

RACISM AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE MASS MEDIA

An overview of research and
examples of good practice
in the EU Member States, 1995-2000

on behalf of the

European Monitoring Centre
on Racism and Xenophobia, Vienna
(EUMC)

by

European Research Centre
on Migration and Ethnic Relations
(ERCOMER)

Edited by Jessika ter Wal

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PREFACE

The research interest in analysing the way mass media report on ethnic issues has increased in the Member States over the last decades. And for this reason the EUMC decided to bring together the major research reports and their findings over the last five years in this report "RACISM AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE MASS MEDIA - an overview of research and examples of good practice in the EU Member States, 1995-2000".

The project has been carried out by Dr Jessika ter Wal, at Ercomer, Utrecht University, the Netherlands. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to her for her excellent work. The report underlines the importance of media research in the area of racism and diversity.

The mass media, and especially the news media, have an unequivocal position in society when it comes to establishing and disseminating common cultural references. The mass media have an influence on people's attitudes as well as our common knowledge, but not always in the expected and desired ways.

The active democratic role of the mass media in society can be influenced by a number of factors. The way the mass media represent, focus and give voice to different actors and incidents in society could have the unintentional result of strengthening a racist discourse instead of fighting against it. Mass media reporting is especially sensitive when it comes to ethnic, cultural and religious relations in our society.

The mass media organisations in the Member States take different initiatives to promote cultural, ethnic and religious diversity, such as developing codes of conduct, recruiting broadcasters from the migrant and minority communities and training the personnel from multiethnic societies.

The report has already attracted a lot of interest from researchers, from journalists as well as from media organisations. I hope that the report will be of practical use to all those interested in the fight against racism and especially those working in the media.

Beate Winkler

Director of the EUMC

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5 APPENDIX

5.1 CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

by Jessika ter Wal

In this section the central concepts of this study, and the main theoretical and methodological approaches in research on media and racism are presented and discussed. The reference to literature in this section does not aim to be representative of all existing theory and research, but is a selection meant to show the claims and assumptions of each approach.

5.1.1. THE CONCEPT OF RACISM

Racism is manifested through discriminatory or exclusionary practices, on the one hand, and prejudiced beliefs, opinions, attitudes, and ideologies, on the other. It is a phenomenon expressed at the dimension of society, groups, individuals, and institutions, and is thus not to be analysed as an attribute of the individual person or agency, but as a more complex, structural phenomenon.

In contemporary sociological theory, racism is defined as a process of boundary drawing, i.e. of social categorisation and attribution of identity markers to ethnic minority groups. Different identity markers of 'race', class, gender, nation and age may intersect in boundary drawing processes (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992). These processes require a relation to practices of exclusion based on differentiation and/or inferiorisation, and on a naturalisation of difference.

'We refer to exclusionary practices against ethnic minorities as racism, which may be defined as a process whereby social groups categorise other groups as different or inferior, on the basis of phenotypical or cultural markers.' (...) 'Racism means making (and acting upon) predictions about people's character, abilities or behaviour on the basis of socially constructed markers of difference.' (Castles and Miller, 1993: 29)

In social theory, the non-existence of 'race' as an empirical category, and its status as a social, ideological and - formerly - scientific construct has been accepted unanimously (Miles, 1989). It is argued that it is more appropriate to speak about the '*racialisation*' of ethnic groups, i.e. when (social, economic, cultural or personal) difference is signified in terms of phenotype or other presumably inherited features and a notion of stock (Miles, 1989).

As a result of widespread acceptance and internalisation of anti-racist norms, within contemporary pluralistic societies the differentiation and exclusion of ethnic minority groups has been continued in more covert ways and legitimated on the basis of other criteria and assumptions than those of racial difference or inferiority (alone). The names given to these forms of racism vary according to the national political, social and cultural context in which they are manifested.

For example, in the 1980s scholars in the U.S. debated about 'new' forms of racism where negative attitudes towards out-groups are based on evaluations about their non-compliance to in-group norms and values. Similarly, in the British discourse on 'race relations' in the 1980s, the justifications for immigration control and the regulation of ethnic relations were no longer based on implicit assumptions about racial inferiority but on arguments about the cultural difference and incompatibility of ethnic minorities. In social psychology, a distinction is drawn between 'blatant' (broadly traditional) forms of racism based on biological inferiorisation, and 'subtle' racism, which corresponds to these new, politically correct forms of rejection. With the introduction of these concepts, racism is no longer seen as an irrational individual 'bias'. Instead, the arguments used to justify racist attitudes are often based on rational grounds, such as limits to economic resources or space, unemployment, cultural incompatibility, and so on. Such forms of argument are reproduced through everyday interaction, and also, importantly, through the media. This insight into contemporary forms of racism means that an analysis of racism is not restricted to right-wing extremism, or racist violence alone. Neither is it limited to an analysis of explicit or blatant expressions of racist beliefs or opinions.

In addition, the term xenophobia, when used in this report, can be conceptualised according to its common usage meaning, which indicates (attitudes of) fear towards foreigners. This term is mostly reserved for popular attitudes or dispositions towards foreigners, which do not result in particular negative actions against groups of migrants, or, by extension, for expressions of beliefs in political or media discourse which express or fuel such fear.

5.2 MEDIA AND RACISM

In this report, it is assumed that racism is communicated through the media in the form of social representations. This means that the image of immigrants and the interpretation of ethnic relations in the media is not deliberately distorted and not by individuals, but rather that media are an influential part of a larger process of (re) production of social representations in the public sphere. Journalists and media institutions often reproduce forms of ethnic inequality 'by default'; i.e. they do not do so consciously, but inadvertently, for example as part of their professional routine and constraints inherent to newsmaking. Racism in the media is often not blatant: it is precisely the implicit stereotypical representations, generalising or justifying statements, or even the very 'absence' of ethnic minorities' viewpoints in news about them, that produce the widespread prejudiced beliefs and the legitimisation of exclusionary practices and hostility towards them.

A distinction needs to be made between questions that concern three different levels of analysis. First, *what* is reported about when media report about racism in its various manifestations (subjects). Second, *how* do media report on racism and issues related to ethnicity and cultural diversity. And, finally, in what way media may contribute to the *reproduction or challenge of racism in indirect ways*, through news making practices and the representation of minorities and migrants.

5.2.1 STUDYING MEDIA TREATMENT OF RACISM

In media reporting on racism, ideologies of right-wing extremism, neo-Nazism may be associated with biological racism and other

forms of racism. Media may also report on racist acts and practices, ranging from racist harassment, physical aggressions and even murder, to acts of discrimination, either institutional or individual, and acts of 'everyday racism'. The political mobilisation of anti-immigrant sentiment by extreme right or populist parties may to some extent be recognised by the media as practices of racism and xenophobia. Similarly, popular protests against the presence of migrants or minorities in specific areas may be reported on in terms of racist or xenophobic protests. On the level of attitudes and opinions, media report results of surveys or can they themselves conduct phone-in programmes etc. to measure (and shape) the public opinion on ethnic issues.

5.2.2 RACISM, DENIAL AND ANTI-RACISM

The ways in which the mass media cover and evaluate the hostility or solidarity towards immigrants, asylum seekers or ethnic minorities, is a crucial part of the analysis of the role of the media. The same counts for the way in which media promote, criticise or support policy decisions related to ethnic affairs. We know from previous research that - in line with general orientations conceptualised in the 'new racism' approach - media will not openly sustain or publish without comment overtly racist positions, because of their compliance to widely accepted anti-racist norms. It is not accepted to have negative intentions against immigrants and in general forms of blatant, traditional racism are not accepted. But 'subtle' forms of racism are often accepted and are in fact not seen as racist by the wider public.

For the same reason, the media and the different (elite) actors that appear in media reporting tend to deny racism in various ways, for reasons of positive impression management or 'social desirability'. For example, by arguing that expulsion policies are actually for the migrants' 'own good', or by claiming that immigration has to be reduced in order to combat racism, speakers manage a positive impression of (apparent) anti-racism (van Dijk, 1992, 1993). This makes it important to establish what is apparent and what is true. The consistency between expressions (e.g. categorisations, and evaluations about ethnic out-groups), on the one hand, and the

practices advocated or defended by these expressions, on the other hand, is thus extremely important. Indeed, news actors may present themselves as anti-racists while actually in the same context they formulate or legitimise beliefs that do not consider migrants and minorities as equals, or recommended policies that exclude migrants.

Of course, despite such frequently occurring contradictions and complexities, sometimes it is clear that actors do challenge racism, and it should not be excluded that anti-racist positions (and policies) may have become more influential and accepted within mainstream political and media organisations in recent years. In addition, it should not be forgotten that in countries with long-established ethnic minority communities, the groups themselves have gained more access and direct representation in the media, and have thus contributed to a more balanced picture of cultural diversity (Cottle, 2000b and Statham in this report). At the same time, however, a 'white backlash culture' is also found to have attacked and ridiculed anti-racist strategies and multi-cultural policies, a culture which is not absent in present day media (Gabriel, 1998). In other instances, rather than denial, challenge, or 'anti-anti-racism' there is a lack of awareness (and the failing of the media to raise this awareness). The often uncritical or in other cases sensationalist representation of forms of everyday and subtle racism, as well as their justification by political organisations and elite actors in the media may shape a common acceptance.

5.2.3 PREJUDICED ATTITUDES AND SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS

The media produce social representations of migrants and ethnic minorities in society. First, the media problematise migrants' issues (in consonance with other elite institutions) in several ways, using categorisations and evaluations. *Categorisations* can be analysed through the use of specific linguistic/discursive devices in out-group categorisations and designations (labelling), for example the link between 'illegal migrants', 'outlaws' and 'criminals', or derogatory names such as 'aggressors'. Furthermore, the attribution of identity traits and the negative *evaluations* of migrant and ethnic

minority groups as a threat are common. These traits tend to be represented as characteristics of the group as a whole, to represent specific forms of negativity as an essentialising group trait. Commonly, the representations mentioned are also conceptualised as expressions of ethnic prejudice, and the attribution of identity traits are identified as stereotypical portrayals. Many analyses use these analytical concepts and they are used in this report.

The second form of social representation is represented by the *explanations* (or definitions) of ethnic situations, which the media provide, or support. For example, these explanations may blame minorities or migrants for the problems they face and even for the problems the majority population is facing. Similarly, explanations are used to portray migrants as the causes of social, economic or public problems. This also involves the attribution of agency, responsibility and blame, e.g. blaming migrants for their ending up in criminal activities.

5.3 MAIN THEORETICAL APPROACHES ¹³²

Different theoretical orientations on the study of racism and the media have evolved over the last decades. In the social sciences, media (in particular press) coverage has been studied as an indicator for social phenomena, such as ethnic relations or the construction of collective identity. However, reporting cannot be taken at face value as a reliable indicator for actual social phenomena. For example, a study that takes the number of incidents of racist violence covered by the media, as an indicator of the number of actual incidents is obviously counter-factual. It is moreover dangerous, if the publication of these results may end up being used to create social alarm. Others have compared press reporting on crime with actual crime statistics, and shown a divergence between the two. In this case, press data can be used to analyse and denounce media bias in the reporting on ethnic affairs.

132 This part of the report is based on a paper written by Marcello Maneri and Jessika ter Wal (1998).

By contrast, the approaches on which this report is focused take media data not as an indicator, but as an object of analysis in its own right. The empirical material studied in the well-established research traditions in this field mostly date back to the 1970s and 1980s. These traditions formed part of the general concern with 'race' relations, in particular in the US, the UK, and to some extent other countries such as the Netherlands. Studies on news reporting in the 1990s and in other countries partly confirms these findings, but also observe different characteristics that require new approaches to the role of the media.

In the following, an overview is provided of the existing body of literature and the most established research traditions in the field. These represent different approaches to the study of press data, which provide indicators for the analysis of racism in relation to the media. These approaches answer questions as to how and why news on migrants is so often negative for the image of foreigners, ethnic minorities, and immigrants.

5.3.1 MINORITIES AND THE MEDIA' APPROACH

The mass media have long been considered a sort of mirror, albeit distorted, of society. This metaphor has worked in two directions. On the one hand, if this mirror provides the images through which a large part of the social world is interpreted, there has been a worry about the possible distortion of media representations, which could reinforce prejudice among the readership. On the other, if prejudice is widespread in society and, as a consequence, among journalists (mostly 'whites'), media are likely to reflect that prejudice.

In North American studies in the 1960s and 1970s, this problem has been addressed by examining the dimension of prejudice and discrimination within the newsroom. The studies showed that the problem of unequal distribution of power between the 'white' majority and the 'black' minority group in society was indeed reflected in the composition of the newsroom. The small number of 'Black' and Hispanic journalists and their position in non-directive

roles was used to explain their stereotypical portrayal (Greenberg and Mazingo, 1976).

Finally, the predominantly 'white' composition of the readership of dominant media has often been cited as a reason for information that appears in a form palatable and consistent to the norms and interests of the readers. Similar theories have been used to explain the media bias towards reporting on crime: 'black' crime was over-reported, feeding on worries about the threats posed by 'blacks' to the 'white' majority group. Similarly, police harassment of 'black' families was rarely reported (Ley, 1974), because uninteresting for either the 'white' readership or the major advertisers, to whom 'blacks' were a group of no commercial importance.

The predominant methodology used in these studies has been content analysis. Indicators such as the number of articles, together with space, position and font size of the headlines have been counted to measure the distribution of minority news themes. Using this methodology, media bias is observed in various ways. First, it is a problem of unbalanced selection. Both US-based and European research found that criminality, 'race' riots, policing and violence were some of the most covered subjects, while other subjects were ignored (Schary, 1969; Wilson and Gutierrez, 1985; van Slike Turk et al, 1989; in a different perspective Gans, 1979; Knopf, 1975; Merten, 1986; van Dijk, 1991). A study of British press coverage in the 1980s found that reports on crimes allegedly involving 'black' people have often been given disproportionate coverage (Gordon and Rosenberg, 1989). Some national groups may receive a special attention: in Germany, Turks have been covered as if they were representative of the whole category of 'foreigners'. This group is also more frequently than other groups associated with negative personal characteristics, in particular crime and violence (Merten, 1986). Second, bias is seen as a matter of space reserved to minority opinions, which is always very little even when minority group members are main actors in the news (Schary, 1969; from a different perspective, van Dijk, 1991). Hence, foreigners do not have the possibility to challenge the negative definitions given of them in the press (Merten, 1986). In other words, minorities are mostly represented in the news as speechless actors involved in negative acts.

Similar forms of 'biased' or stereotypical representation have been studied in quantitative content analyses using coding categories that qualified actor roles and characters, (Hufker and Cavender, 1990).

Journalist associations and trade unions have played an important role in trying to change attitudes towards ethnic issues in their own profession, by promoting the use of guidelines, and training facilities. Professional codes such as objectivity, balanced reporting and fair portrayal, the necessity to check sources, and so forth, are also used in media research to check whether and how these are applied in reporting on ethnic issues. This is actually the task fulfilled by monitoring agencies and institutions such as press councils, in many countries. However, it has been observed that, with the commercialisation of media, the control on media practices by the state (judiciary control on respect of professional codes) has decreased, so that fair portrayal and balanced reporting have increasingly become dependent on the choice of the journalist.

A general problem of this body of research lies in its methodology. Another problem regards the concept of media bias and distortion. In some cases, it is not clear which model of 'unbiased' representation the authors refer to. In the case of thematic coverage, what would be a 'fair' representation? How much crime news out of all the news is about minorities?

5.3.2 NEWS-MAKING APPROACH

News-making routines are affected by what can be defined as 'frames' for talking about immigrants, which may reflect stereotypical thinking (or ways to oppose this). However, the news-making approach holds that prejudice does not explain everything. The production of news is constrained by numerous routines, practises and organisational limits, which influence the contents and presentation of reports in press, TV and radio programmes. Journalistic routines and techniques of news gathering, selection, and editing determine news content and perspective (and hence the image of the 'other' which is eventually produced in the media).

The news-making approach assumes that the selection and presentation of news topics, actors and events is constrained by several conditions. Among the most central factors commonly identified in the literature of the 1970s and 1980s are:

- news values;
- news scripts and genres;
- ownership, control and political affiliation;
- background, socialisation and ethnic group membership of journalists
- differential access (of sources and news actors);
- the relations between press and politics, and
- editorial policies, including relations between journalist and editor-in-chief.

The first general theoretical assumption is that the selection of news depends on dominant news values, such as negativity and recency of events, authority of actors, and consonance of actions to public stereotypes (van Dijk, 1988a: 119-24). Another news value, of unambiguity, is mentioned to account for the fact that images of 'blacks' are distorted because complex situations are reduced, through simple generalisations, to quick and superficial explanations (Gordon and Rosenberg, 1989: 61). Hence, the fact that in reporting on poverty and social exclusion, circumstantial causes for the existence of these phenomena is hardly ever investigated is not just a result of 'white' prejudice or the denial of racism. It does imply, however, that the cause or 'blame' for minority poverty is more easily attributed to the minorities themselves, a mechanism that, so this approach states, does reinforce and legitimate ethnic prejudice.

Another cause of distortion by simplification lies in the adoption of news scripts, which perform the function of organising potentially ambiguous elements in easily interpretable stories. New occurrences are often adapted to an existing script - a narrative structure used to write about recursive events generally treated in the same way. The individual reporter has little freedom to present the news in another way, if it is decided by editorial boards to adopt a given news format or news genre (such as the crime news or social issue

genre). These conventional genres are also used or maintained in order to meet time and space limits, and are conditioned by limited resources.

News-making routines such as the use of sources for information and verbal reactions are also constrained by the power relation's in- and outside the newsroom. Inside the newsroom, hierarchies, socialisation and decision-making influence the contents and presentation of news. Outside, the predominance of institutional actors in the definition of news agendas and contents is explained by the use of these actors by the media as privileged news sources and as sponsors of the news-making industry. The choice of institutional sources relies on their direct access to 'facts' of supposedly general interest, on their assumed reliability, on their possibilities to provide media with continuous inputs presented in an easily retrievable format. Institutions also tend to actively phase events to fit the bureaucratic schedules of news organisations (Cohen, 1980). By contrast, minority sources generally do not have favourable access to the media as sources. This may negatively affect the balanced and fair portrayal of these groups.

News making routines and conventional news formats are also determined by editorial policies (Gans, 1979) and fixed news genres. Journalistic routines and lack of resources also favour the reproduction of readily available official figures and accounts. For the same reasons, journalists often have to work from behind their desk and thus primarily gather information from the news agencies, where official sources traditional news values are again favoured, and investigative journalism, background reports and explanatory accounts are disfavoured. If facts or opinions that could contradict the stereotypical image reproduced are ignored or not covered prominently, then it is more likely that a distorted or biased image of migrants and minorities in the press is maintained.

Many scholars analysing these aspects have stressed that news-making constraints do not explain away the racist implications of press reporting. They also stress that it is not the individual journalist who is to be blamed for this. Both observations thus point at the importance to not only examine news making but also the domi-

nant cultural outlook towards and common sense ideologies about ethnic relations, as well as the ideological constructions that are involved in reporting about ethnic issues.

Although journalists thus tend to share those beliefs and values which are widespread and generalised among the majority group, and need to have developed a special awareness to introduce more critical reporting, media can (and actually do) contribute to promote cultural diversity in various ways. Journalists often are self-critical towards their professional practices and values, and sensitive to cultural diversity, despite news production routines. With a specific awareness, journalists do go beyond the reproduction of the same news formats and, for example, investigate and report facts from a different angle, if that possibility is given within the media organisation.

5.3.3 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST APPROACH

Classical studies representing this approach are the studies on the social construction of crime and (youth) deviance in the British press (Cohen and Young, 1981; Cohen, 1980, Hall et al., 1978). All of them are characterised by a wider perspective, which inscribes empirical findings in a historical, socio-economic and political perspective. This perspective is also known as the '*cultural studies*' tradition. The reality represented by the news is conceived as an essentially ideological construction, based on consensual definitions of marginality and deviance reproduced by the media through their institutional sources. Political and social elites are seen to act as 'primary definers' for journalists gathering information.

In the influencing study by Hall *et al* (1978) the authors have argued that instead of recognising the specific characteristics of a social problem or crisis, the state responded to deviance with public order measures, which could be justified in reference to a 'mugging wave' in urban areas. They have analysed the constructed nature of mugging, considering it 'not as a fact but as a relation - the relation between crime and the reaction to crime' (1978: viii). The creation of moral panics (Cohen, 1980; Goode and Ben Yehuda, 1994; Hunt, 1997) around phenomena such as mugging, has been interpreted

as a powerful instrument in building consensus and setting the agenda for the solution of social problems with law-and-order policies. The moral panic is sustained by appeals to common sense fears grounded on would-be 'objective' analyses of the problem. The creation of a moral panic is defined as follows:

When the official definition to a person, groups of persons or series of events is out of all proportion to the actual threat offered, when 'experts' in the form of police chiefs, the judiciary, politicians and editors perceive the threat in all but identical terms, and appear to talk 'with one voice' of diagnoses, prognoses and solutions, when the media representations universally stress 'sudden and dramatic' increases (in numbers involved or events) and 'novelty', above and beyond that which a sober realistic appraisal could sustain, then we believe it is appropriate to speak of the beginnings of a moral panic. (Hall et al, 1978: 16).

The studies by Cohen and Hall and associates have reconstructed the usual stages of a moral panic (Cohen for youth cultures, and Hall et al adding the dimension of 'race' to the discussion), in which various social actors - including representations of 'public opinion' - play a predictable role.

From the perspective of discourse, a primary interest has been the analysis of the forms and the origins of the mythical elements upon which ideological signification have been built. 'Riots' in the early 1980s in Britain could be defined - and then dealt with - as a criminal rather than political phenomenon through reporting centred around the image of a 'thin blue line' of police defending the community against an unprecedented wave of violence and lawlessness (Murdock, 1984). Another central myth in British discourse on migrants criminality has been that of the 'inner-city', an isolated place alien to the norms and values of the 'white' middle-class and potentially destructive for the British way of life (Burgess, 1985, Miles, 1984). The *banlieues* in France and several metropolitan areas in Italy have been subjected to a similar construction of deviance in the early 1990s (Hargreaves, 1996; ter Wal, 1996).

Based on recent research, the 'dominant ideology' and 'primary definers' theses of the social constructionist approach are questioned, at least partially. For example, Hargreaves (1996) shows that constructions of difference found in the French press reporting on the '*banlieues*' did not correspond to the official definitions, and that the social movement of immigrants had attracted media attention to these areas in the first place. However, although 'primary definers' do not always set the agenda, and provide the definitions adopted in the media, opposing discourses, in particular the discourse of the immigrants themselves may nevertheless be marginalised, even if only because of the terms in which their contribution to the debate is framed. These are often the terms constructed by other more powerful actors, or resulting from unintentional news framing techniques.

The broadening of the perspective typical of this research would imply the use of field observation, interviews to strategic actors, official data and documents, but this has been rarely done. The role of the various actors is generally inferred from the analysis of press materials. In a similar fashion, the strongest methodological critique made to research in this perspective concerns the difficult task of analysing both criminal action and societal reaction: although claims are made about the 'overreaction' which lies behind any moral panic, data are not systematically analysed to prove it. This problem is hard to overcome, since official data on for example crime or illegal immigration are very sensible to the reactions to it, and indeed measure as much the latter as the former.

5.3.4 DISCOURSE ANALYTICAL APPROACH

Discourse analysis is a qualitative and interdisciplinary approach to the study of written and spoken texts (including images) in their social and political context. It aims not only at a detailed description of linguistic features, rhetorical forms, and discursive structures and strategies, but also at an analysis of the social context and social, cognitive and psychological functions of language use. It aims to show how existing power inequalities and discrimination can be maintained or challenged through discourse. That is, discourse has not only pragmatic functions of persuasion and credibil-

ity enhancement, but also socio-political functions of legitimisation and control, or change.

Discourse analysis defines categories for the analysis of media text in a systematic way. In this way, it is avoided that qualitative analysis is merely a summary and paraphrase of what is found in the material, i.e. a narrative or anecdotal reconstruction of the events covered in the press. Instead it analyses the structures of texts and draws conclusions on the representation of the information contained in these texts in the minds of the people who read, see and process them.

Similar to social constructionism, discourse analysis has shown how news definitions build on the dominant perspective of the powerful and on a mutual reinforcement of official and popular perspectives on the definition of social problems. This approach assumes that discourse plays a crucial role in the reproduction of ethnic prejudice and racism, because beliefs and opinions about ethnic out-groups become socially shared through communication and language use. Because most in-group members do not have a daily interaction with immigrants, their beliefs and knowledge about the out-group are shaped largely by the media (van Dijk, 1987, see also 'news and attitudes approach' below).

Discourse analysis claims that negative reporting is only partly a result of routine conditions of news reporting. Of course, since information has to be presented in a condensed and short way, operations of selection, summarisation and generalisation are required. However, so it is argued, in news discourse these operations tend to have an ideological bias. News discourse itself is a social and cognitive practice. Negative reporting is produced by (the reproduction of) dominant ideologies which are encoded in the structures (the content and style) of news text (van Dijk, 1991).

Beliefs about out-groups are also organised following a certain structure. For example, beliefs about refugees are composed of several propositions: about 'bogus refugees'; 'welfare scroungers'; 'large numbers that cannot be controlled'; 'arrival through criminal organisations and smugglers'; and 'likely to end up in illegal, deviant

or criminal activities'. Through an analysis of lexical and argumentation strategies and quotation patterns it is then shown how such beliefs or claims are used to justify policy decisions, regarding for example law and order interventions or the restriction of the right to asylum (van Dijk, 1991).

Insights from social psychology and social cognition theory are furthermore used to claim that the representation of migrants and minorities in news is monitored by pre-existing beliefs and attitudes about the general threat and particular deviant behaviour of migrants, which are stored in 'social memory' (van Dijk, 1991). News on ethnic events is claimed to reproduce dominant 'situation models', which support and confirm negative ethnic beliefs (van Dijk, 1991, 1993). The social cognitions or 'representations' are further said to be organised by an ideological value structure, which becomes apparent in particular in the discourse of editorials (van Dijk, 1991).

The ways in which ethnic beliefs and opinions become socially shared, shaped and reproduced through the media are multiple and complex (often indirect and unconscious). It is a process enacted through the language and images used, the 'common sense' notions and 'definitions of the situation' constructed in views of various news actors. Ethnic beliefs and opinions are revealed in the presuppositions, assumptions and meanings that are expressed in news discourse through features of - among other things - topical organisation, lexical choice and syntactic style.

Acknowledging criticism about the emphasis of discourse analysis on power, some discourse analytical scholars have argued that more attention should be paid to variety and diversity, in order to account for the role of media in the transformation of culture and society (for example, Fairclough 1995).

5.3.5 NEWS AND PUBLIC ATTITUDES APPROACH (AUDIENCE/RECEPTION STUDIES)

As the next approach, we discuss the difficult problem of the study of effects in the communication research tradition. It is a common

sense perception that media can fuel feelings of fear, panic and alarm in society. Media are commonly criticised for speculating on the fears and emotions of people, e.g. through images and selection of negative news facts. This is especially related in common sense perceptions to reporting in tabloid newspapers and crime news. From a communication research perspective, the mass media are generally represented as a powerful institution, which fulfils functions of agenda setting, control (the media as watchdog or fourth power) and opinion making. But has this actually been investigated by comparing media coverage with audience perceptions and attitudes, and have any changes been observed recently?

Most research has actually questioned whether it is at all possible to study the role of media in simple cause-effect terms. In discourse analysis, claims in this direction are based on the theoretical foundations of social cognition theory, which allows the scholar to claim that the organisation of news text forms the cognitive structure, which is used for cognitive processing of news by its readers (see above). However, even here caution is necessary: in a study comparing the representation of different minority community crime in the press with the cognitions of readers about minority crime, Graber (1980) found interesting divergences.

What we do know is that, in many situations, people refer to information retrieved from the media as one of the primary sources for their knowledge about migrants, migration and cultural diversity. This may be as important a source for opinions and beliefs as face-to-face encounters or interactions with members of ethnic minority groups in person, especially when the latter are rare.

Indeed, research within the discourse analytical tradition indicated that media coverage does shape the way in which people speak and think about immigrants (van Dijk, 1987). On the basis of qualitative analyses of interviews in inner-city neighbourhoods in the Netherlands and the US, van Dijk found that the media, together with personal experience and hearsay, formed one of the main sources for 'white' people's stories about ethnic minorities. Media was thus one of the key elements in the acquisition and reproduction of socially shared knowledge about ethnic minorities.

On many occasions, people refer to the media as a source of information or as a source of ethnic opinions with which they may agree or disagree. ... interpersonal communication about ethnic groups, especially in the low-contact areas, is heavily dependent on media information. People mention the media in general, or the press in particular, for 'evidence' about the negative characteristics of ethnic groups. Crime is the major topic in this case, although sometimes also other themes are mentioned, such as cultural differences or favourable treatment. (Van Dijk 1987: 153)

However, in his book on press discourse and racism, van Dijk admits that more research needs to be done into the claims about the *social reproduction* of ethnic prejudice and racism (van Dijk, 1991).

Findings of earlier analysis of press coverage combined with attitude analysis suggested that 'the media do not determine how people think, but mostly what to think about' (Hartmann and Husband, 1974). The finding on thematic influence seems to confirm other research in the agenda-setting tradition. Agenda setting functions are typically researched by comparing content analysis results with results of attitude surveys around specific cases or issues.

Most research in discourse analysis has opposed the assumptions of traditional attitude research that measures opinions with ended questions and categorisations. Instead, discourse analysts have stressed the need to understand the variability of attitudes as they can be found through qualitative analyses of sequences of text and narratives. This makes for time-intensive research that can only be addressed in larger projects.

Discourse analytical and social constructionist approaches have found that xenophobia and the perception of 'problems' related to ethnic relations and migration are based on or reinforced by media messages or information from political or other official sources presented in the media. The approaches suggest that due to the powerful position of the media and other elites represented in the media, its discourse can 'pre-formulate' opinions about migrants and ethnic minorities. However, critics have said that the role of elites in the constitution of news discourse and the stereotypical

and negative representation of migrants and minorities should be investigated rather than assumed dominant and pre-formulating *a priori*.

In addition, the social constructionist and discourse analytical approaches are criticised for underestimating that media might also communicate positive opinions. Indeed, communication research claims that media do also play an important role in the mobilisation of anti-racist action and the promotion of cultural diversity. This research counts an increasing proportion of media messages dealing with anti-racist issues and related actors. However, the actual criteria to define positive and negative media reporting, and its effects, are not very often researched.

Whereas previous research in social construction (cultural studies) and discourse analysis has found that media legitimise popular hostility in order to support policy decisions, other more recent findings suggest that mainstream media may support solidarity or anti-racist initiatives (in particular when supported by policy actors) and criticise negative policy decisions. Linguistic and qualitative analyses of media are crucial here, because quantitative analyses can merely count the occurrence of different actors. They cannot specify in detail the subtle ways in which (with which vocabulary, connotations, implicit evaluations about their credibility) claims of different actors are reported and framed using a particular terminology or framework, which for example may not be that of the minority actors themselves. Quantitative analysis is limited to summarising such subtleties in general quantifiable features, such as positive or negative.

In the 'new ethnicities' approach it is claimed that audience reception cannot just be analysed as though the interpretation of covered events would depend on the racial identity of the audience; nor can it be assumed that interpretation of news text will always be the same. That is, interpretations can conform to dominant readings of events, but they can also manifest 'negotiated' and 'oppositional codes of audience reading' (cf. Cottle, 2000b). It has to be taken into account that media use implies variation and interaction of different technologies (TV, internet, radio), which may

become part of everyday cultural practices and environments in multiple ways. In this view, audience reception of media involves complexity and contestation of multiple 'subject positions' (or the formation of 'new ethnicities'), and therefore fluid, complex cultural responses are observed within processes of media reception and identity formation (cf. Cottle, 2000b). The development of this paradigm is still too short-lived to be part of the research results presented in this report.

5.3.6 OTHER APPROACHES

Another important approach to the analysis of media data in relation to racism is focusing on consumption patterns of media by ethnic minorities and the production of special minority media or special programmes by ethnic minority groups, addressing a minority or wider audience. This kind of research may indicate a self-segregationist logic (for example ethnic minorities watching satellite television from the countries of origin of the first generation), but may also show more positive developments (see for example, Cottle, 2000c; Hargreaves and Mahdjoub, 1997; Milikowski, 2000).

More in general, in communication research agenda-setting theory combined with content analysis has produced findings on the flow of news on ethnic affairs. It shows that such news may pass through long phases of latency, with issues being picked up as emergencies only occasionally, either as a result of political agenda setting or as a result of media campaigns.

Another approach combines social movement/collective action theories with content analysis, actor analysis, and framing analysis (Statham, in this volume). Similar to this is the event history analysis, where a classification of events and development of social issues is based on an extensive press content analysis. For example, Olzak (1989) applied event history analysis to study desegregation movements in the US.

5.3.7 SUMMARY

Earlier approaches focused on 'bias' and 'distortion' (whether related to the representation of minorities, newsmaking or social construction, cf. Hall et al, 1978). These have been replaced more recently by research that has tried to account for the complex relations between news text and social representations (discourse analysis, van Dijk, 1991) and for the dynamic use of media and the changing representations of ethnic identities in the media (cf. Cottle, 2000a). The perspective has thus gradually developed from an analysis of news production and news content to a more contextualised analysis of news texts and the use and perceptions of media representations. A similar shift has occurred in theory, moving away from a conceptualisation of dominant ideologies and fixed representations, to an analysis of possibilities for media and media users to negotiate identities and to shape (to some extent) media events (also as a means to oppose other or dominant readings). To analyse media use, scholars have recently introduced more 'democratic' and dynamic models of news production possibilities and of representation of ethnic minorities in the media, which seem to reflect better the present and future realities of post-industrialist globalised societies where identity becomes increasingly conceptualised as hybrid and fluid. However, current research remains influenced by both the historical and more recent approaches, and still acknowledges the limits inherent to news making and production. Fortunately, there is more openness in a number of organisations to face the issue of the representation of minorities in the media. The issue is therefore also approached in a more practical and operational way in terms of initiatives for change and factors that can increase their success.

5.4 METHODS FOR ANALYSIS

Given the state-of-the-art in theoretical approaches, which was sketched in the previous section, the following indicators generally form part of research in the area of racism and the media. Firstly, content analysis allows for a generalisation of news-making features (frequency of news subjects, actors, and their quotation) for a large amount of articles to be made. Secondly, qualitative discourse

analysis allows the structures and detailed meanings of news text to be examined. This approach also allows investigating what sorts of social identity, what versions of 'self' and 'other' the media project, and what cultural values these entail. Finally, discourse analysis can be complemented by ethnographic field work/observation, interviews with privileged actors, and by a semiotic analysis. In many existing studies two or more approaches are incorporated. The general question about the presentation of news, which is studied by asking who was talking about what, in what way, in which position, can indeed be answered by various approaches, which add to complementary insights. The most common combination is that of content and discourse analysis as separate research methods and analytical tools. This means analyses do not just mention the frequency of quotation of various (minority/majority) actors, but also how they are quoted. Similarly, prototypical explanations or argumentative strategies (so called '*topoi*') may first be analysed qualitatively and then - on the basis of a typology - quantified for a number of texts.

5.4.1 EXTENSIVE ANALYSIS AND CASE STUDIES

Case studies size down the amount of data, and therefore go into more detail, also making qualitative analyses. For comparative research, case studies have the advantage of allowing for a selection of the data, which makes comparison meaningful. However, the news material selected for case studies may differ to a considerable extent from the day-to-day routine coverage, for example on ethnic issues in urban areas. Extensive analyses on the other hand provide are usually restricted to quantitative analyses, unless concentrating on a subset such as a particular format or theme or, otherwise, using a large research team. The advantage of an extensive analysis is that it summarises large amounts of data, produces easily readable/convincing quantitative results and monitors everyday coverage.

Although providing crucial data, it should be taken into account that case studies may be representative only of the particular (the typical or paradigmatic case). Generalisations from too specific and extreme data should thus be drawn with extreme caution.

However, case studies on specific issues do allow for cross-national comparison and may by cumulation show significant trends. Nevertheless, data on everyday routine coverage (usually the object of quantitative content analyses) are as important for cumulative effects of the reinforcement of negative stereotypical beliefs and opinions about ethnic out-groups.

Case study reports generally extract data for qualitative analysis on the basis of criteria of:

- issue status (when does everyday reporting start receiving political attention, when is it used for social mobilisation, by whom)
- primacy (news peak days, page number) and
- prominence (headlines and position in the article, quotation and social representation of main actors involved).

A study of specific cases of media campaigns may show that occasionally event coverage acquires an almost routine-like nature, so that single events become increasingly linked to the genre of the everyday reporting. In this case, a case study can thus also give insight into the everyday dealings with ethnic issues. It is then also possible to study the passage of daily reporting at the local level into a political and national issue, also by combining press with TV data analysis.

The *methods* used influence the type of data reported. Quantitative data, typically produced through methods of content analysis, are important to substantiate claims about general trends and dominant themes in news reporting, which also allow developments over time to be indicated (within the sample). Qualitative data are generally yielded by multiple methods for the analysis of language use, images, and the presentation of news text in general. The most comprehensive approach to such data is that of discourse analysis, but some studies also limit themselves to reporting and/or paraphrasing headlines.

The majority of research on the media is about press data, although television is also being studied more frequently in some Member

States. This is because other media are generally more labour and cost-intensive sources for research: access is often difficult and/or expensive; transcription is needed for most of the media and in the case of television discourse and content analysis must be integrated with an analysis of non-verbal communication.

There is reason to believe that the press still plays an important role. It is cited as a means of credibility enhancement in interviews (also found for NL, van Dijk 1987) and in TV talk shows. It is journalism that allows one to follow cases over a much longer stretch of time. The press also has a more powerful agenda setting effect, and plays a crucial role in local mobilisations and the definition of most local issues related to crime and migration. TV is more important in national issues, although this varies per country. The incidence of TV news coverage and TV documentary and talkshows within the development of a longer issue in the national (longer) and local (longest) press could be undertaken. Another interesting focus of analysis is the 'migration' of news scripts, locutions, interpretative frames from one medium to the other.

5.4.2 CONTENT ANALYSIS

Content analysis is a basic and indispensable part of press data analysis. Content analysis is a quantitative technique used to study large corpuses of text. For clarity of exposition, we can distinguish between two approaches:

- a) Lexical indexes: when the units of analysis are linguistic units such as words, 'key symbols', or, less commonly, small phrases.

Words, key symbols (metaphors, units composed of two or more words with particular significance for the theoretical interests of the researcher) are chosen according to the research hypothesis, counted, generally classified in more general categories and then analysed with different techniques. Words most frequently selected are those used to name (nouns) and qualify (adjectives) the actors involved.

b) Coding categories: when the units of analysis correspond to the communication units (such as articles) or are subsets of them (defined in non linguistic terms)

With this technique quantitative data are obtained by filling out an (electronic) standardised questionnaire (or code book), which is compiled 'interviewing' the communication units (articles, TV news, etc.). The variables may measure frequencies of topics, subjects, actors, and quotations. In this case, a list of possible values (typologies of actors, for example) must be arranged after a first exploration of the materials to be analysed. A possible alternative is to build it after an examination of open-ended 'questions'. Variables may also try to measure dimensions of the representation of actors (more or less racialised, threatening, inclined to crime and so on) and processes; they may also measure the journalists' attitude towards the actors involved (more or less favourable, emphatic etc.) or their perspective on a specific issue. In all these cases particular scales can be used.

Compared to lexical indexes, coding categories allow for a deeper investigation of content and a wider range of research questions, but in a way that leaves much space to the subjectivity of the researchers and to their interpretations. This can be controlled using different analysts who code the same communication units and then confront their results, but this check is often skipped for reasons of cost. Data produced by codebooks have the limit of not being grounded on clear linguistic indicators. Besides, the more they pretend to inquire complex dimensions such as the representation of actors, the attitude of the journalist and so on, the more they provide vague and abstract conclusions. Hence, it is possible to say that in 30% of the articles migrants are portrayed as a threat, but it is not possible to further qualify this finding.

If lexical indexation forces the researcher to address simple questions or, alternatively, to draw complex conclusions from rough data through uncontrolled inferential processes, the use of coding categories inverts the problem. The inferential work is done at the beginning, and the results bear no trace of the (linguistic) material used. This is why content analysis should be preferably used to pro-

vide (quantitative and reliable) data at a (simple) thematic level, or at the level of the presence-absence of actors, quotations, sources.

Besides the obvious quantification of 'race' themes as related to frequencies for other themes, and proportion of negative vs. positive portrayal of migrants (for example in headlines), as well as the (words for) mention and representation of other actors, other related variables are often analysed. For example, they:

- measure the attention given in mainstream media to reports on harassment and violence against migrants by employers, police, etc. which is not infrequently far less attention than for migrants' violence
- confront frequencies of coverage on violence *against* migrants with frequency of reports on 'white' victims of alleged 'black' attackers
- examine the extent to which migrants are over-represented in the coverage on 'problem areas'
- note the topics the press does not focus on (e.g. the problems experienced by migrants and minorities often tend to be neglected)
- identify and count the words featuring headlines, that are associated with crime and illegal acts, conflict or disagreement, and control
- count whether or not ethnic authors of crime are identified in the headlines (cf. Bovenkerk, 1978, van Dijk, 1988c for the Netherlands, Hartmann and Husband, 1974 for the UK; Maneri, 1995 for Italy)

Content analysis can only grasp some of the building blocks of social representations, such as labels/denominations for immigrants, and their recurrence. Further qualitative analysis is often done to go into more detail. In content analysis, the evaluation of a word, and the different meanings assigned to it in different contexts, cannot be assessed, unless the contexts are checked for every occurrence (a practice which is very time-consuming). Because data are re-organised, the influence of structure, ordering etc. - in the original context - on the meanings of language is completely lost.

5.4.3 NEWS-MAKING RELATED QUESTIONS

Typical research questions related to the news-making approach are:

- what is defined as news (indicator of news value, but also of the framing of issues)
- how and how often and on which occasions are actors quoted (possible indicator of the under-representation of powerless groups in definitions of the situation and opinions on the events)
- adaptation to news formats producing a possible 'bias', e.g. the press often does not integrate within reporting on deviance and crime an analysis of processes of social, economic or cultural change within the 'white' community (Keith, 1995, Ter Wal, 1997)
- adaptation to news scripts producing a possible 'distortion': e.g. the 'race riot' schema (Holland, 1981), the 'citizen protest' schema (Maneri, 1995)
- what different news-making formats are used, e.g. what kind of articles, and how (interviews, prevalence of investigative or descriptive journalism, standard reporting of 'primary definitions', promote phone-in programs or letter rubrics either to use 'public opinion' as evidence for the need to restore law and order, or to support anti-racist initiatives)
- which news themes emerge, how they work in the selection, framing and writing of news, in what circumstances they appear, by which news/political/official practices they are fed
- how are sources written texts (agency dispatches, press releases) transformed narratively and semantically

5.4.4 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

To provide answers about the role of different institutional actors in the social construction of difference, both quantitative and qualitative analyses are done, for example:

- measure, analyse and compare reactions of officials and public to neighbourhood protests/protest movements and to incidents of racist violence

- measure access of non-state actors to the media, their frequency and position (as well as style, in DA) of quotation
- analyse the position towards social problems, the categories and causal models used to explain these in editorials, opinion articles and political interviews (editorials indicate the importance of an issue for political elites)
- spell out the ideological and moral values that are expressed in the news
- compare problem definitions or group designations used by representatives of the state with those adopted by the media and in wider public discourse of non-state actors. This comparison allows for processes of definition to be analysed which may run a different course than the ones described in the classical studies on 'policing the crisis'
- assess the different ways in which violence against other immigrant groups is covered depending on whether or not there is political involvement or social movements backing an anti-racist or anti-immigrant protest
- analyse the use and provenience of myths
- study the structures of media activation (campaigns, moral panics) and the role of the various actors in launching and sustaining them

5.4.5 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Unlike traditional content analysis and lexical analyses, discourse analysis examines context and coherence of larger stretches of text, so that the meaning of a word or sentence may be grasped. Discourse analysis can also go further into questions related to source use and quotations, such as the consequences for the representation of social groups and the definition of the situation.

In discourse analysis news text is the object of analysis. The discourse analytical framework deals with text at various levels and dimensions. It works with a checklist of analytical categories, which are divided into different levels of analysis. The analyst usually starts by making a 'summary' (following specific rules of macrostructure composition) of the text, which represents the semantic macrostructure. Then the analysis passes to the level of local text

analysis, however, always keeping in mind context and function of the analysed fragment in the text as a whole.

Global semantics

The production and processing of news texts is assumed to require cognitive operations, the activation of previous knowledge, and the updating of existing situation models, and of group- and event schemata (van Dijk, 1988ab). Cognitive relevance is revealed in the physical organisation of news texts. The superstructure of news reports or news schema consists of a number of conventional categories, which exhibit a special linear order, as well as hierarchical organisation. Superstructures determine what content typically comes first, second, or last in a text (van Dijk, 1988ab)

- Analyse the topical organisation of news reports. Compare this semantic macrostructure with the information in headlines: is it an adequate summary or does it highlight certain statements, actors, or claims?
- Analyse the order and the prominence of topics. This is relevant in telling ideologically biased news stories. This may be also important in the combination of different news stories on one page. For example, in the first-page coverage on the topic of an anti-racist demonstration, the news on a coinciding event, which associated particular migrants with crime, was upgraded, whereas topics related to the demonstration were downgraded. As a result, a dubious light was cast on the actions of the out-group as a whole.
- Analyse the connection of different thematic areas in causal explanation to be derived from an analysis of coherence relations in text. For example, the crime theme can typically be related to entry, asylum, cities, poverty, unemployment, and cultural difference. In a study on the Dutch press Van Dijk (1988c: 244) notes "crime and deviance may combine with cultural differences (in particular, treatment of wife and children in Islamic culture)".

Analysing the *narrative organisation* (or semantic macrostructure, in discourse analysis) of the various 'elements' of a text (narrative functions, episodes, topics) is another way to reveal the constitu-

tion of meaning. In news, the chronological order of what happened is rarely respected. Rather, in hard news in the 'quality' press, the order of elements proceeds as their news value decreases. Systematic downgrading of a topic or of a type of episode is an indicator of its little news value. In news with a dramatic construction, such as many feature stories, some narrative sequences may favour interpretations that would be unlikely if the order of the elements presented was different. Also the narrative organisation of event reporting over a longer period of time may follow a schematic form. For example, Fishman (1978) described the typical structure of a 'crime wave'.

Local semantics (lexicalisation, perspective, implicature)

In critical linguistics, studies of the ideological functions of news *discourse* have been applied predominantly to the syntactic and local semantic level of discourse (Fowler, Hodge, Kress and Trew, 1979; Fairclough, 1989, Fairclough, 1991; Fowler, 1991). Discourse analysis is directed not only at the local level of word and sentence structure and meaning, but also at the level of larger units of meaning, such as paragraphs, and the global organisation of text structure and meaning (topics) (Van Dijk, 1988ab, 1991). The latter can also be used as a basis for quantitative analysis. An analysis of news discourse production and text features (source use, quotation, headlines, topics, semantic structures, argumentation) allows the elements of an interpretative framework for ethnic events and issues to be identified.

- implementation of topics in the meaning of words and sentences, for instance by the addition of irrelevant details than can be interpreted in accordance with prevailing stereotypes and prejudices about 'them'.
- the denominations used for immigrants, the traits attributed to them to depict them as different, to construct an image of for example racial violence which obscures and stigmatises
- over-lexicalisation as an indicator of the importance attributed to a specific trait or issue
- the credibility status of quoted speakers may be enhanced or lowered by the strategic use of verbs or adverbs with dif-

ferent presuppositions or other forms of implicitness. Migrants - when at all quoted - tend to be assigned lower credibility and less prominence than majority group speakers, whose credibility is usually enhanced and taken for granted. In (introductions to) quotations, verbs and adverbs are chosen which reinforce negative stereotypes though the representation of the out-group as a threat and as not respecting 'our' norms for civilised debate (Ter Wal, 1996).

- absence/presence of different types of explanations
- ways in which responsibility is attributed/downplayed
- causal explanations that tend to personalise/depersonalise actors in specific circumstances.

Syntactic style

Nominalisations, use of intransitive verbs, of passive voice and omission of the agent are used in order to conceal in-group agency in the portrayal of negative acts, e.g. of the police, or discrimination. On the other hand, agency and ethnic identity are used in headlines in which 'they' are associated with negative topics (illegal entry, protests, and crime). Minorities are thus presented in a role of active, responsible agents, and not victims (Graber, 1980, Fowler et al, 1979, van Dijk, 1991).

Rhetoric (metaphors, metonymies etc.)

For example, metaphors of flood, war, walls, metaphors representing immigration as a pathology, etc. lead to an emotionalisation of facts (Chilton, 1994; ter Wal, 1991) and may function as a justification for restrictive measures and defensive reactions.

Headlines and topics

The social and institutional routines of news making are related to structural properties of news reports, such as the summarisation of global meaning or the 'up-grading' of salient information in headlines. The 'order of appearance' of official actors in more prominent positions than non-official and minority actors in the news is also related to these criteria of news making. That is, the most crucial problem definitions are found in the most prominent and recurrent elements of the structures of news reports, such as headlines and other news schema categories (Van Dijk, 1988b). Therefore the rep-

resentation of in- and out-groups and the use of argumentative strategies in headlines and leads deserve special attention. The textual function of headlines is to represent the global theme or topic; articles are characterised by a biased schematic or thematic organisation, when a relatively unimportant piece of information is expressed in the headline.

Newspapers also tend to 'tag' their services as a means to give a first 'framing' for the events and situations described. In newspapers this is the 'tag' at the corner of the page or of the title, citing the rubric/subject area within which the news is covered, such as 'internal affairs'. For special issues more specific tags are used which may be telling about the framing of these issues in mainstream media.

Quotation patterns

Quotation patterns reveal the assignment of speaking and social roles to actors with different power, status and access to news making (Zelizer, 1989). Qualitative discourse analysis of reported speech may identify forms of indirect and direct quotation, several ways of (de)legitimising or up/downgrading statements made by different actors, and their confirmation/contradiction, or repetition. This indicates not only the different news value and access of actors, but also the 'reading of events', which is thus imposed.

Argumentation

The text structure of editorials is composed of argumentative categories. Editorials do not only comment on immediate events but also address wider moral and ideological issues. Because of their focus on argumentation, and their giving voice to elite group representatives, editorials play an important role in the justification and/or challenge of official definitions and policies. The use of argumentation strategies in news reports may also show the way in which power relations are embedded in news discourse. That is, it may reveal that arguments produced in a specific format or by a specific group of news actors are likely to be deemed valid, credible and functional to the justification of a particular response to immigration by a potentially large group of people. Common argumentation strategies in discourse on migration and ethnic relations are:

- denial strategies, e.g. aiming at the denial of 'white' involvement and responsibility
- adopting 'division tactics' between 'good' and 'bad' or 'legal' and 'illegal' within the minority groups
- 'blaming the victim', i.e. attributing responsibility for problems to the communities themselves (personal instead of circumstantial attribution)
- justification strategies for restrictive immigration measures, residential segregation (dispersal of immigrant settlements, avoidance of migrants concentrations) or public order interventions by depicting migrants and minorities in a negative way

Discourse and other analyses have often observed the racist construction of ethnic hierarchies and the stereotypical depiction of forms of ethnic crime. That is, specific migrants and minorities tend to be more frequently and/or more overtly depicted negatively and/or as involved in criminal or deviant activity. Similarly, the indifferent or partial coverage of violence against specific groups (e.g. Roma people) may indicate a more negative evaluation of that group compared with others. This would provide indicators for the construction of ethnic stereotypes as related to the attribution of specific negative action traits to specific groups.

5.4.6 PUBLIC ATTITUDES

The construction of negative out-group representations and boundary drawing practices in the news can be analysed for their possible effects on public attitudes. For example, the correlation between the public perception of 'ethnic hierarchies' in terms of degree of 'viciousness'/maliciousness (and related degrees of racism/xenophobia) and the amount of news coverage on certain migrants and minorities (campaigns) can indicate this. Also, the amount of political resonance given to transform such problem definitions into a political issue may indicate the impact of news discourse on attitudes.

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