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News discourse and ideology: critical analysis of Copenhagen gang wars' online news

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Abstract

Gang warfare is one of the social problems that attract attention in Denmark and it occupies an important place in the media discourse. However, the discriminatory and exclusionary effects of this discourse have been largely overlooked in many of the previous studies focusing on this problem. Taking this into account, this study examines the discriminatory aspects of the online news discourse covering these gang wars. In this way, it uncovers the forms of anti-immigrant bias in the news discourse in Denmark by examining articles from two online news articles by the newspaper Politiken and the news quoted from the same newspaper. Specifically, this study aims to demonstrate that the discriminatory and exclusionist discourse on the gang wars in Denmark may cause ethnic discrimination by producing negative social capital. The chosen sample of news articles has been analysed by devoting special attention to the concepts of 'racism', 'exclusion', 'marginalisation' and 'negative social capital' which are based on the critical discourse analysis of Teun A. van Dijk, who does not perceive news media as passive reporters but instead draws attention to their role in (re)constructing news events and dominant ideology.

Keywords: news discourse; ideology; Critical Discourse Analysis; gang wars; Copenhagen

Introduction

In the early 1970s, Denmark began hiring workers, like many other Western European countries and admitted unskilled workers as immigrants. However, in the 1990s, large number of refugees from Somalia, Palestine, Iraq, Iran and former Yugoslavia arrived in this country. By the turn of the century, Denmark, a country regarded as a country of democracy and tolerance, began to perceive its national values under assault thanks to the increasing emphasis from both the *Denmark Populist Party* and the media on cultural and religious factors with specific reference to immigrants (Yazgan, 2010: 51). Recently, violent incidents have occurred between rival gangs in the so-called '*ghettos*' of Copenhagen (Politiken, 2008). "These turf wars have mostly taken place between the local Hells Angels

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gang and various other gangs. Discussions related to the gang wars in Copenhagen first appeared in the media in 2007-2008" (Yazgan & Svenson, 2016: 7).

Gang wars in Europe constitute an important source of insecurity which is defined as a driver for human mobility (see Sirkeci, 2009). Therefore, the European Union (EU) defines gang wars as 'Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs'. Danish police also repeat the EU reports and indicate the gangs as a source of organised crime (Politi, 2004: 7). Origins of these gangs in Denmark date back to the 1980s. The Hells Angels are one of the most 'prominent and numerous national and international' groups. The group has many chapters in and outside Europe and carry out criminal activities with other illegal groups in various countries (Barker, 2014: 27). The Hells Angels are not the only group; other criminal gangs known as Bandidos, Black Cobras and AK81 are also involved in criminal activities which jeopardise the security of Denmark, as the police stated in their report on Organised Crime in Denmark in 2004: "Persons with links to the biker culture are involved in such crimes as homicide, violence, robbery, narcotics crime, smuggling of goods subject to high levels of tax, intimidation and various forms of financial crime" (Politi, 2004).

While the gang wars are an important phenomenon affecting security and society in Denmark, their relation to immigration and who constitutes these groups is also a concern. Most of the gang wars and violence have been concentrated in the Norrebro region of Copenhagen, which is mainly populated by Turkish and Pakistani immigrants. Both Danish and ethnic-rooted youth became members of gangs via various connections. Although all gang groups are involved in criminal activities, their representation in the media changes significantly according to the ethnic composition of the groups. The negative emphasis on immigrants in the news media increases the exclusion and discrimination of ethnic minorities living in the ghettos (Yazgan & Svenson, 2016). In this regard, the examination of immigration, gang wars and media representation appears a significant issue for discussion.

Our aim is to uncover the racist and discriminative ideological discourse implicit and embedded in news articles. We aim to show how ideological messages have been implicitly conveyed in the news. We employ socio-cognitive and linguistic analysis on two news outlets. We have detailed our examples because we argue this is the best way of providing specificity to an otherwise unmanageable dataset. The news reports were chosen from the newspaper *Politiken*, one of the leading Danish daily newspapers, with second highest national circulation volume (Stokes-DuPass, 2015). *Politiken* has a news section in English, which allows us conducting media discourse analysis on Denmark gang wars. In this paper, we deliberately selected the two specific articles based on their relevance to the problem. They clearly illustrate the (re)construction of the events and ideology. Based on these two articles, we analyse and argue that inequality is reproduced by means of this ideology-based discourse.



In this analysis, we start from the premise that discourse is power, as Foucault (1990) argues. Therefore, we examine the discursive dimensions of ideologies and how ideologies may be expressed and covered up in discourse and also be reproduced in the news and media following Van Dijk's (2003:9) approach: He explains that the term "ideology as a basis for the social practices of group members and racist ideologies may be at the basis of discrimination... Often, ideologies thus emerge from group conflict and struggle, and they thus typically pitch Us against Them... One of the crucial social practices influenced by ideologies are language use and discourse." Van Dijk also sheds light on the 'mental' character of ideologies and from this aspect we achieve insight into the cognitive dimension of ideology (Van Dijk, 2003: 9).

The importance of media analysis to uncover the issue of the marginalisation of certain groups has been discussed in the literature. Giddens indicates the role of the media to fictionalise and direct individuals' lives and, he emphasises the media's role of reinforcing prejudices (2008: 656). Following on the same line, Bilgin argues that "mass media shapes and directs cultures by bringing some of the culture factors into the forefront, by pushing some of them into the background and thus acting as a filter" (2006: 119). Group identity with its destructive dimensions may also have contained a stereotypical portrayal of outsiders (Field, 2008: 121).

While marginalisation is under way, the ideological discourse that media (re)construct plays a significant role. The ideological discourse of the media (from the perspective of majority group identity in Denmark) provokes discrimination against ethnic groups and produces positive social capital in terms of in-group (by constructing national identity, "we-feeling" etc.), although for those outside the group, it produces a negative form of social capital, that is, inequalities. The aim of providing coherence and homogeneity for the internal group can cause a lack of social capital (or negative social capital) which forms a basis for social differentiation and conflicts (Field, 2008:125; Karagül & Masca, 2015: 46). In this sense, Field (2008: 125) describes racism as a kind of negative capital too. Studies dealing with subjects like discrimination and racism, through analysing the discriminative media discourse concerning ethnic minorities, show that media discourse with negative representations produces biases which cause exclusion and marginalisation of minorities (Van Dijk, 1989; Hussain, 2000; Morck et al., 2013).

Taking into consideration the importance of the source of the continuing gang wars in Copenhagen and the resultant stigmatisation of ethnic minorities through the media discourse, this study uncovers the forms of anti-immigrant bias in the news discourse by examining two online news articles by the newspaper *Politiken* and the news quoted from the same newspaper.

We argue that the Danish media focus on the ethnic and cultural origins of individuals and this promotes exclusionism and stigmatisation beyond reporting

news. The media may cause social differentiation through their coverage of the ongoing gang wars in Denmark and this ever-increasing ethnicity-based discriminatory news discourse promotes the exclusion of ethnic minorities. The ethnic differentiation-based discourses in the media appear positive for the individuals “in the group” (native population), while they are exclusionist for individuals “out of the group” (ethnic minorities). The relationship between the media discourse and the marginalisation of minorities is one based on exclusion and inequality.

The remainder of this article is organised as follows: the next section describes the theoretical background of the study. The qualitative research method, which is closely interconnected with media discourse analysis, is also mentioned in this section. After clarification of approach and method, the analyses of the two texts are presented. Finally, the findings will be discussed in the concluding parts.

Analytical Approach: Discriminatory Discourse, Social Capital and Marginalisation

The media discourse analysis is conducted in this study by adopting a qualitative approach. Qualitative researchers prefer to concentrate on small samples as their main aim is to understand cases intensively rather than exploring causal relationships (Hoepfl, 1997). They “often study only a single setting or a small number of individuals or sites, using theoretical or purposeful rather than probability sampling, and rarely make explicit claims about the generalizability of their accounts” (Maxwell, 2008: 137). As qualitative researchers, we have selected only two news texts for a detailed analysis. This provides an in-depth understanding of the world as produced through certain ideologies. Eventually the aim of critical news discourse analysis is to reflect how elite ideology uses media as an instrument to control the interpretation of individuals’ perception of reality. We focus on the racist ideology and the way in which it controls and shapes reality with reference to the selected online news articles on the “Gang wars” from *politiken.dk* and *voxeurop.eu*. The newspaper *Politiken* is a liberal one with a centre-left stance. It is also published online at *politiken.dk*. Our aim is to reflect on how implicitly elite ideology can be embedded in discourse.

Our analytical framework is geared towards disclosing how ideology is hidden in new discourse and how discourse might impact on the entire society. We adopted Teun A. van Dijk’s approach as exemplified in his research on “Mediating Racism” where he displays fundamental points with respect to media and their role to produce ethnic attitudes and racism: First, the media attention to ethnic groups is high if minority groups are associated with violence, illegality, crime, or ‘strange’ cultural behaviour, Second, minority groups are not often indicated as major agents unless again they are suspected or accused of such negative acts. Third, these conditions pave the way for overall negative thematic content and biased stylistic associations. Fourth, Teun A. van Dijk diverts attention from news to journalists and indicates their role to reproduce the dominant and consensual



ideological framework of dominant class and ethnic groups, as they themselves also belong to this group (Van Dijk, 1989: 218-220).

Ethnic minorities who are represented negatively in the media are generally those who come from Muslim countries and the main messages given implicitly to these minority communities are “you don’t belong here”, “your presence causes problems in this country”, “you should return to where you came from” and “cultures should not mix” (Van Dijk, 1989: 200).

As van Dijk clearly portrays, the media produce a discourse that excludes ethnic minorities by employing an “us and them” social categorisation which can also play a role in developing intergroup bias. If we describe individuals who do not belong to the “us” group as ethnic minorities, then we can see in Hussain’s study (2000) to show how this neo-racist discourse became popularised through the media. He argues that media played a role in legalising bias in the exclusion of immigrant people in the social, economic and cultural areas of Danish society.

van Dijk’s approach (1995) does not just describe discourse with language usage, but also shows how the discourse is shaped by power/elite ideology and how social identity, social relationships, knowledge and belief systems are effective in the concept of social culture while the non-critical approach deals solely with the discourse applications in a descriptive and explanatory way. The critical discourse approach argues that social values determine language/discourse. Elite discourses become the natural and dominant message. The mass media, which are one of the ideological tools of the state, process ideology through its use. While ideological news discourse adjusts individuals to the political ideology of the state, the news discourse feeds all citizens with daily doses of nationalism, chauvinism, liberalism and morality via the press, radio and television. The devices which serve the maintenance of the capitalist system are covered and hidden with universally dominant bourgeois ideology (Mora, 2011: 5-10). Discourse that organises social reality according to a specific ideology is the most effective political tool (Fairclough, 2003).

Jorgensen and Louise (2002: 1-64) define the term discourse as “a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world) ... and critical discourse analytical approaches take the side of oppressed social groups.” Hence, news is a political discourse. The discourses of the ruling powers in place are repeated in the news; thus, common consent is produced. News cause the acceptances set in the minds about the forwarded message to be confirmed once again by the individual him/herself via the writer and the text or causes them to be questioned antithetically. News is a text in which dominant discourses are set. Political speech re-establishes the present social forms of power/potency relations. The meaning is structured inside the discourse, and power relations are revealed in a critical way. Hence, the news media serve as a tool that re-establishes specific reality definition. According to Wodak (2009), one of the topics that critical discourse analysis should focus on the discourse strategies of unequal relations. It

is emphasised that critical discourse analysis will provide significant contributions in terms of analyses of reproduction of inequality and sovereignty in discourse via language. van Dijk (1989: 221) referred to the importance of factors which have the characteristics of interrelated social and cognitive discourses in news analysis about minorities.

Taken all together, we examine how the gang wars in Denmark in 2009 were dealt with by *Politiken*. Two pieces of online news were chosen to reflect how violence and gang warfare news are narrated. We have limited our analysis to these two news articles in which the gang wars were reported.

Analysis of the News Texts

Gang warfare may cause marginalisation and exclusion connected to social inequality that may also be associated with anti-immigration sentiment and racial discrimination in media. The children of 'families with immigration background' are often associated with negative representations relating to being non-European with Muslim-origins. At this point, they are excluded and portrayed as potential causes of many of their country's ills, such as criminality. Putnam states that four of the six countries that have the highest social capital are Scandinavian and that the countries which have high social capital have a homogenous ethnic structures (Field, 2008: 11). For members of ethnic minorities, inequality, exclusions and gang turf are a kind of negative form of social capital.

Van Dijk (1989) states that one of the most significant problems in Western Europe is the growing racism and nationalism against immigrants who came from Mediterranean countries and former colonies. He argues that the message of "these people do not belong here, and their presence may cause problems" is given implicitly in most contexts. To this end, he points out that "the media play a role in producing nationalism and racism, and furthermore they portray violence, riots and crime as being associated with ethnic minorities. The media also serve to reinforce the categorisation of "them and us"; we can see that by the attribution of positive features to the "us" social categorisation and negative features to the "them" social categorisation. He adds that "this is not always expressed in media discourse clearly, but rather implicitly". Van Dijk (1985) focuses on the area described as global organisation of news, and particularly on the structure of the news. Thematic and schematic structures are looked into; however, syntactic, semantic, stylistic or rhetorical features of sentences fall outside that framework. Furthermore, graphical issues such as photographs are also not looked at. In short, rather than the micro-organisation of the news discourse, the macro phenomena are scrutinised.

News discourse has a conventional schema, in other words, for the news schema and the analysis, the possible ordering and the hierarchical organisations of text units should be analysed. Headlines have very specific thematic functions and they represent the most important items of the news. They give the message to the



reader that they portray the most important message of the text. Thematic and schematic structures of the news are examined in a social context.

Van Dijk (1985a: 71) also emphasises micro, macro and linguistic approaches for integrated analysis of media discourse. In this study, we discuss the news discourse in terms of ideological analyses in a social context. In other words, the news as a social product is considered within an ideological framework, and the discourse in nationalist-racist mediating perspective is examined at various levels. Cognitive and strategic orientation of theme and schema formulae which takes place in the news discourse should be given importance. This study explores the nationalist and racist ideology that is present in the news discourse. The discourse analysis framework begins with society, discourse and social cognition which Van Dijk describes as a conceptual triangle. At this point, ideologies present a basic framework in the organisation of social cognitions. Ideologies are both cognitive and social.

The Copenhagen gang wars are conceptualised as a source of negative social capital and marginalisation and we argue that this gang wars issue is reflected as an ideological aspect in the news media discourse. Internet news media sources are examined in the framework of the terms racism, “us/them” social categorisation, the presentation of foreigner (insiders, outsiders) differentiation in terms of nationalist dominant discourse and including opponent voices (criminal expression in class and inequality) (in the context of negative social capital and marginalised groups).

Macro structures:

There is a hierarchy of thematic analysis (headline, spot and the news entry) in which firstly the most important information and then unimportant and irrelevant details are given.

Thematic analysis:

Ethnic minorities’ appearances in the media are mostly portrayed in connection with crime, illegality, violence or weird cultural behaviours (that is deviance of some kind), according to content analyses obtained from many different countries (van Dijk, 1989). In that sense, the selection and presentation of the topic as minorities imply the ideological dimension of the news. In this study of the discourse analysis of the news sources reporting the gang wars between criminal groups in Denmark, if we apply to social cognition analysis as ideological discourse analysis in terms of revealing the inequalities (van Dijk, 1995), we need to say that the ideology is cognitive and social-cognitive.

News headlines are very important in terms of thematic function. Then we looked at the headlines:

News headlines

News 1-3 March 2009 - Hells Angels: Immigrants must clean up their act

The Hells Angels biker group says that the only ones who can stop the current gang war are the immigrants themselves.

News 2-7 July 2009 - Denmark: Hells Angels in race war with "jackals"

In the first headline, *the Hells Angels* is in the actor position as the one who speaks on the main topic; via the group, all immigrants (from Muslim-rooted countries) are warned. At this point, there is a reference to polarisation, with the categorisation of "us" and "them" seen clearly in nationalist and racist ideologies. We can also see that immigrants are generalised in a negative presentation framework. There follows a sub-heading: "The Hells Angels biker group says that the only ones who can stop the current gang war are immigrants themselves."

The way these criminal, drug-related and marginalisation-related conflicts appear in the media triggers racism and discrimination against immigrants in Denmark. For Kim Kliver, the head of the National Investigation Centre in Copenhagen, the gang war is criminal, not racial, in its origin. He expresses his opinions as follows:

"Basically it is the control of the criminal markets that means the narcotics markets, that means the trafficking of human beings into prostitution and the money they can earn on these criminal activities." (Al-Jazeera, 12 April 2010)

In the second news headline "*Denmark: Hells Angels in race war with "jackals"*", Denmark with colon (Denmark:) via the native population ("us"), *the Hells Angels* (i.e. good boys, heroes of Denmark against immigrants), Arabs and Muslims described as "jackals" in the second paragraph of the news have a very negative portrayal. In this presentation, the implication of the categorisation of "us" and "them" clearly means all Arab and Muslim immigrants are "jackals". Both news headlines can be seen as the premises of social-cognitive models with a racist, discriminatory and exclusionist ideology. In both headlines, the active part is the representation and speech of Denmark natives and *the Hells Angels* and Arab and Muslim immigrants; in other words, 'THEM' are presented as the source of the problem.

We can see that ideological cognitive models are in place in news media discourse and reproduced via information reduction (or missing information), generalisations and fictionalisation in both news headlines. Spot/news entry is the second important rank in the hierarchy.

Analysis of the first news spot/entry:

The bloody conflict between immigrant gangs and bikers can only be stopped if responsible immigrants take responsibility and "clean up in their own ranks," according to *the Hells Angels* biker group on its website.

Here gang wars, a big problem in Denmark, are again portrayed from the point of view of *the Hells Angels*. All negative factors and even the name of the opposing gangs are not given, but just by categorisation they are referred to as immigrant gangs. Furthermore, responsibility for all these conflicts is put explicitly on this gang



and implicitly on all immigrants (O'Leary, 2008: 118). *The Hells Angels*, on the other hand, are portrayed as the side which has a voice, which appears in a positive light as a good child and even as a hero on behalf of the native Danish population ("us"). In the following paragraphs, as a dissenting voice, an individual referred as "anonymous immigrant" emphasises that Denmark is their home too, and that all immigrants are not the same.

My home too

"I don't understand why the Hells Angels has become a club dedicated to wiping out immigrants (Ed: see endnote) like me," the contributor says, adding: "Wake up - it's not all immigrants who don't wish Denmark well. This is my home too."

(Note: The word actually used in the texts was the Danish word for 'pearl' (perle) which has both a derogatory and a non-derogatory meaning in Danish.)

In the implication of the opponent voice, "it's not all immigrants" means in other words, immigrants do not wish Denmark well BUT, there are also immigrants like me. The usage of 'immigrants like me' indicates that there are also exceptions that resemble me, among the immigrants. van Dijk (1989) explains this kind of sentence in his ideological discourse analysis approach, under local semantics as follows: "... Examples of such semantic strategies in our own research on the reproduction of semantic strategies are well-known and comprise such classical moves as the disclaimers of the apparent denial ("I have nothing against Blacks, but...") ... More generally, elite ideologies are known to de-emphasise social inequality by semantic strategies that aim to legitimate, justify, naturalise, rationalise, authorise, universalise or deny injustice, to transfer it to other groups (as when elites attribute racism to popular resentment) or to blame the victim" (Van Dijk, 1989: 27). He states that elite ideologies are seen in the news text clearly and are not emphasised via semantic strategies. They are legalised by blaming the victims and thus contribute to racism. In the continuing paragraphs of the news, the dialogue continues:

But the Hells Angels webmaster rejects the notion that the organisation is trying to kindle racial hatred. "HAMC Denmark doesn't want to wipe out anyone. We have immigrants, as you nicely put it, (Ed: see endnote) in our own club. But just as so many other Danes and new Danes, *we are tired of the mentality that some immigrants* (Ed: see endnote) have," the webmaster writes, calling on *well-integrated* immigrants to *help solve the conflict*.

"HAMC is made up of proud men with their honour intact, which is why we have the current situation. If what is going on is to be stopped,

responsible immigrants and their descendants must clean up in their own ranks," the webmaster says.

In the above paragraph, "us/them" categorisation continues; all these gang wars and conflicts are laid on the opposing gang members, on the fact that they are immigrants and implicitly on immigrants in general. In other words, all Arabs and Muslims are categorised as immigrants - those who have a problem with integration. We can see a discriminatory ideological reproduction with nationalist, racist categories in a clear and implicit way in all the structures of the news. Negative factors are given to "them", but although being presented as a criminal gang group, the Hells Angels, conversely, are presented as protective, hero figures of Denmark. None of the negative features of *the Hells Angels* group are presented and they are also depicted as the ones who have the voice in the news, i.e. they are given an active role in one of the most important units of the news.

Analysis of the second news spot/entry:

Over the last ten years, not much has been heard of Denmark's Hells Angels. But as daily *Politiken* now reports, *the bikers* are well and truly back in the news with a gang war that resulted in two deaths in early July – adding to an overall total of six murders since August 2008. The last time such an outbreak of violence occurred was in 1996-1997, when the Hells Angels fought a prolonged battle with another traditional gang, the Bandidos. *However, this latest conflict has racist connotations, because the members of the opposing gang, Black Ghost, all have immigrant backgrounds.*

Again in the news summary, it is stated with a racist implication that over the last 10 years, gang wars have not occurred and that the last conflicts have taken place. In the categorisation, while one group is referred to (with such nicknames) as *the Hells Angels*, the bikers, the group who call themselves *Black Ghost* are referred to as immigrants. We can also see the discriminatory language with an analysis on the word and sentence levels and with conjunctions in the last sentence.

The continuation of the news (lending credibility via numbers):

When we look at the last paragraph of the first news article, the part which seems most insignificant hierarchically, we can see the numbers used as the credibility expression as the summary and appendix of the news.

The gang warfare between immigrant and biker groups broke out in earnest in August 2008. Since then, *Politiken* has registered 53 shootings in Copenhagen, of which most are thought to have a direct connection to the gang conflict.



If we examine the last paragraph of the second news article:

In a recently published manifesto, the Hells Angels claim they are fighting to protect Denmark from the “jackal mentality” that “characterises” Arabs and Muslims. According to a poll in Politiken - which leads with the headline “Denmark fears a full blown race war” - 65% of Danes are worried the gang fight might lead to a wider conflict. However, police believe the feud is prompted by a conflict over the illegal drugs market.

We can see a similar hierarchical rank here, too. The strategy of lending credibility via quoting numbers is implemented again. The immigrants are categorised as a gang group with a negative presentation such as jackal mentality, criminality, violent etc. and categorised as “them” and they are presented again in the framework of fear and violence concepts. Meanwhile, the categorised “us” group which is referred to as 65% of Danes via numbers is presented as the ethnic Dane population. Arabs and Muslims are associated with terrorists and violence stereotypically. The real reason of the conflict emerges in the last sentence.

If we evaluate the news in the framework of syntactic analyses in micro-analysis of the news, the writer of the first news article shows a neutral perspective by using passive sentence structures and by presenting the expressions of both groups. However, it expresses the source of conflicts to be immigrants with the vocabulary, expressions used to the reader and with an implication by making fictionalisation via referential relations. In the second news report, the reporter states that the conflicts are race-based in an effective position as follows: “*However, this latest conflict has racist connotations, because the members of the opposing gang, Black Ghost, all have immigrant backgrounds.*” Both news reports tried to lend credibility via numbers, and rhetoric is strengthened. No photographs are used in either report.

Schematic Analysis of the News:

Of the two news articles, only in the second one - in the last sentence, which is hierarchically the most insignificant part – is information about the reasons for gang wars given: “However, police believe the feud is prompted by a conflict over the illegal drugs market.” Nevertheless, the presentations of reports are seen in the context of race conflict and improper behaviours of immigrants in the news. In that sense, it is observed that “us and them” identities in the discourse are reproduced via the two groups between the news and its reader. Thus, these two pieces of news are used as a tool for the reproduction of the opinion that ethnic minorities in Denmark cannot be accepted with their own identities via being Danish and immigrant identity norms by the dominant ideology.

Presentation and Conclusion Analysis of the News:

It is concluded in the news via groups categorised by positioning subjects and vocabulary selection that: If you have 'the mentality of aforementioned immigrants' (jackal) and you do not mind your p's and q's, you cannot become integrated in Denmark (immigrants must clean up their act) and as the protector of Denmark's identity and the representative of Denmark a group will show up and will do the necessary. Even laws will not be able to prevent that situation. It is concluded that this case can be adjusted only if immigrants clean up their act. At this point, it presents the news within its "us/ them" categorisation and disseminates the dominant ideology via gang wars news.

Contextual Analysis of the News:

The sentence "The bloody conflict between immigrant gangs and bikers can only be stopped if responsible immigrants take responsibility and 'clean up in their own ranks,' according to *the Hells Angels* biker group on its website..." in the first news article refers to a race-based conflict between the native population and immigrants, especially in Denmark. The sentence "Denmark fears a full blown race war – 65% of Danes are worried the gang fight might lead to a wider conflict" in the second news article is given as the expression of that conflict and fear. In addition to the expressions given in big type size and bold characters in the headings, words given in quotation marks and the expression of the immigrant speaker confirm the discrimination between Danish and immigrant, us/the other categorisation. Danish society is separated into two groups and the reason given for this separation /polarisation is attributed to the acts of immigrants with Muslim background. Furthermore, it is stated that this conflict would not end unless immigrants adopt the dominant social norms of the country. In Denmark, there are two classes that have cultural differences; one group warns the other group to clean up their act, thus that group is the dominant and majority, the other group is the non-Danish, other, excluded and minority group.

Van Dijk (1989) argues that situation in modern, industrial communities is not only local and interpersonal but also mass mediated. Then, mass media appear as an important actor to shape public perception and reproduction of dominant ideologies. This means that the media actively mediate opinions between the public and power elites. By (re-)interpreting, (re-)constructing and (re-)presenting ethnic opinions, the media contribute to the construction of ethnic consensus which also underpins the racist ideologies and practices of our society (Van Dijk, 1989: 222).

Our findings are in line with other empirical studies (Van Dijk, 1989; Husain, 2000; Cottle, 2000; Morck et al., 2013) in the sense that it becomes evident not only how the power of elites' media marginalises or excludes ethnic minorities via dominant discourse, but also how they contribute to inequalities and the presence of conflicts and gangs by marginalising them.



Morck et al (2013) examined how young people were problematised and marginalised in the media. Especially after 2009, immigrants were ostracised, particularly via gang wars, and were represented with negative features. It is stated that *the Hells Angels* converted their negative fame particularly for the years 2008-2010 into a positive image with their representation as ‘the protector of Denmark’ common in the media. In a sentence published on the website of the gang spokesman on 30 June 2009, he named ethnic minorities as Jackals in a Jackal Manifesto. The media, politicians and *the Hells Angels* constitute one section of that conflict. In the study, it is dwelled on that media presented ethnic minority members as the enemy part by categorising others as ‘bad guys’ and *the Hells Angels* to be ‘heroes’ as the part of the conflict, in addition to quotations about how an individual, referred to as Little A, of the opposing group members criminalised ethnic minority members and how the media generalised. It is said that problematised ethnic minority members separated all the society via gang wars, and thus marginalised ethnic minority members could be pushed to be gangsters. It is emphasised that while ethnic minorities previously appeared on media as “the foreigner problem”, “the Muslim problem” or “the immigrant problem”, after 2008 they were discriminated via “Ghetto problems” and “Gang war”.

According to Hussain (2000), inequalities in Danish society are reproduced via media discourse and the negative representations of biased discourse are reproduced via mass media. Biases are constituted via discourse as follows: “People make strategic inferences from these kinds of discourse, build mental models of ethnic situations and generalise these to general negative attitude schemata or prejudices that embody the basic opinions about relevant minority groups” (van Dijk, 1989: 202).

In that sense the media plays an important role in the acceptance and distribution of ethnic ideologies (van Dijk, 1989). The minorities who appear in the media in a negative light do not have equal chances with the native population in most areas such as education, accommodation or jobs because of discrimination and disadvantages (see Johnston et al., 2010; Liversage, 2009; Sirkeci et al., 2014). The association of the minorities with crime appear as a major negative representation.

Conclusion

This study uncovers the connection between news discourse and ideology which impacts on the process of migrant marginalisation via us/them social categorisation with reference to the “*Copenhagen Gang Wars*”. There has been growing racism and discrimination against immigrants with Muslim backgrounds. In different social contexts, this discriminatory message has been conveyed as “you are not part of this country and you are potentially producing problems”. News media are powerful in reinforcing the racist ideology and news discourse producing social capital for members of the in-group, which results in negative social capital for the out-group (immigrants). Gang wars’ portrayals in news discourse may have

a potential role in producing marginalisation, discrimination and racist ideology. The news articles analysed here shows that gang wars are not racism-based conflicts, as claimed by the dominant media. With such claims, media may marginalise ethnic minorities involved in these conflicts through negative representations, thereby reproducing a discriminatory ethnic ideological discourse based on perpetuating an “us” and “them” dichotomy. The discriminatory discourse results in negative social capital (for immigrants) produced by the media via their reporting on the gang wars. This very same discourse also produces bonding social capital for those in the group (the native population). This may contribute to the existing inequalities by excluding ethnic minorities.

We conclude that the news discourse of gang wars in Denmark produces a racist ideological discourse implicit in the ways in which the conflict is portrayed. This could contribute to the marginalisation of immigrants due to negative social capital created. Despite its narrow focus and limited scope of design, this study demonstrates how implicitly news ideology could be racist and discriminatory.

To examine the ways in which the news discourse produces social inequalities, we used Van Dijk's critical approach to news discourse. We analysed two samples of online news. Hence, we are aware of the limitations that may arise from the sample and the method. Nevertheless, to understand the processes of media discourse and exclusion and inequalities produced through it, this approach and case studies are appropriate. However, further cross-national research is required to examine more closely the links between discourse and elite ideology and their relationship with inequalities.

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