

Discourse & Society

<http://das.sagepub.com>

Discourse and manipulation

Teun A. van Dijk

Discourse Society 2006; 17; 359

DOI: 10.1177/0957926506060250

The online version of this article can be found at:
<http://das.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/17/3/359>

Published by:

 SAGE Publications

<http://www.sagepublications.com>

Additional services and information for *Discourse & Society* can be found at:

Email Alerts: <http://das.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

Subscriptions: <http://das.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

Reprints: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

Permissions: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

Discourse and manipulation



Discourse & Society
Copyright © 2006
SAGE Publications
(London, Thousand Oaks,
CA and New Delhi)
<http://das.sagepub.com>
Vol 17(3): 359–383
10.1177/
0957926506060250

TEUN A. VAN DIJK
UNIVERSITAT POMPEU FABRA, BARCELONA

ABSTRACT. 'Manipulation' is one of the crucial notions of Critical Discourse Analysis that require further theoretical analysis. This article offers a triangulated approach to manipulation as a form of social power abuse, cognitive mind control and discursive interaction. Socially, manipulation is defined as illegitimate domination confirming social inequality. Cognitively, manipulation as mind control involves the interference with processes of understanding, the formation of biased mental models and social representations such as knowledge and ideologies. Discursively, manipulation generally involves the usual forms and formats of ideological discourse, such as emphasizing Our good things, and emphasizing Their bad things. At all these levels of analysis it is shown how manipulation is different from legitimate mind control, such as in persuasion and providing information, for instance by stipulating that manipulation is in the best interest of the dominated group and against the best interests of dominated groups. Finally, this theory is illustrated by a partial analysis of a speech by Tony Blair in the House of Commons legitimating the participation of the UK in the US-led war against Iraq in 2003.

KEY WORDS: *Tony Blair, domination, House of Commons, ideologies, Iraq war, knowledge, legitimacy, manipulation, mental models, mind control, parliamentary discourse, persuasion, power abuse, social representations*

Introduction

There are a number of crucial notions in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) that require special attention because they imply discursive power abuse. Manipulation is one of these notions. Yet, although this notion is often used in a more impressionistic way, there is no systematic theory of the structures and processes involved in manipulation.

In this article, I examine some of these properties of manipulation, and do so within the 'triangulation' framework that explicitly links discourse, cognition

and society (Van Dijk, 2001). A discourse analytical approach is warranted because most manipulation, as we understand this notion, takes place by text and talk. Secondly, those being manipulated are human beings, and this typically occurs through the manipulation of their 'minds', so that a cognitive account is also able to shed light on the processes of manipulation. Thirdly, manipulation is a form of talk-in-interaction, and since it implies power and power abuse, a social approach is also important.

I have advocated many times that these approaches cannot be reduced to one or two of them (see, e.g., Van Dijk, 1998, 2001). Although social, interactional and discursive approaches are crucial, I aim to show that a cognitive dimension is important as well because manipulation always involves a form of mental manipulation.

In this article I do not deal with the form of 'manipulation' used in physics, computer science, medicine or therapy, among other uses, more or less directly derived from the etymological meaning of 'manipulation' as moving things by one's hands. Rather, I deal with 'communicative' or 'symbolic' forms of manipulation as a form of interaction, such as politicians or the media manipulating voters or readers, that is, through some kind of discursive influence.

Conceptual analysis

Before we embark on a more theoretical account and the analysis of some data, we need to be more explicit on the kind of manipulation we want to study. As suggested, manipulation as intended here is a communicative and interactional practice, in which a manipulator exercises control over other people, usually against their will or against their best interests. In everyday usage, the concept of manipulation has negative associations – manipulation is *bad* – because such a practice violates social norms.

It should therefore be borne in mind in the rest of this article that 'manipulation' is a typical observer's category, e.g. of critical analysts, and not necessarily a participant category; few language users would call their own discourse 'manipulative'. As is also the case for racist discourse, this shows that the well-known principle of some forms of ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis (CA), namely to make explicit members' categories, is not always a useful method in more critical approaches. Indeed, this would make the (critical) study of sexist or racist discursive practices impossible.

Manipulation not only involves power, but specifically *abuse* of power, that is, *domination*. That is, manipulation implies the exercise of a form of *illegitimate* influence by means of discourse: manipulators make others believe or do things that are in the interest of the manipulator, and against the best interests of the manipulated (of the many studies on discourse and legitimation, see, e.g., Chouliaraki, 2005; Martín Rojo and Van Dijk, 1997).

In a broader, semiotic sense of manipulation, such illegitimate influence may also be exercised with pictures, photos, movies or other media (Van Leeuwen,

2005). Indeed, many forms of contemporary communicative manipulation, e.g. by the mass media, are multimodal, as is typically the case in advertising (Day, 1999; Messaris, 1997).

Without the negative associations, manipulation could be a form of (legitimate) persuasion (see, e.g., Dillard and Pfau, 2002; O'Keefe, 2002). The crucial difference in this case is that in persuasion the interlocutors are free to believe or act as they please, depending on whether or not they accept the arguments of the persuader, whereas in manipulation recipients are typically assigned a more passive role: they are *victims* of manipulation. This negative consequence of manipulative discourse typically occurs when the recipients are unable to understand the real intentions or to see the full consequences of the beliefs or actions advocated by the manipulator. This may be the case especially when the recipients lack the specific knowledge that might be used to resist manipulation (Wodak, 1987). A well-known example is governmental and/or media discourse about immigration and immigrants, so that ordinary citizens blame the bad state of the economy, such as unemployment, on immigrants and not on government policies (Van Dijk, 1993).

Obviously, the boundary between (illegitimate) manipulation and (legitimate) persuasion is fuzzy, and context dependent: some recipients may be manipulated by a message that is unable to manipulate others. Also the same recipients may be more or less manipulable in different circumstances, states of mind, and so on. Many forms of commercial, political or religious persuasion may formally be ethically legitimate but people may still feel manipulated by it, or critical analysts may judge such communication to be manipulating people. Provisionally, then, I shall assume that the crucial criteria are that people are being acted upon against their fully conscious will and interests, and that manipulation is in the best interests of the manipulator.

In the following theoretical account of discursive manipulation, I follow the overall multidisciplinary framework I have advocated in the last decade, triangulating a social, cognitive and discursive approach (see, e.g., Van Dijk, 1998, 2001). That is, manipulation is a social phenomenon – especially because it involves interaction and power abuse between groups and social actors – a cognitive phenomenon because manipulation always implies the manipulation of the minds of participants, and a discursive–semiotic phenomenon, because manipulation is being exercised through text, talk and visual messages. As claimed earlier, none of these approaches can be reduced to the other and all three of them are needed in an integrated theory that also establishes explicit links between the different dimensions of manipulation.

Manipulation and society

To understand and analyse manipulative discourse, it is crucial to first examine its social environment. We have already assumed that one of the characteristics of manipulation, for instance as distinct from persuasion, is that it involves

power and domination. An analysis of this power dimension involves an account of the kind of control that some social actors or groups exercise over others (Clegg, 1975; Luke, 1989; Van Dijk, 1989; Wartenberg, 1990). We also have assumed that such control is first of all a control of the mind, that is, of the beliefs of recipients, and indirectly a control of the actions of recipients based on such manipulated beliefs.

In order to be able to exercise such social control of others, however, social actors need to satisfy personal and social criteria that enable them to influence others in the first place. In this article, I limit my analysis to social criteria, and ignore the influence of psychological factors, such as character traits, intelligence, learning, etc. In other words, I am not interested here in what might be a 'manipulating personality', or in the specific personal way by which people manipulate others.

Social conditions of manipulative control hence need to be formulated – at least at the macro level of analysis – in terms of group membership, institutional position, profession, material or symbolic resources and other factors that define the power of groups and their members. Thus, parents can manipulate their children because of their position of power and authority in the family, professors can manipulate their students because of their institutional position or profession and because of their knowledge, and the same is true for politicians manipulating voters, journalists manipulating the recipients of media discourse or religious leaders manipulating their followers. This does not mean that children cannot manipulate their parents, or students their teachers, but this is not because of their position of power, but as a form of opposition or dissent, or ad hoc, on the basis of personal characteristics.

Thus, the kind of social manipulation we are studying here is defined in terms of social domination and its reproduction in everyday practices, including discourse. In this sense, we are more interested in manipulation between groups and their members than in the personal manipulation of individual social actors.

A further analysis of domination, defined as power abuse, requires special access to, or control over, scarce social resources. One of these resources is preferential access to the mass media and public discourse, a resource shared by members of 'symbolic' elites, such as politicians, journalists, scholars, writers, teachers, and so on (Van Dijk, 1996). Obviously, in order to be able to manipulate many others through text and talk, one needs to have access to some form of public discourse, such as parliamentary debates, news, opinion articles, textbooks, scientific articles, novels, TV shows, advertising, the internet, and so on. And since such access and control in turn depend on, as well as constitute, the power of a group (institution, profession, etc.), public discourse is at the same time a means of the social reproduction of such power. For instance, politicians can also exercise their political power through public discourse, and through such public discourse they at the same time confirm and reproduce their political power. The same is true for journalists and professors, and their respective institutions – the media, the universities, etc.

We see that manipulation is one of the discursive social practices of dominant groups geared towards the reproduction of their power. Such dominant groups may do so in many (other) ways as well, e.g. through persuasion, providing information, education, instruction and other social practices that are aimed at influencing the knowledge, beliefs and (indirectly) the actions of the recipients.

We have seen that some of these social practices may of course be quite legitimate, e.g. when journalists or teachers provide information for their audiences. This means that manipulation, also in accordance with what has been said before about its negative characteristics, is characterized as an illegitimate social practice because it violates general social rules or norms. We define as illegitimate all forms of interaction, communication or other social practices that are only in the interests of one party, and against the best interests of the recipients.

We here touch upon the very social, legal and philosophical foundations of a just or democratic society, and of the ethical principles of discourse, interaction and communication (see, e.g., Habermas, 1984). A further discussion of these principles, and hence an explanation of why manipulation is illegitimate, is outside the scope of this article. We assumed that manipulation is illegitimate because it violates the human or social rights of those who are manipulated, but it is not easy to formulate the exact norms or values that are violated here.

One might venture as a norm that recipients are always duly informed about the goals or intentions of the speaker. However, this would be much too strict a criterion because in many forms of communication and interaction such intentions and goals are not made explicit, but contextually attributed to speakers by recipients (or analysts) on the basis of general rules of discourse and interaction. Indeed, one might even postulate a social egoism principle, saying that (nearly) all forms of interaction or discourse tend to be in the best interests of the speakers. This means that the criteria of legitimacy must be formulated in other terms, as suggested, namely that manipulation is illegitimate because it violates the rights of recipients. This need not imply the norm that all forms of communication should be in the best interests of the recipients. Many types of communication or speech act are not, as is the case for accusations, requests, commands, and so on.

A more pragmatic approach to such norms and principles are the conversational maxims formulated by Grice (1975), which require contributions to conversations to be truthful, relevant, relatively complete, and so on. In actual forms of talk and text, however, such maxims are often hard to apply: People lie, which may not always be the wrong thing to do; people tell only half of a story for all kinds of, sometimes legitimate, reasons and irrelevant talk is one of the most common forms of everyday interaction.

In other words, manipulation is not (only) 'wrong' because it violates conversational maxims or other norms and rules of conversation, although this may be one dimension of manipulative talk and text. We therefore will accept without further analysis that *manipulation is illegitimate in a democratic society, because it*

(re)produces, or may reproduce, inequality: it is in the best interests of powerful groups and speakers, and hurts the interests of less powerful groups and speakers. This means that the definition is not based on the intentions of the manipulators, nor on the more or less conscious awareness of manipulation by the recipients, but in terms of its societal consequences (see also Etzioni-Halevy, 1989).

For each communicative event, it then needs to be spelled out how such respective interests are managed by manipulative discourse. For instance, if the mass media provide incomplete or otherwise biased information about a specific politician during an election campaign so as to influence the votes of the readers, we would have a case of manipulation if we further assume that the readers have a right to be 'duly' informed about the candidates in an election. 'Due' information in this case may then further be specified as balanced, relatively complete, unbiased, relevant, and so on. This does not mean that a newspaper may not support or favour its own candidate, but it should do so with arguments, facts, etc., that is through adequate information and persuasion, and not through manipulation, for instance by omitting very important information, by lying or distorting the facts, and so on. All these normative principles, as they are also laid down in the professional codes of ethics of journalism, are part of the specific implementation of what counts as 'legitimate' forms of interaction and communication. Each of them, however, is quite vague, and in need of detailed further analysis. Again, as suggested earlier, the issues involved here belong to the *ethics of discourse*, and hence are part of the *foundations of CDA*.

This informal analysis of the social properties of manipulation also shows that if manipulation is a form of domination or power abuse, it needs to be defined in terms of *social groups, institutions or organizations*, and not at the individual level of personal interaction. This means that it only makes sense to speak of manipulation, as defined, when speakers or writers are manipulating others in their role as a member of a dominant collectivity. In contemporary information societies, this is especially the case for the symbolic elites in politics, the media, education, scholarship, the bureaucracy, as well as in business enterprises, on the one hand, and their various kinds of 'clients' (voters, readers, students, customers, the general public, etc.) on the other. Thus, manipulation, socially speaking, is a discursive form of elite power reproduction that is against the best interests of dominated groups and (re)produces social inequality.

Obviously, this formulation is in terms of traditional macro-level categories, such as the power of groups, organizations and institutions. Especially relevant for discourse analysis is of course also the more local, situated micro-level of social structure, that of *interaction*. Manipulation is also very fundamentally a form of social practice and interaction, and we shall therefore pay more attention to those local forms of manipulation when we discuss discursive manipulation later in this article.

Manipulation and cognition

Manipulating people involves manipulating their minds, that is, people's beliefs, such as the knowledge, opinions and ideologies which in turn control their actions. We have seen, however, that there are many forms of discourse-based mental influence, such as informing, teaching and persuasion, that also shape or change people's knowledge and opinions. This means that manipulation needs to be distinguished from these other forms of mind management, as we have done earlier in social terms, that is, in terms of the context of discourse. In order to be able to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate mind control, we first need to be more explicit about how discourse can 'affect' the mind in the first place.

Since the mind is extraordinarily complex, the way discourse may influence it inevitably involves intricate processes that can only be managed in real time by applying efficient strategies. For our purposes in this article, such an account will be simplified to a few basic principles and categories of cognitive analysis. There are a vast number of cognitive (laboratory) studies that show how understanding can be influenced by various contextual or textual 'manipulations', but it is beyond the scope of this article to review these (for general accounts of discourse processing, see Britton and Graesser, 1996; Kintsch, 1998; Van Dijk and Kintsch, 1983; Van Oostendorp and Goldman, 1999).

MANIPULATING SHORT TERM MEMORY (STM)-BASED DISCOURSE UNDERSTANDING

First of all, discourse in general, and manipulative discourse in particular, involve processing information in the short term memory (STM), basically resulting in 'understanding' (of words, clauses, sentences, utterances and non-verbal signals) for instance in terms of propositional 'meanings' or 'actions'. Such processing is strategic in the sense of being online, goal-directed, operating at various levels of discourse structure, and hypothetical: fast and efficient guesses and shortcuts are made instead of complete analyses.

One form of manipulation consists of controlling some of this, partly automatized, strategy of discourse understanding. For instance, by printing part of the text in a salient position (e.g. on top), and in larger or bold fonts; these devices will attract more attention, and hence will be processed with extra time or memory resources, as is the case for headlines, titles or publicity slogans – thus contributing to more detailed processing and to better representation and recall. Headlines and titles also function as the conventional text category for the expression of semantic macrostructures, or topics, which organize local semantic structures; for this reason, such topics are better represented and recalled. Our point here is that specific features of text and talk – such as its visual representation – may specifically affect the management of strategic understanding in STM, so that readers pay more attention to some pieces of information than others.

Of course, this occurs not only in manipulation, but also in legitimate forms of communication, such as news reports, textbooks and a host of other genres. *This suggests that, cognitively speaking, manipulation is nothing special: it makes use of very general properties of discourse processing.* So, as was the case for the social analysis of manipulation, we need further criteria that distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate influence on the processing of discourse. Manipulation in such a case may reside in the fact that by drawing attention to information A rather than B, the resulting understanding may be partial or biased, for instance when headlines emphasize irrelevant details, rather than expressing the most important topics of a discourse – thus impairing understanding of details through top-down influence of topics. The further social condition that should be added in this case, as we have done earlier, is that such partial or incomplete understanding is in the best interests of a powerful group or institution, and against the best interests of a dominated group. Obviously, this is not a cognitive or textual condition, but a normative social and contextual one: the rights of recipients to be adequately informed. Our cognitive analysis merely spells out how people are manipulated by controlling their minds, but cannot formulate why this is *wrong*. Similar processes are at play with many forms of non-verbal expressions, such as general layout, use of colour, photos, or drawings in written conversation, or gestures, facework and other non-verbal activity in oral discourse.

Since discourse processing in STM involves such different forms of analysis as phonetic, phonological, morphological, syntactic and lexical operations, all geared towards efficient understanding, each and any of these processes of STM may be influenced by various means. For instance, more distinct, slower pronunciation, less complex syntax and the use of basic lexical items, a clear topic on a subject the recipients know well, among many other conditions, will generally tend to favour understanding.

This also means that if speakers wish to hinder understanding, they will tend to do the opposite, that is, speak faster and less distinctly, with more complex sentences and abstruse words, on a confused topic or a subject less familiar to the recipients – as may be the case, for instance, in legal or medical discourse that is not primarily geared towards better understanding by clients, and hence may assume manipulative forms when understanding is intentionally impaired.

In other words, if dominant groups or institutions want to facilitate the understanding of the information that is consistent with their interests, and hinder the comprehension of the information that is not in their best interests (and vice versa for their recipients), then they may typically engage in these forms of STM-based manipulation of discourse understanding. We see that cognitive, social, discursive and ethical dimensions are involved in this case of illegitimate hindering or biasing of the process of discourse comprehension. The ethical dimension also may involve the further (cognitive) criterion whether such control of comprehension is *intentional* or not – as is the case for the distinction between murder and manslaughter. This means that in the context models of the speakers or writers there is an explicit plan to impair or bias understanding.

EPISODIC MANIPULATION

STM-based manipulation takes place online and affects strategic processes of the understanding of specific discourses. However, most manipulation is geared to more stable results, and hence focuses on long term memory (LTM), that is, knowledge, attitudes and ideologies, as we shall see in a moment. Also forming part of LTM, however, are the personal memories that define our life history and experiences (Neisser and Fivush, 1994), representations that are traditionally associated with 'episodic' memory (Tulving, 1983). That is, our memory of communicative events – which are among our everyday experiences – is stored in episodic memory, namely as specific mental models with their own schematic structures. Telling a story means formulating the personal, subjective mental model we have of some experience. And understanding a news report or a story involves the construction of such a (subjective) mental model by the recipients.

In episodic memory, the understanding of situated text and talk is thus related to more complete models of experiences. Understanding is not merely associating meanings to words, sentences or discourses, but constructing mental models in episodic memory, including our own personal opinions and emotions associated with an event we hear or read about. It is this mental model that is the basis of our future memories, as well as the basis of further learning, such as the acquisition of experience-based knowledge, attitudes and ideologies.

Note that mental models are unique, ad hoc and personal: it is *my* individual interpretation of this particular discourse in this specific situation. Of course, such personal models also involve the 'instantiation' of general, socially shared knowledge or beliefs – so that we can actually understand other people and communication and interaction is possible in the first place – but the mental model as a whole is unique and personal. There are other notions of (mental, cognitive) models that are used to represent socially shared, cultural knowledge (see, e.g., Shore, 1996), but that is not the kind of model I am referring to here.

Mental models not only define our understanding of talk and text itself (by representing what a discourse is about), but also the understanding of the whole communicative event. Such understandings are represented in 'context models', which at the same time, for the speakers, operate as their – dynamically changing – plans for speaking (Van Dijk, 1999).

Given the fundamental role of mental models in speaking and understanding, manipulation may be expected to especially target the formation, activation and uses of mental models in episodic memory. If manipulators are aiming for recipients to understand a discourse as *they* see it, it is crucial that the recipients form the mental models the manipulators want them to form, thus restricting their freedom of interpretation or at least the probability that they will understand the discourse against the best interests of the manipulators.

We shall later examine some of the discourse strategies that are geared in this way towards the formation or activation of 'preferred' models. More generally the strategy is to discursively emphasize those properties of models that are consistent with our interests (e.g. details of our good deeds), and discursively de-

emphasize those properties that are inconsistent with our interests (e.g. details of our bad deeds). Blaming the victim is one of the forms of manipulation in which dominant groups or institutions discursively influence the mental models of recipients, for instance by the re-attribution of responsibility of actions in their own interests. Any discursive strategy that may contribute to the formation or reactivation of preferred models may thus be used in manipulative discourse use. As is the case for STM processing, much model formation and activation tend to be automatized, and subtle control of mental models is often not even noticed by language users, thus contributing to manipulation.

MANIPULATING SOCIAL COGNITION

Discursively manipulating how recipients understand one event, action or discourse is at times quite important, especially for such monumental events as the attack on the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September, 2001, or the bomb attack on Spanish commuter trains on 11 March, 2004. Indeed, in the latter case, the conservative Spanish government led by José María Aznar tried to manipulate the press and citizens into believing that the attack was committed by ETA instead of by Islamist terrorists. In other words, through his declarations as well as those of his Minister of the Interior, Acebes, Aznar wanted to influence the structure of the mental model of the event by emphasizing the preferred agent of the attack – a model that would be consistent with the government's own anti-ETA policies. Since it soon became clear that this time it was not ETA but Al Qaida that was responsible for the attack, the voters in the upcoming elections felt manipulated and voted Aznar and the government of the Partido Popular out of office.

Although these and similar events, as well as the many discourses accompanying, describing and explaining them give rise to mental models that may have a special place in episodic memory so that they are well recalled even much later, the most influential form of manipulation does not focus on the creation of specific preferred mental models, but on more general and abstract beliefs such as knowledge, attitudes and ideologies. Thus, if a political party wants to increase its popularity with the voters, it will typically try to positively change voters' attitudes towards such a party, because a general, socially shared attitude is far more stable than the specific mental models (and opinions) of individual language users. Influencing attitudes implies influencing whole groups, and on many occasions. Thus, if governments want to restrict immigration, they will try to form or modify the attitudes of citizens (including other elites) about immigration (Van Dijk, 1993; Wodak and Van Dijk, 2000). In this case, they need not engage in multiple persuasion attempts every time immigrants want to enter the country. Manipulation thus focuses on the formation or modification of more general, socially shared representations – such as attitudes or ideologies – about important social issues. For instance, governments may do so for the issue of immigration by associating increased

immigration with (fears of) increasing delinquency, as former Prime Minister Aznar – as well as other European leaders – did in the past decade.

We see that the cognitive processes of manipulation assume that LTM not only stores subjectively interpreted personal experiences as mental models, but also more stable, more permanent, general and socially shared beliefs, sometimes called ‘social representations’ (Augoustinos and Walker, 1995; Moscovici, 2001). Our sociocultural knowledge forms the core of these beliefs, and allows us to meaningfully act, interact and communicate with other members of the same culture. The same is true for the many social attitudes and ideologies shared with other members of the same social group, e.g. pacifists, socialists and feminists, on the one hand, or racists and male chauvinists on the other (Van Dijk, 1999). These social representations are gradually acquired throughout our life time, and although they can be changed, they do not typically change overnight. They also influence the formation and activation of the personal mental models of group members. For instance, a pacifist will interpret events such as the US-led attack on Iraq, or news reports about them, in a different way from a militarist, and hence form a different mental model of such an event or sequence of events.

We have assumed that mental models on the one hand embody the personal history, experiences and opinions of individual persons, but on the other hand also feature a specific instantiation of socially shared beliefs. Most interaction and discourse is thus produced and understood in terms of mental models that combine personal and social beliefs – in a way that *both* explains the uniqueness of all discourse production and understanding, *and* the similarity of our understanding of the same text. Despite the general constraints of social representations on the formation of mental models and hence on discourse production and understanding, no two members of the same social group, class or institution, not even in the same communicative situation, will produce the same discourse or interpret a given discourse in the same way. In other words, mental models of events or communicative situations (context models) are the necessary interface between the social, the shared and the general, as well as the personal, the unique and the specific in discourse and communication.

Whereas manipulation may concretely affect the formation or change of unique personal mental models, the general goals of manipulative discourse are the control of the shared social representations of groups of people because these social beliefs in turn control what people do and say in many situations and over a relatively long period. Once people’s attitudes are influenced, for instance on terrorism, little or no further manipulation attempts may be necessary in order for people to act according to these attitudes, for instance to vote in favor of anti-terrorism policies (Chomsky, 2004; Sidel, 2004).

It comes as no surprise that, given the vital importance of social representations for interaction and discourse, manipulation will generally focus on social cognition, and hence on groups of people, rather than on individuals and their unique personal models. It is also in this sense that manipulation is a discursive practice that involves both cognitive and social dimensions. We should

therefore pay special attention to those discourse strategies that typically influence socially shared beliefs.

One of these strategies is generalization, in which case a concrete specific example that has made an impact on people's mental models is generalized to more general knowledge or attitudes, or even fundamental ideologies. The most striking recent example is the manipulation of US and world opinion about terrorism after 9/11, in which very emotional and strongly opinionated mental models held by citizens about this event were generalized to more abstract, shared fears, attitudes and ideologies about terrorism and related issues. This is also a genuine example of massive manipulation, because the resulting social representations are not in the best interests of the citizens when such attitudes are being manipulated in order to dramatically raise military spending, legitimate military intervention and pass legislation that imposes severe restrictions on civil rights and freedoms (such as the Patriot Act). Manipulation in this case is an abuse of power because citizens are manipulated into believing that such measures are taken in order to protect them (of the many books on manipulating public opinion after the September 11 attacks in the USA, see, e.g., Ahmed, 2005; Chomsky, 2004; Greenberg, 2002; Halliday, 2002; Palmer, 2003; Sidel, 2004; Žižek, 2002).

This notorious example of national and international manipulation by the US government, partly supported and carried out by the mass media, also shows some of the cognitive mechanisms of manipulation. Thus, first of all a very emotional event with a strong impact on people's mental models is being used in order to influence these mental models as desired – for instance in terms of a strong polarization between Us (good, innocent) and Them (evil, guilty). Secondly, through repeated messages and the exploitation of related events (e.g. other terrorist attacks), such a preferred model may be generalized to a more complex and stable social representation about terrorist attacks, or even an anti-terrorist ideology. Of importance in such a case is that the (real) interests and benefits of those in control of the manipulation process are hidden, obscured or denied, whereas the alleged benefits for 'all of us', for the 'nation', etc. are emphasized, for instance in terms of increased feelings of safety and security. That through anti-terrorist actions and military intervention not only the military and business corporations who produce arms and security outfits may profit, but more terrorism may actually be promoted, and hence security of the citizens further endangered, is obviously not part of the preferred attitudes that are the goals of such manipulation. Thus, one crucial cognitive condition of manipulation is that the targets (persons, groups, etc.) of manipulation are made to believe that some actions or policies are in their own interests, whereas in fact they are in the interests of the manipulators and their associates.

The examples of immigration, political violence and anti-terrorist ideologies involve strong opinions, attitudes and ideologies, and are textbook examples of governments and media manipulating the population at large, as they also were manipulated, for instance, during the 'Red scare' of anti-communist ideologies and manipulation in the Cold War and McCarthyism in the USA (Caute, 1978).

However, manipulation of social cognition may also involve the very basis of all social cognition: general, socioculturally shared *knowledge*. Indeed, one of the best ways to detect and resist manipulation attempts is specific knowledge (e.g. about the current interests of the manipulators) as well as general knowledge (e.g. about the strategies of maintaining the military budget at a high level). It will thus be in the best interests of dominant groups to make sure that relevant and potentially critical general knowledge is *not* acquired, or that only partial, misguided or biased knowledge is allowed distribution.

A well-known example of the latter strategy was the claim with which the US and its allies legitimized the attack on Iraq in 2003: 'knowledge' about weapons of mass destruction, knowledge that later turned out to be false. Information that may lead to knowledge that may be used critically to resist manipulation, for instance about the real costs of the war, the number of deaths, the nature of the 'collateral damage' (e.g. civilians killed in massive bombing and other military action), and so on, will typically be hidden, limited or otherwise made less risky, and hence discursively de-emphasized, for instance by euphemisms, vague expressions, implicitness, and so on.

Manipulation may affect social representations in many ways, both as to their contents as well as to their structures. Although as yet we know little about the internal organization of social representations, they are likely to feature schematic categories for participants and their properties as well as the typical (inter)actions they (are thought to) perform, how, when and where. Thus, attitudes about terrorist attacks may feature a script-like structure, with terrorists as main actors, associated with a number of prototypical attributes (cruel, radical, fundamentalist, etc.), using violent means (e.g. bombs) to kill innocent civilians as their victims, and so on.

Such attitudes are gradually acquired by generalization and abstraction from mental models formed by specific news stories, government declarations as well as films, among other discourses. It is important in this case that 'our' forms of political violence, such as military intervention or the actions of the police, are spoken and written about in such a way that they do not give rise to mental models that can be generalized as terrorist attacks, but as legitimate forms of (armed) resistance or punishment. And, vice versa, terrorist attacks need to be represented in such a way that no legitimation of such political violence may be construed in mental models and attitudes. The very notion of 'state terrorism' for this reason is controversial and used largely by dissidents, while blurring the distinction between illegitimate terrorist action and legitimate government and military action (Gareau, 2004). Mainstream media therefore consequently avoid describing state violence in terms of 'terrorism', not even when they are critical of the foreign policy of a country, as was the case for many European media in regard to the US attack against Iraq in 2003.

Finally, the manipulation of social cognition may affect the very norms and values used to evaluate events and people and to condemn or legitimate actions. For instance, in the manipulation of globalized world opinion, those who

advocate neoliberal market ideologies will typically emphasize and try to get adopted the primary value of 'freedom', a very positive value, but in such a case specifically interpreted as the freedom of enterprise, the freedom of the market, or the freedom from government interference with the market. In the case of terrorist threats and actions, anti-terrorist discourse celebrates the value of security, assigning it a higher priority than, for instance, the value of civil rights, or the value of equality (Doherty and McClintock, 2002).

We see how the cognitive dimension of manipulation involves strategic understanding processes that affect processing in STM, the formation of preferred mental models in episodic memory, and finally and most fundamentally, the formation or change of social representations, such as knowledge, attitudes, ideologies, norms and values. Groups of people who thus adopt the social representations preferred by dominant groups or institutions henceforth barely need further manipulation: they will tend to believe and act in accordance with these – manipulated – social cognitions anyway, because they have accepted them as their own. Thus, as we have seen, racist or xenophobic ideologies, manipulated in this way by the elites, will serve as a permanent basis for the discrimination (such as blaming the victim) of immigrants: a very effective strategy for steering critical attention away from the policies of the government or other elites (Van Dijk, 1993).

Discourse

Manipulation as defined here takes place through discourse in a broad sense, that is, including non-verbal characteristics, such as gestures, facework, text layout, pictures, sounds, music, and so on. Note though that, *as such*, discourse structures are not manipulative; they only have such functions or effects in specific communicative situations and the way in which these are interpreted by participants in their context models. For instance, as stipulated, manipulation is a social practice of power abuse, involving dominant and dominated groups, or institutions and their clients. This means that in principle the 'same' discourse (or discourse fragment) may be manipulative in one situation, but not in another situation. That is, the manipulative meaning (or critical evaluation) of text and talk depends on the context models of the recipients – including their models of the speakers or writers, and their attributed goals and intentions. Manipulative discourse typically occurs in public communication controlled by dominant political, bureaucratic, media, academic or corporate elites. This means that further contextual constraints prevail, namely on participants, their roles, their relations and their typical actions and cognitions (knowledge, goals). In other words, *discourse is defined to be manipulative first of all in terms of the context models of the participants*. That is, as critical analysts, we evaluate discourse as manipulative first of all in terms of their context categories, rather than in terms of their textual structures.

And yet, although discourse structures per se need not be manipulative, some of these structures may be more efficient than others in the process of influencing the minds of recipients in the speaker's or writer's own interests. For instance, as suggested earlier, headlines are typically used to express topics and to signal the most important information of a text, and may thus be used to assign (extra) weight to events that in themselves would not be so important. And, vice versa, discourse about events or states of affairs that are very relevant for citizens or clients may eschew headlines that emphasize the negative characteristics of dominant groups and institutions. To wit, the press *never* publishes stories about racism in the press, let alone emphasizes such information by prominent headlines on the front page (Van Dijk, 1991).

The overall strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation is very typical in this biased account of the facts in favour of the speaker's or writer's own interests, while blaming negative situations and events on opponents or on the Others (immigrants, terrorists, youths, etc.). This strategy can be applied to the structures of many discourse levels in the usual way (for examples and detail, see, e.g., Van Dijk, 2003):

- Overall interaction strategies
 - Positive self-presentation
 - Negative other-presentation
- Macro speech act implying Our 'good' acts and Their 'bad' acts, e.g. accusation, defence
- Semantic macrostructures: topic selection
 - (De-)emphasize negative/positive topics about Us/Them
- Local speech acts implementing and sustaining the global ones, e.g. statements that prove accusations.
- Local meanings Our/Their positive/negative actions
 - Give many/few details
 - Be general/specific
 - Be vague/precise
 - Be explicit/implicit
 - Etc.
- Lexicon: Select positive words for Us, negative words for Them
- Local syntax
 - Active vs passive sentences, nominalizations: (de)emphasize Our/Their positive/negative agency, responsibility
- Rhetorical figures
 - Hyperboles vs euphemisms for positive/negative meanings
 - Metonymies and metaphors emphasizing Our/Their positive/negative properties
- Expressions: sounds and visuals
 - Emphasize (loud, etc.; large, bold, etc.) positive/negative meanings
 - Order (first, last; top, bottom, etc.) positive/negative meanings

These strategies and moves at various levels of discourse are hardly surprising because they implement the usual ideological square of discursive group polarization (de/emphasize good/bad things of Us/Them) one finds in all ideological discourse (Van Dijk, 1998, 2003). Since social-political manipulation as discussed here also involves domination (power abuse), it is likely that such manipulation is also ideological. Thus, in the manipulative discourses that followed the September 11 and March 11 terrorist attacks in New York and Madrid, nationalist, anti-terrorist, anti-Islam, anti-Arab and racist ideologies were rife, emphasizing the evil nature of terrorists, and the freedom and democratic principles of the 'civilized' nations. Thus, if Bush & Co. want to manipulate the politicians and/or the citizens in the USA into accepting going to war in Iraq, engaging in world-wide actions against terrorists and their protectors (beginning with Afghanistan), and adopting a bill that severely limits the civil rights of the citizens, such discourse would be massively ideological. That is, they do this by emphasizing 'Our' fundamental values (freedom, democracy, etc.) and contrast these with the 'evil' ones attributed to Others. They thus make the citizens, traumatized by the attack on the Twin Towers, believe that the country is under attack, and that only a "war on terrorism" can avert a catastrophe. And those who do not accept such an argument may thus be accused of being unpatriotic.

Much more detailed analyses of these discourses have shown that they are fundamentally ideological in this way, and it is likely that social-political manipulation always involves ideologies, ideological attitudes and ideological discourse structures (see the special double issue of *Discourse & Society* 15(2-3), 2004, on the discourses of September 11, edited by Jim Martin and John Edwards). If many Western European leaders, including former Prime Minister Aznar, and more recently also Tony Blair, want to limit immigration so as to increase support from the voters, then such manipulative policies and discourses are also very ideological, involving nationalist feelings, Us/Them polarization, and a systematic negative representation of the Others in terms of negative values, characteristics and actions (delinquency, illegal entry, violence, etc.).

Although socio-political manipulation is usually ideological, and manipulative discourses often feature the usual ideological polarization patterns at all levels of analysis, the discursive structures and strategies of manipulation cannot simply be reduced to those of any other ideological discourse. Indeed, we may have social-political discourses that are persuasive but not manipulative, such as persuasive parliamentary debates or a discussion in a newspaper or on television. That is, given our analysis of the social and cognitive contexts of manipulative discourse, we need to examine the specific constraints formulated earlier, such as the dominant position of the manipulator (for instance), the lack of relevant knowledge of the recipients, and the condition that the likely consequences of the acts of manipulation are in the interest of the dominant group and against the best interests of the dominated group, thus contributing to (illegitimate) social inequality.

As suggested earlier, it is not likely that there are discursive strategies that are only used in manipulation. Language is seldom that specific – it is used in many different situations and by many different people, also by people of different ideological persuasions. That is, the same discourse structures are used in persuasion, information, education and other legitimate forms of communication, as well as in various forms of dissent.

However, given the specific social situation, there may be distinctive strategies preferred in manipulation, that is, ‘manipulative prototypes’. Specific kinds of fallacies might be used to persuade people to believe or do something, for instance those that are hard to resist, such as the Authority fallacy consisting of presenting devote Catholics with the argument that the Pope believes or recommends a certain action, or addressing Muslims and pointing out that a certain action is recommended by the Koran.

We thus introduce a contextual criterion that recipients of manipulation – as a form of power abuse – may be defined as victims, and this means that somehow they need to be defined as lacking crucial resources to resist, detect or avoid manipulation. Crucially, this may involve:

- (a) Incomplete or lack of relevant knowledge – so that no counter-arguments can be formulated against false, incomplete or biased assertions.
- (b) Fundamental norms, values and ideologies that cannot be denied or ignored.
- (c) Strong emotions, traumas, etc. that make people vulnerable.
- (d) Social positions, professions, status, etc. that induce people into tending to accept the discourses, arguments, etc. of elite persons, groups or organizations.

These are typical conditions of the cognitive, emotional or social situation of the communicative event, and also part of the context models of the participants, i.e. controlling their interactions and discourses. For instance, if recipients of manipulative discourse feel afraid of a speaker, then this will be represented in their context models, and the same is true for their relative position and the power relation between them and the speaker. Conversely, in order for manipulation to be successful, speakers need to have a mental model of the recipients and their (lack of) knowledge, their ideologies, emotions, earlier experiences, and so on.

Obviously, it is not necessary for all recipients to have the ideal properties of the target of manipulation. It may be sufficient that a large group or a majority has such properties. Thus, in most real-life situations there will be critical, sceptical, cynical, incredulous or dissident people who are impervious to manipulation. But as long as these people do not dominate the mainstream means of communication, or the elite institutions and organizations, the problem of counter-discourses is less serious for the manipulators.

Again, the most typical recent example has been the US-led war against Iraq, in which the majority of the mainstream media supported the government and congress, and critical voices were effectively marginalized, especially in the USA.

As soon as such dissident voices become more powerful (for instance, when part of the mainstream media supports them) and more widespread, as was the case during the war against Vietnam, manipulation functions less efficiently and finally may become useless, because the citizens have enough counter-information and arguments to resist manipulative discourse. Indeed, as was the case after the terrorist bomb attack in Madrid, citizens may resent manipulation so much that it will turn against the manipulators – and vote them out of office.

Given these contextual constraints, we may focus on those discourse structures that specifically presuppose such constraints:

- (a) Emphasize the position, power, authority or moral superiority of the speaker(s) or their sources – and, where relevant, the inferior position, lack of knowledge, etc. of the recipients.
- (b) Focus on the (new) beliefs that the manipulator wants the recipients to accept as knowledge, as well as on the arguments, proofs, etc. that make such beliefs more acceptable.
- (c) Discredit alternative (dissident, etc.) sources and beliefs.
- (d) Appeal to the relevant ideologies, attitudes and emotions of the recipients.

In sum, and in quite informal terms, the overall strategy of manipulative discourse is to focus on those cognitive and social characteristics of the recipient that make them more vulnerable and less resistant to manipulation, that make them credulous or willing victims to accept beliefs and do things they otherwise would not do. It is here that the essential condition of domination and inequality plays a role.

As formulated earlier, these general strategies of manipulative discourse appear to be largely semantic, i.e. focused on manipulating the 'content' of text and talk. However, as is the case for the implementation of ideologies, these preferred meanings may also be emphasized and de-emphasized in the usual ways, as explained: by (de-)topicalization of meanings, by specific speech acts, more or less precise or specific local meanings, manipulating explicit vs implicit information, lexicalization, metaphors and other rhetorical figures, as well as specific expression and realization (intonation, volume, speed; text layout, letter type, photos, etc.). Thus, the powerful position of the speaker may be emphasized by a very formal setting, attire, tone of voice, lexical choice, and so on, such as an official discourse of the president addressing the nation or Congress. The reliability of sources may be further enhanced by mentioning authoritative sources, using photographs, and so on – for example, the demonstration of the presence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. People's emotions may be roused and appealed to by specially selected words, dramatic rhetoric (hyperboles, etc.), photographs, and so on. Opponents and dissidents may be discredited by the usual display of Us/Them polarization mentioned earlier. All these discourse features of manipulation need to be examined in closer detail to see how they are formulated, how they function in text and talk and how they achieve their contextual functions and effects.

An example: Tony Blair legitimating the war against Iraq

Instead of continuing to theorize about these properties, however, let us examine an example of well-known manipulative discourse, e.g. when the UK Prime Minister (PM) Tony Blair in March 2003 legitimated his government's decision, in line with that of US President George W. Bush, to go to war and invade Iraq. This is a classic example that has attracted much attention in the press as well as from academic analysts from different disciplines. The case is important because until the following general elections in May 2005, Tony Blair was permanently accused of having misled UK citizens about this decision.

Examine the following initial fragment of this debate:

Extract 1

- 1 At the outset, I say that it is right that the House debate this issue and pass judgment. That is the
 2 democracy that is our right, but that others struggle for in vain. Again, I say that I do not disrespect the
 3 views in opposition to mine. This is a tough choice indeed, but it is also a stark one: to stand British
 4 troops down now and turn back, or to hold firm to the course that we have set. I believe passionately
 5 that we must hold firm to that course. The question most often posed is not "Why does it matter?" but
 6 "Why does it matter so much?" Here we are, the Government, with their most serious test, their
 7 majority at risk, the first Cabinet resignation over an issue of policy, the main parties internally
 8 divided, people who agree on everything else –
 9
 10 [Hon. Members: "The main parties?"]
 11
 12 Ah, yes, of course. The Liberal Democrats – unified, as ever, in opportunism and error.
 13
 14 [Interruption.]

Tony Blair begins his speech with a well-known *captatio benevolentiae*, which at the same time is a specific move in the overall strategy of positive self-presentation, by emphasizing his democratic credentials: respect for the House and other opinions, as well as recognizing the difficulty of the choice about whether or not to go to war. The manipulative effect here consists of suggesting that the UK Parliament (still) had the right to decide about going to war, although it later became clear that this decision had already been made the previous year. In the following sentences, Blair also insists that he/we/they must 'hold firm', which is also a strategic move of positive self-presentation. And when he finally refers to his 'passionate beliefs', we see that, in addition to the rational arguments, Blair is also presenting his emotional (and hence vulnerable) side, thus emphasizing the strength of his beliefs.

He even concedes that the matter is so serious that for the first time – due to the opinions and votes, even in his own party, against the war in Iraq – his government majority is at risk. Secondly, he construes the well-known polarized opposition between Us (democracies) and Them (dictatorship), thereby politically implying that those who are opposed to the war might be accused of supporting Saddam Hussein – trying, in this way, to silence opposition. Going to war, thus, is

a way of defending democracy, an implicit – fallacious – argument that is quite common in manipulation, namely by associating recipients with the enemy and hence possibly as traitors. This move is further sustained by another – ideological – move, namely that of nationalism when he refers to ‘British troops’ that cannot be stood down, which also politically implicates that not supporting British troops is disloyal and also a threat to the UK, democracy, and so on.

Finally, after protests from the House about mentioning only the major parties (Labour and Conservatives), he discredits the opposition of the Liberal Democrats by ridiculing them and calling them opportunistic.

We see that even in these few lines all aspects of manipulation are evident:

- (a) ideological polarization (Us/Democracies vs Them/Dictatorships, nationalism, supporting the troops);
- (b) positive self-presentation by moral superiority (allowing debate, respect for other opinions, struggling for democracy, holding firm, etc.);
- (c) emphasizing his power, despite the opposition;
- (d) discrediting the opponents, the Liberal Democrats, as being opportunistic; and
- (e) emotionalizing the argument (passionate beliefs).

In sum, those who oppose the decision to go to war are implicitly being accused (and once explicitly, such as the Liberal Democrats) as being less patriotic, as being unwilling to resist dictatorship, etc.

Consider the next paragraph of Blair’s speech:

Extract 2

1 The country and the Parliament reflect each other. This is a debate that, as time has gone on, has
 2 become less bitter but no less grave. So why does it matter so much? Because the outcome of this issue
 3 will now determine more than the fate of the Iraqi regime and more than the future of the Iraqi people
 4 who have been brutalized by Saddam for so long, important though those issues are. It will determine
 5 the way in which Britain and the world confront the central security threat of the 21st century, the
 6 development of the United Nations, the relationship between Europe and the United States, the
 7 relations within the European Union and the way in which the United States engages with the rest of
 8 the world. So it could hardly be more important. It will determine the pattern of international politics
 9 for the next generation.

Manipulation in this fragment becomes even more explicit. First, Blair continues his positive self-presentation by emphasizing his generosity and democratic credentials (recognizing opposition in parliament and the country). Secondly, he rhetorically enhances the seriousness of the matter (with the litotes ‘no less grave’). Thirdly, he continues the ideological polarization strategy (We/Democracy vs Them/Dictatorship). Fourthly, he uses hyperboles (‘brutalized’) to enhance that the Other is evil. And finally and crucially, he extends the ideological opposition between Us and Them, to an in-group of Us, Europe, the United States and the rest of the world, facing its major security threat. To summarize, what in reality is (among many other things) getting control with

the USA of a key (oil) country in the Middle East, using as an excuse weapons of mass destruction and the support of terrorism, is now presented as defending the whole 'free' world against its major threat. Besides the extension of the in-group from 'Us' in the UK to the rest of the 'free' world (a move one might call 'ideological globalization'), we also witness several other hyperbolic moves to emphasize the seriousness of the situation, e.g. the extension of time: 'for the next generation'.

Thus we see that manipulative discourse focuses on several crucial and fundamental issues: the international struggle between Good and Evil, national and international solidarity, the seriousness of the situation as an international conflict, positive self-presentation as a strong ('firm') and morally superior leader, and negative other-presentation (e.g. of the opposition) as opportunistic.

In the rest of his speech, not analysed here, Blair engages in the following manipulative moves:

- (a) History of the aftermath of the previous war with Iraq, the importance of the issue of the WMD, Saddam Hussein's bad intentions, and misleading UN weapons inspections, etc.
- (b) Description of the WMD: anthrax, etc.
- (c) Repeated expressions of doubts about Saddam Hussein's credibility.
- (d) Repeated positive self-presentation: details of willingness to compromise, as being reasonable ('Again, I defy anyone to describe that as an unreasonable proposition'.)

In other words, this part is essentially what was missing in the earlier part: a detailed account of the 'historical facts', up to Resolution 1441 of the Security Council, as a legitimization to go to war.

Although this single example obviously does not present all the relevant strategies of manipulative discourse, we have found some classic examples of manipulative strategies, such as emphasizing one's own power and moral superiority, discrediting one's opponents, providing details of the 'facts', polarization between Us and Them, negative Other-presentation, ideological alignment (democracy, nationalism), emotional appeals, and so on.

Members of parliament are not exactly stupid people, and there is little doubt that they would perfectly understand many of Blair's moves of legitimization and manipulation. This means that if they are not powerless victims, and there is no consequential political inequality, we may have a form of political persuasion but not of manipulation, as stipulated earlier.

Yet, there is a crucial point where parliament and the opposition are less powerful than the government: they lack the crucial information, e.g. of the secret services, about the WMD, in order to be able to accept the legitimacy of the invasion of Iraq. Secondly, the Labour majority in the House, even when many of them opposed the invasion of Iraq – as did the majority of the British people – can hardly reject Blair's motion without putting the Labour government at risk. We know that only a few Labour politicians openly defied the party leadership, and

thus were willing to risk losing their jobs. Thirdly, such a rejection would also mean defying the USA and damaging the friendship between the UK and the USA. Fourthly, no one in the House can morally defend showing any lack of solidarity with British troops abroad – and hope to get re-elected. Finally, withholding support for this motion could indeed be (and has been) explained as defending Saddam Hussein: a double bind or Catch 22 situation in which those on the left wing in particular, who are most explicitly engaged in the struggle against dictatorships, can hardly disagree with the manipulative argument.

In this specific case, we see that some relevant context properties of this speech help us to distinguish between manipulation and legitimate persuasion, although in real life the two kinds of mind control overlap. That is, many of the strategies used may also be applied in perfectly legitimate political rhetoric in parliament. However, in this case of what is defined as a national and international emergency, even a powerful parliament like that of the UK may be manipulated into accepting the Prime Minister's policy of joining the USA in what is presented as a war against tyranny and terrorism. Both contextually (the speaker as leader of the Labour party and PM, the recipients as MPs and British, etc.) as well as textually, Blair defines the situation in such a way that few MPs *can* refuse, even when they know they are being manipulated and probably lied to.

In sum, the MPs are 'victims' of the political situation in several ways, and can thus be manipulated, as happened in the USA and Spain, by those in power. By accepting the reasons provided by Blair in his speech legitimating the war, they are manipulated not only into accepting specific beliefs, e.g. on international security, but also into the concrete act of accepting the motion and thereby sending troops to Iraq.

Final remark

In this article, we have taken a multidisciplinary approach to an account of discursive manipulation. In order to distinguish such discourse from other forms of influence, we first *socially* defined it as a form of power abuse or domination. Secondly, we focused on the *cognitive* dimensions of manipulation by identifying what exactly the 'mind control' dimension of manipulation means. And finally, we analysed the various *discursive* dimensions of manipulation by focusing on the usual polarized structures of positive self-presentation and negative other presentation expressing ideological conflict. In addition, we found that manipulation involves: enhancing the power, moral superiority and credibility of the speaker(s), and discrediting dissidents, while vilifying the Others, the enemy; the use of emotional appeals; and adducing seemingly irrefutable proofs of one's beliefs and reasons. Future work will need to provide much more detail about the discursive, cognitive and social aspects of manipulation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An earlier version of this paper was read at the annual Critical Discourse Colloquium in Athens (24–5 May 2005), organized by Bessie Mitsikopoulou and her colleagues and students. I thank the participants for their critical comments.

POSTSCRIPT MARCH 2006

After completion and first proofs of this paper, I received a book on the same topic, edited by Louis de Saussure & Peter Schultz: *Manipulation and Ideologies in the Twentieth Century* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2005), which I hope to review in a forthcoming issue of *Language & Society*. This book is a useful and timely collection of papers (by European discourse analysts) on such topics as argumentation and fallacies in argumentation, the use and abuse of metaphors, the role of presuppositions, the notion of 'manufacturing consent', the analysis of fascist and other totalitarian discourses (Hitler, Pinochet), and manipulation and racist populism, among other topics, as well as concerted attempts at definition and conceptual analysis of the elusive notion of manipulation. I regret I did not know about this book when I wrote this paper. I am sure I would have benefited from it, and it would be interesting to examine how my theoretical account overlaps with that of the contributors.

REFERENCES

- Ahmed, N.M. (2005) *The War on Truth: 9/11: Disinformation, and the Anatomy of Terrorism*. New York: Olive Branch Press.
- Augoustinos, M. and Walker, I. (1995) *Social Cognition: An Integrated Introduction*. London: Sage.
- Britton, B.K. and Graesser, A.C. (eds) (1996) *Models of Understanding Text*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Caute, D. (1978) *The Great Fear: The Anti-Communist Purge under Truman and Eisenhower*. London: Secker and Warburg.
- Chomsky, N. (2004) *Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance*. New York: Henry Holt.
- Chouliaraki, L. (2005) 'The Soft Power of War: Legitimacy and Community in Iraq War Discourses', special issue of *Journal of Language and Politics* 4(1).
- Clegg, S. (1975) *Power, Rule, and Domination: A Critical and Empirical Understanding of Power in Sociological Theory and Organizational Life*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Day, N. (1999) *Advertising: Information or Manipulation?* Springfield, NJ: Enslow.
- Dillard, J.P. and Pfau, M. (2002) *The Persuasion Handbook: Developments in Theory and Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Doherty, E. and McClintock, M. (2002) *A Year of Loss: Reexamining Civil Liberties since September 11*. New York: Lawyers Committee for Human Rights.
- Edwards, J. and Martin, J.R. (eds) (2004) Interpreting tragedy: the language of 11 September 2001. Special issue. *Discourse & Society* 15(2–3).
- Etzioni-Halevy, E. (1989) *Fragile Democracy: The Use and Abuse of Power in Western Societies*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.
- Gareau, F.H. (2004) *State Terrorism and the United States: From Counterinsurgency to the War on Terrorism*. Atlanta, GA: Clarity Press.

- Greenberg, B.S. (ed.) (2002) *Communication and Terrorism: Public and Media Responses to 9/11*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Grice, H. (1975) 'Logic and Conversation', in P. Cole and J. Morgan (eds) *Syntax and Semantics*, Vol. 3: *Speech Acts*, pp. 68–134. New York: Academic Press.
- Habermas, J. (1984) *The Theory of Communicative Action*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Halliday, F. (2002) *Two Hours that Shook the World: September 11, 2001: Causes and Consequences*. London: Saqi.
- Kintsch, W. (1998) *Comprehension: A Paradigm for Cognition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Luke, T.W. (1989) *Screens of Power: Ideology, Domination, and Resistance in Informational Society*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Martín Rojo, L.M. and Van Dijk, T.A. (1997) 'There Was a Problem, and It Was Solved: Legitimizing the Expulsion of Illegal Migrants in Spanish Parliamentary Discourse', *Discourse & Society* 8(4): 523–66.
- Messaris, P. (1997) *Visual Persuasion: The Role of Images in Advertising*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Moscovici, S. (2001) *Social Representations: Explorations in Social Psychology*. New York: New York University Press.
- Neisser, U. and Fivush, R. (eds) (1994) *The Remembering Self: Construction and Accuracy in the Self-Narrative*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- O'Keefe, D.J. (2002) *Persuasion: Theory & Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Palmer, N. (ed.) (2003) *Terrorism, War, and the Press*. Teddington, Middlesex: Hollis.
- Shore, B. (1996) *Culture in Mind: Cognition, Culture, and the Problem of Meaning*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sidel, M. (2004) *More Secure, Less Free? Antiterrorism Policy & Civil Liberties after September 11*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Tulving, E. (1983) *Elements of Episodic Memory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (1989) 'Structures of Discourse and Structures of Power', in J.A. Anderson (ed.) *Communication Yearbook* 12, pp. 18–59. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (1991) *Racism and the Press*. London: Routledge.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (1993) *Elite Discourse and Racism*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (1996) 'Discourse, Power and Access', in C.R. Caldas-Coulthard and M. Coulthard (eds) *Texts and Practices: Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis*, pp. 84–104. London: Routledge.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (1998) *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach*. London: Sage.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (1999) 'Context Models in Discourse Processing', in H. van Oostendorp and S.R. Goldman (eds) *The Construction of Mental Representations during Reading*, pp. 123–48. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (2001) 'Multidisciplinary CDA: A Plea for Diversity', in Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (eds) *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, pp. 95–120. London: Sage.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (2003) *Ideología y discurso*. Barcelona: Ariel.
- Van Dijk, T.A. and Kintsch, W. (1983) *Strategies of Discourse Comprehension*. New York: Academic Press.
- Van Leeuwen, T. (2005) *Introducing Social Semiotics*. London: Routledge.
- Van Oostendorp and S.R. Goldman (eds) (1999) *The Construction of Mental Representations during Reading*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Wartenberg, T.E. (1990) *The Forms of Power: From Domination to Transformation*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Wodak, R. (1987) "'And Where Is the Lebanon?'" A Socio-Psycholinguistic Investigation of Comprehension and Intelligibility of News', *Text* 7(4): 377–410.

Wodak, R. and Van Dijk, T.A. (eds) (2000) *Racism at the Top: Parliamentary Discourses on Ethnic Issues in Six European States*. Klagenfurt: Drava Verlag.

Žižek, S. (2002) *Welcome to the Desert of the Real! Five Essays on 11 September and Related Dates*. London: Verso.



TEUN A. VAN DIJK was Professor of Discourse Studies at the University of Amsterdam until 2004, and is currently Professor at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona. After earlier work on generative poetics, text grammar and the psychology of text processing, his work since 1980 has taken on a more 'critical' perspective and deals with discursive racism, news in the press, ideology, knowledge and context. He is the author of several books in most of these areas, and edited *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (4 vols, Academic Press, 1985) and the recent introduction *Discourse Studies* (2 vols, Sage, 1997). He founded six international journals, *Poetics, Text, Discourse & Society, Discourse Studies, Discourse & Communication* and the internet journal *Discuso & Sociedad* (www.dissoc.org) and still edits the latter four. His last monograph is *Ideology* (Sage, 1998), and his last edited book (with Ruth Wodak), *Racism at the Top* (Drava Verlag, 2000). He is currently working on a new book on the theory of context. For a list of publications, recent articles, resources for discourse studies and other information, see his homepage: www.discourse-in-society.org. ADDRESS: Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Dept. de Traducció i Filologia, Rambla 30, Barcelona 08002, Spain. [email: vandijk@discourse-in-society.org]