban unrest', 'disturbance' or 'uprising' on the other hand, as is also the case for the classical example of 'terrorist' vs. 'rebel' vs. 'freedom fighter'. Thus, most mentions of 'terrorists' (especially also in the US press) will stereotypically refer to Arabs. Violent men who are our friends or allies will seldom get that label. For the same reason, 'drug barons' are always Latin men in South America, never the white men who are in the drugs business within the US itself. In other words, when there are options of lexicalization, choosing one word rather than another often has

contextual reasons, such as the opinions of the speaker about a person, a group or their actions.

Modern linguistics and discourse analysis, however, goes beyond the study of isolated words, and also studies the meaning of sentences or sequences of sentences and their role in the text as a whole. Thus, sentence meanings also show what specific roles participants have, for instance as responsible agents, targets or victims of action. What we find in such an analysis is in line of the general strategy mentioned above: Minorities are often represented in a passive role (things are being decided or done, for or against them), unless they are agents of negative actions, such as illegal entry, crime, violence or drug abuse. In the latter case their responsible agency will be emphasized.

Much of the information in discourse, and hence also in news reports, is implicit, and supplied by the recipients on the basis of their knowledge of the context and of the world. Also in news and editorials about ethnic affairs, thus, many meanings are merely implied or presupposed and not explicitly stated. Because of social norms, and for reasons of impression management, for instance, many negative things about minorities may not be stated explicitly, and thus are conveyed 'between the lines'. For instance in a sentence like 'The rising crime in the inner city worried the politicians', it is presupposed, and not explicitly stated, that there is rising crime in the inner city, as if this were a known 'fact'.

What distinguishes an arbitrary sequence of sentences from a (fragment) of discourse, is what we call 'coherence'. One of the conditions of coherence is that subsequent sentences refer to situations, actions or events that are (for instance causally) related. But, as suggested above, beliefs about such facts may be biased, and hence also may affect coherence. For instance, if Dutch employers claim that high unemployment among minorities is caused especially by lacking qualifications (and not by discrimination), then their version of the relations between the facts makes their discourse coherent-for-them, but possibly not for others. Thus, also in ethnic affairs reporting, the coherence of news is relative to the way journalists represent ethnic events (in their so-called 'mental models' of these events).

Another feature of coherence is not based on the 'facts of a model', but rather on 'functional relations' between the meanings of sentences themselves. One meaning for instance may be a generalization, a specification or an example of another. News in general is written top-down, usually following relationships of specification: beginning with the general summary of an event in headline and lead, the rest of the news will specify details. However, we have seen that in ethnic affairs coverage, if such details are bad for Our image, specifications may fail. This is the case more generally in discourse

meaning: the levels of description and amount of detail on each level will depend not only on contextual relevance, but also on whether or not this will contribute to (de)emphasizing our good properties and their bad one. For the same reason, another functional relation that is bound to occur is that of contrast – for instance emphasizing Their lack of initiative and emphasizing Our help.

Such a semantic construction of oppositions in underlying attitudes about the ingroup and the outgroup typically appears, as we have seen above for other discourse about minorities, in what are called ‘disclaimers’. These are specific semantic moves that realize in one sentence the strategy of Positive Self-Presentation and Negative Other-Presentation. Typical examples of such disclaimers, as we have seen, are Apparent Denial (‘We have nothing against foreigners, but . . .’), Apparent Concession (‘There are also nice foreigners, but on the whole . . .’), Apparent Empathy (‘Of course it is sad for refugees that . . ., but . . .’), and Transfer (‘I have nothing against foreigners, but my clients . . .’). We call these disclaimers ‘apparent’ not because the speakers are obviously or intentionally ‘lying’, but because the structure of their discourse is such that especially the negative part of the sentence is spelled out throughout the discourse. The positive part thus especially has the function of avoiding a bad impression with the recipients.

Form, formulation and expression

Discourse meaning especially realizes ‘underlying’ beliefs of speakers, such as their mental models about a specific event reported in the news. But discourse is more than just meaning: meaning must be expressed in concrete words, as we have seen above, and these words make up sentences, with their own syntax, and (in the press) their characteristic expression in different letter type, layout, photos, place on the page, and so on. These various forms or formulation patterns of discourse may themselves emphasize or de-emphasize meanings. Thus violence and crime of minorities will typically appear in (big) headlines, and prominently on the front page, whereas this is seldom the case for other news about them. Similarly, ‘active’ sentences may emphasize the responsible agency of the subject, whereas ‘passive’ sentences about the same action may background agency. The same is true for verbs that are ‘nominalized’, such as using the word ‘discrimination’ instead of saying who discriminated whom. Much research has shown that this is a well-known device in the coverage of ethnic issues, for instance to mitigate the negative actions of ingroups or ‘our’ organizations, such as the police (Fowler *et al.* 1979; Fowler 199 1).

Conclusion

We see that various levels of discourse (and we shall mention some others below) may be involved in the enactment, expression or inculcation of negative beliefs about immigrants and minorities, and thus contribute to racism. Beyond a superficial content analysis of isolated words, a detailed discourse analysis may provide insight into the underlying mechanisms of how discourse embodies ethnic stereotypes and attitudes, and at the same time, how the minds of recipients are 'managed' by such discourse structures. Overall we have found that both the meanings and the formal structures of text and talk in general, and of news in particular, tend to favour the ingroup and often derogates or problematizes the outgroup.

Example

Let us finally examine in some detail a concrete example of a newspaper text. In light of what has been said above, such an analysis focuses on the ways that events and their participants are being represented in the text, and whether the structures of the text do convey a generally positive or negative opinion about Us versus Them.

The news report we analyse is taken from the British tabloid the *Sun* of 2 February 1989. It is presented as a 'News Special', which suggests not only that it is 'news' but also that the *Sun* probably has done some 'investigative reporting' of its own. It is signed by John Kaye and Ahson Bowyer. The article deals with 'illegal immigration' and police raids of various establishments where 'illegal immigrants' were arrested. Given the *Sun*'s circulation, millions of British readers may have seen this article.

The article takes up nearly a whole page, with three pictures of 'raided' restaurants on the left, with a band on the pictures saying 'RAIDED'. In the middle of the article there is a figure with statistics of 'illegal immigration' headlined 'HOW THE ILLEGALS TOTAL HAS SHOT UP'.

Over the full width of the page there is a huge banner headline saying:

BRITAIN INVADED BY AN ARMY OF ILLEGALS

Let us begin our analysis, quite appropriately, with this not exactly unobtrusive headline. Theoretically, headlines express the major topic of an article. In this case, the topic is 'illegal immigration' more generally, and not (as in most news items) a specific event. This is also the reason why this is a 'News Special', and not a normal news report. News specials may deal with an issue, and in that respect are more like background articles.

In our analysis, we shall print theoretical terms in bold italic, so as to highlight what kind of analytical concept is being used in the description. Implications and interpretations are printed in italic, and relate to the structures of news on ethnic affairs dealt with above. Instead of dealing with each phenomenon separately, we study them in an integrated way for various fragments, since they often are closely related. Words used in the article quoted in our running text are signalled by quotation marks.

The most obvious property of this headline is its *rhetoric*, as is common in tabloid headlines, namely, the *hyperbolic* use of *metaphors*. Thus, entering Britain is conceptualized as an 'invasion', which is a common negative metaphor to represent immigration, and the immigrants are described with a metaphor of the same military *register*, namely, as an army. Obviously, such metaphors are hardly innocent, and the use of military metaphors implies that immigrants are both *violent* and a *threat*. We have seen that violence and threat among the main properties of the meaning of news discourse on immigrants. However, the violence and threat is not merely that of some individuals coming in, but is suggested to be *massive* and *organized*, as is the case for an army. Moreover, invasion does not merely imply a violent act, but also a massive threat, namely a massive threat from abroad. The target of this threat is Britain, which is *topicalized* in the headline (it occurs in first position of the headline and the article), so that it is highlighted as the victim of the foreign army. On the other hand the *passive sentence* construction emphasizes the 'news' by putting the 'invasion by an army of illegals' as the *comment* of the sentence. Note, finally, that only one dimension of the immigrants is selected in naming them, namely, that they are 'illegal'. This *lexicalization* is adopted also in the mainstream press in most European countries and North America to describe undocumented immigrants. Beside the massive violence of their entry, immigrants are thus also *associated* with breaking the law, and hence implicitly with *crime*.

It needs no further comment that at various levels of the structure of this headline immigrants are being described very negatively according to the third main topic of ethnic issues, namely 'They are a Threat to Us'. But even the notion of Threat is not strong enough, and here further emphasized by stereotypical hyperbolic metaphors used to describe an Outside Threat.

Let us now consider some other fragments of this 'News Special'. The lead, printed over three columns, reads as follows:

1 BRITAIN is being swamped by a tide of illegal immigrants so desperate for a job that they will work for a pittance in our restaurants, cafes and nightclubs.

As usual, leads express the macrostructure of the text, and thus further specify the main topic expressed in the headline. Whereas the headline further abstracts from 'illegals' working in restaurants and other establishments, and describes Britain in general, here further information about the more specific location or targets of the 'foreign army' is given. However, also in this lead sentence, Britain is *topicalized* as the point of focus, the target of the army, and thus not only syntactically marked by the passive sentence, but also further graphically emphasized by the use of *capital letters*.

Then the other standard *metaphor* is being used to negatively describe the arrival of foreigners, namely, that of threatening water, namely, by 'swamped' and 'tide'. The 'swamp' metaphor is well known in Britain, because it was used by Margaret Thatcher in 1979 when she said she understood ordinary British people being 'rather swamped' by people with an alien culture. Again, the actors are being described as being 'illegal', a form of *rhetorical repetition* that further emphasizes that the immigrants break the law and are hence criminals.

There follows an apparent local rupture in the dominant negative meanings in the characterization of the immigrants when they are being described as 'desperate'. Such a description usually implies empathy, and such *empathy* is inconsistent with a description of immigrants in the threatening terms of an 'army' or a 'tide'. However, the rest of the sentence shows that this description is not necessarily one of empathy, but rather explains why the immigrant workers are prepared to work for a 'pittance'. This implies that they are also an *economic threat* to the country, because they thus easily are able to compete against 'legal' workers. This implied meaning is consistent with the current prejudice about foreigners that 'they take away our jobs'.

Finally, notice the first explicit use of an *ingroup designator*, the *possessive pronoun* 'our', thus establishing a clear contrast between Us and Them. That such a use is emphasizing ingroup-outgroup polarization is also obvious from the fact that the rest of the article also speaks about restaurants owned by foreigners or immigrants. That is, the restaurants or other establishments are not literally 'ours', but 'belong to Britain' in a broader, nationalist sense.

2 (a) Immigration officers are being overwhelmed with work. (b) Last year 2,191 'illegals' were nabbed and sent back home. (c) But there are tens of thousands more, slaving behind bars, cleaning hotel rooms and working in kitchens. (d) And when officers swoop on an establishment, they often find huge numbers of unlawful workers being employed.

In this first sentence after the lead, other participants are being introduced in the report, namely ‘immigration officers’, again topicalized in a passive sentence, and again, as in the headline and the lead as victims, but this time of being ‘overwhelmed by work’. This verb is a more subdued, but still quite strong, concept of the series established by ‘invaded’ and ‘swamped’, and *implies powerlessness* against the force, or in this case, the sheer size of the number of ‘illegals’.

The relevance of this implication becomes obvious in the next sentence, which argumentatively provides the statistical ‘facts’ that prove the amount of work. The same is true for the included figure that literally illustrates the rising number by a steeply climbing line, and the caption how the ‘illegals total has shot up’, a metaphor that also is borrowed from the domain of violence (as is ‘army’ and ‘invaded’). Rhetorically, this well-known *number game* of much immigration reporting in the media, does not imply that these numbers are both necessarily incorrect. Rather they signal subjectivity and hence credibility, whereas the numbers themselves imply the size of the threat. And if a modest number like ‘2,191’ should prove to be a weak case for the use of ‘invaded’ and ‘army’ and ‘swamp’, the reporters speak of ‘tens of thousands’, thus fully engaging in the speculative guesses about the ‘real’ number of ‘illegal immigrants’. Also the last line of this paragraph again refers to ‘huge numbers’, an obvious *hyperbole* when it later turns out in the article that these numbers barely reach a dozen. In sum, the typical number game of immigration reporting has one main semantic objective: to associate immigration with problems and threats, if only by quantity. This is also why in the examples of raids being mentioned after this paragraph all numbers are printed in *bold capitals*, thus emphasizing again these numbers.

Note also the unexpected use of *quotation marks* for the word ‘illegals’ in sentence 2b. One might interpret this as taking distance from the use of ‘illegals’ in the rest of the report, as we do ourselves in this article, but no further evidence exists in the article that the authors take such distance. Therefore the quotation marks should be read as being used to mark the use of the adjective ‘illegal’ as a noun, and as short for ‘illegal immigrants’. Note incidentally, that in sentence 2d another word is being used instead of ‘illegal’, namely ‘unlawful’, which also confirms breaking the law, but less harshly so than ‘illegal’. In the following examples of raids, all those described as being arrested are repeatedly characterized as ‘illegals’.

There is another element of empathy creeping into the article when the authors describe the immigrants as ‘slaving’. This totally converts (and subverts) the earlier characterization of the immigrants as active and evil, and not as victims. This use might continue the *thematic line* of empathy, set

with the earlier use of ‘desperate’. On the other hand, the use of ‘slave’ presupposes ‘slaveholders’, and instead of mere empathy, this may suggest an accusation of restaurant owners who exploit their ‘illegal’ workers, as we shall indeed see later in the text, where employers are explicitly accused.

A numbered description of the raids carried out by immigration officers follows. These examples are being described as ‘cases’, as in a scholarly or clinical report. This use of *jargon* suggests objectivity and reliability: the *Sun* has concrete evidence. (In the next paragraph the *Sun* even claims to have a scoop when it revealed ‘exclusively’ the previous day ‘how an illegal immigrant was nabbed’ in the kitchen of one establishment.

Furtive

3 The battle to hunt down the furtive workforce is carried out by a squad of just 115 immigration officers.

As is well known for news, and as suggested above, *numbers* are the *rhetorical* device to suggest precision and objectivity, and hence credibility. Also in this report, we not only find the usual number game to count ‘illegal’ immigrants, but also other aspects of the operation by the authorities, which in the next paragraph is said to be carried out by a ‘squad of just 115 officers’. And in the next paragraph it is said that an ‘extra 40 men’ more are planned to be drafted.

Note in example 3 also the use of another synonym for ‘illegal workers’, ‘furtive workforce’, which also seems a bit softer than ‘illegal immigrants’, but which still has the association of breaking the law and crime.

Again possibly in line with the emphatic sequence about the immigrants is the use of ‘hunt down’ in example 3, which might show some feelings for the immigrants, but again the rest of the text seems to belie this interpretation. Rather ‘hunting down’ is in the same line as ‘battle’, and said of a posse after a dangerous criminal. Rather than the consequence for the victims of such police hunts, it is the fascinating ‘hunt’ itself that the *Sun* is interested in.

Just describing migrant workers as being ‘illegal’ and desperate to work ‘furtively’ might not impress a lot of readers. So, apart from associating them with an army, invasion, and other notions (like the word ‘battle’ in example 3) in the same metaphorical domain of the military, the *Sun* needs to be clearer about the negative characteristics of the immigrants. The tabloid does this as follows:

4 Illegals sneak in by:

- DECEIVING immigration officers when they are quizzed at airports.
- DISAPPEARING after their entry visas run out.

- **FORGING** work permits and other documents.
- **RUNNING** away from immigrant detention centres.

Although perhaps not exactly featuring capital crimes, this bullet list of the ways immigrants break the law or violate norms, is clear enough to emphasize the overall negative picture of them being represented in this report. Indeed, apart from breaking the law, the Others cannot be trusted: they are liars ('deceiving'). The bold caps draw attention and emphasize this negative characters description, as does the bullet list, which obviously functions as a mnemonic device for the readers, in case they should overlook and forget the 'trespasses' of the 'illegals' (now used without quotation marks).

There is only one point where 'people like Us', that is, possible ingroup members, are criticized in this report:

5 They have little difficulty finding jobs, especially in London, because unscrupulous employers know that they can pay rock-bottom wages. *Cash* And they are invariably paid in cash with not a word to the taxman.

Follows a description of the low wages (£60 a week for 60 hours of work – another nice *number rhetoric* example, using identical numbers for money and hours of work).

Usually the *Sun* will not antagonize the business community, so the use of 'unscrupulous' is unexpectedly critical, but the next sentence shows that it is not (only) because poor immigrants are being exploited, but again that the law is broken. This topic fits very well with the law and order orientation of the tabloid, and also the 'illegal' topic of this article. In this sense, 'unscrupulous' employers do not belong to Us. That exploitation is not a primary concern is confirmed by the next paragraph that says that £100 a week is ten times more than a Thai or Filipino would earn at home, *implying* that paying them ten times more than at home is in fact great for them.

Also the next paragraphs continue the *number rhetoric*: how many people were arrested ('nabbed' in the *popular style* of the *Sun*), sent back or voluntarily went back. Keeping the score, apparently, is important when it comes to 'illegal' immigrants, and gives the News Special its hard core, factual character. And if a Thai has overstayed, the number of years he overstayed is printed in bold caps in the next paragraph: **12 YEARS**.

In the rest of the article, we finally get to hear some of the participants. First an immigration officer who comments on the numbers, as well as the military style operation of the 'hunt': 'It is impossible to know how many illegal immigrants there are. But we are certainly stepping up our efforts to

track them down.’ Then, also employers are quoted, and their violation of the law seemingly excused, as follows:

6 It is difficult for the restaurant trade to work out who is a legal worker and who is not.

As we already surmised above, accusing ‘one’s own’ is not a common element in the overall strategy of Positive Self-Presentation, and example 6 shows that the accusation is mitigated by referring to the alleged difficulties of the employers to know who is ‘illegal’ or not. This is in accordance with the strategy in ethnic reporting that emphasizes Their bad acts, and mitigates those of ingroup members. The quote from the managing director of a trendy cafe, seems to belie these ‘difficulties’ when he says that checking the passport for a valid work permit is all there is to it. The same quote again returns to the number theme: ‘I’d say 1 in 20 people who come here aren’t allowed to work in Britain’. A separate side-article, on the other hand, emphasizes again that it is not that easy to find out the status of immigrants, because these often use ‘false identities’.

Results of the analysis

Our analysis has shown that reporting on ethnic affairs typically shows the following properties within the overall strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation:

- Immigrants are stereotypically represented as breaking the norms and the law, that is, as being different, deviant and a threat to Us.
- We as a group or nation are represented as victims, or as taking vigorous action (by immigration officials or the police) against such deviance.
- Such representations may be enhanced by hyperboles and metaphors.
- Credibility and facticity of reports is rhetorically enhanced by the frequent use of numbers and statistics.

Conclusion

The New Racism of western societies is a system of ethnic or ‘racial’ inequality consisting of sets of sometimes subtle everyday discriminatory practices sustained by socially shared representations, such as stereotypes, prejudices and ideologies. This system is reproduced not only in the daily participation of (white) group members in various non-verbal forms of everyday racism,

but also by discourse. Text and talk about the Others, especially by the elites, thus primarily functions as the source of ethnic beliefs for ingroup members, and as a means of creating ingroup cohesion and maintaining and legitimating dominance. This is especially the case for media discourse in general and the news in particular. Systematic negative portrayal of the Others, thus vitally contributed to negative mental models, stereotypes, prejudices and ideologies about the Others, and hence indirectly to the enactment and reproduction of racism. Beyond superficial content analysis, detailed and systematic discourse analysis is able to provide insights into the discursive mechanisms of this role of public discourse in the reproduction of racism, and how also the news systematically conveys positive images (mental representations) of Us, and negative ones about Them.

Further reading

- Bell, A. and Garrett, P. (eds) (1998) *Approaches to Media Discourse*. Oxford: Blackwell.
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