

5 Ideologies, Racism, Discourse: Debates on Immigration and Ethnic Issues

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Aims

This paper studies some of the ideological properties of political discourse on immigration and minorities in contemporary Europe. It combines results of my current work on the theory of ideology (Van Dijk, 1998a) with those of an earlier large project on the discursive reproduction of racism (Van Dijk, 1984, 1987, 1991, 1993a). More specifically, the framework of this discussion is an international project, directed by Ruth Wodak¹ and myself, which examines and compares the way leading politicians in seven EU countries speak and write about immigration and ethnic issues.

Although there are obvious contextual differences between immigration, 'race' relations, and hence between talk about these issues in the various countries, the overall theoretical framework for their analysis is essentially the same. This framework, which will only be briefly summarised here, combines elements from the following multidisciplinary triangle: (a) an elite theory of racism as a form of ethnic dominance and inequality, (b) a socio-cognitive approach to (racist, nationalist) ideologies and other social representations, and (c) a complex multi-level analysis of text and talk in context, in general, and of parliamentary debates, in particular.

Thus, although file examples analysed in this paper are taken from a debate in the British House of Commons on oil asylum seekers, it is assumed that many of the properties of this debate may also be found in immigration debates in other western European countries. Earlier analyses and comparisons of debates on immigration and ethnic issues in Western Europe shows that there are differences of style (e.g., in the UK, France and Germany, MPs may interrupt, heckle and shout, which is much less the case in Spain and the Netherlands), and of nationalist rhetoric (especially in France), but that the main topics, argumentation strategies and especially the standard arguments (topoi) against immigration are very much comparable (Van Dijk, 1993a).

Another difference exists between countries where immigration has been taking place for some decades now (the UK, France, the Netherlands), and the countries where immigration is a more recent phenomenon (Italy, and especially Spain). In the first group of countries, issues of affirmative action, integration, minority policy, and other topics related to multicultural societies are more prominent. In the latter countries, the main topic and concern of talk is still often that of new Immigration and their reception and integration. In the countries where large-scale immigration goes back several decades, there are also MPs who belong to immigrant communities (see also Hargreaves and Leaman, 1995). Common to nearly all countries is the current preoccupation with a 'flood' of asylum seekers, a topic common to many debates in most western European countries.

Discourse and Racism

The issue to be theoretically dealt with here is the relations between ideology, racism and discourse. My first thesis about these relations is that *both* racism and ideology are prominently reproduced by social practices and especially by discourse. I am interested in these processes of societal reproduction and how exactly text and talk are involved in such processes. More specifically, from a more critical perspective, I want to know how discourse reproduces systems of dominance and social inequality, such as racism. That is, the broader framework of my investigation is the type of analytical discourse research now commonly designated as *critical discourse analysis* or CDA (Fairclough, 1995; Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; Van Dijk, 1993b).

This way of framing my problem entails that I do not equate racism with ideology, as is often done in the literature (Miles, 1989). Racism does have an ideological basis, but cannot be reduced to it alone. As a form of dominance and social inequality, racism also needs to be defined in terms of various types of social practice, such as discriminatory discourses and other acts of interaction, at the micro-level. At the same time it requires analysis at the macro-level, through analysis of institutional arrangements, organisational structure, and group relations of power abuse (for details, see the vast literature on the social and institutional dimensions of racism, e.g., Essed, 1991; Feagin and Sikes, 1994; Marable, 1995; Omi and Winant, 1994; Solomos and Wrench, 1993; Van Dijk, 1991, 1993a; Wellman, 1993).

Although I do analyse ideologies in terms of the social cognitions of social groups, other social representations are also involved in this cognitive domain of analysis, such as knowledge, opinions or attitudes (such as prejudices) (Dovidio and Gaertner, 1986; Fiske and Taylor, 1991; Farr and

Moscovici, 1984; Spears, Oakes, Ellemers and Haslam, 1997). Moreover, whereas this is true for groups, I finally also needed what I term *mental models* of individual group members in order to be able to account for individual discourses and acts of discrimination, and hence for personal variation in the social system of racism.

In sum, racism is a complex system of social inequality in which at least the following components are combined:

- a) ideologically based social representations of (and about) groups
- b) group members' mental models of concrete 'ethnic events'
- c) everyday discriminatory discourse and other social practices
- d) institutional and organisational structures and activities
- e) power relations between dominant white and ethnic minority groups.

Without this complex, multidisciplinary framework it is impossible to understand many of the structural and functional properties of talk in western European parliaments, as I analyse it below. Not only is it necessary to describe what parliamentarians say in such debates, and how they do so, but also *why* these political elites speak the way they do, and what functions such properties have in the overall system of racist inequality characterising western European societies and their ideological underpinnings.

However, space limitations allow only the highlighting of some of these features of racism and its reproduction, namely the relations between racist cognition (ideologies, representations and models) on the one hand and (political, parliamentary) discourse on the other.

Ideology

The multidisciplinary theory of ideology that inform this analysis of parliamentary debates, is markedly different from prevailing, largely sociological, political-economic and philosophical approaches (see Larrain, 1979; Eagleton, 1991). Instead of using vague notions such as 'prevailing ideas', 'belief systems', or '(false) consciousness', as they are used in the traditional literature, I propose to found a new theory of ideology based on a more explicit socio-cognitive theory, in which ideologies are first defined as fairly general and abstract mental representations which govern the shared mental representations (knowledge and attitudes) of social groups. Second, the societal dimension of the theory makes explicit which groups, group members, or institutions, are actually involved in the formation, confirmation, reproduction, or change of such ideologies. As is the case for the reproduction of racism, I

assume, for instance, that specific elite groups, such as politicians, journalists, teachers, scholars, and their institutions, are greatly involved in this process of ideological reproduction. Third, as suggested above, I assume that these societal (and historical) processes of ideological formation and change are enacted by group members through social practices in general, but especially in many forms of institutional talk and text (for detail, see Van Dijk, 1998a).

To summarise this complex theory of ideology as a form of social cognition, I highlight the following main points (see Figure 3.1); some details will be elaborated later where I deal with racist ideologies and discourse.

(1) An ideology is a type of *belief system* (Seliger, 1976). This implies that they should be characterised in cognitive terms, and not be confused with, or reduced to. Social practices or discourses, or societal structures of any kind. One may however say that such practices or discourses are expressions or enactments of underlying ideologies.

(2) Ideological belief systems, however, are at the same time *social*, and defined for *social groups*, and hence are forms of shared, societal cognition (Fraser and Gaskell, 1990). Although individuals, as group members, may have ideologically based opinions, ideologies as such are not individual.

(3) Unlike classical theories of ideologies, I do not assume that ideologies are limited to 'dominant' classes, groups or formations; dominated groups may have, for example, ideologies underlying their resistance to domination. Under specific social conditions, *any social group* or social movement may develop an ideology.

(4) In addition to organising the shared social representations and social identity of a group, ideologies control *intra-group action* and cooperation, as well its *inter-group perception and interaction* of group members.

(5) Ideologies are not just any kind of socially shared belief systems, but should be located at a more fundamental or basic level. They are less specific than, for instance, social attitudes (e.g., about abortion, the death penalty, or immigration), but form the '*axiomatic*' basis of numerous attitudes and much knowledge (about various social domains) as shared by group members.

(6) I distinguish between *group knowledge*, that is, beliefs held to be true by a group according to its own truth criteria, and the more general, culturally shared knowledge that is taken for granted, undisputed, and generally (and discursively) presupposed, across groups, within a given culture or historical period. I call this latter Kind of knowledge *common ground* knowledge. Of course, what counts as 'knowledge' within one group may be seen as ideologically based beliefs from the perspective of another group. Similarly, common ground beliefs may, and generally will, alter over time (and may even be reduced to the knowledge of specific groups), whereas the knowledge of specific groups (e.g., scholars) may later enter the common ground.

(7) The essential distinction between group knowledge and cultural common ground knowledge allows us to distinguish between ideological and non-ideological beliefs in a given culture. Thus, contrary to most other approaches, I hold that beliefs which are taken for granted and undisputed within a given culture are by definition not ideological *within that culture* (they may, of course, later or from another perspective be seen as ideological). In informal terms: ideologies presuppose competition, conflict, struggle, or differences of opinion and knowledge between groups.

(8) Ideologies are themselves constituted by *basic propositions* that represent what is good or bad for the group. They are, thus, based on the *values* and *norms* that each social group develops or borrows from more general cultural values (freedom, liberty, autonomy, truth, reliability, etc.).

(9) Virtually neglected in traditional approaches, a socio-cognitive theory of ideology also focuses on the *internal structures* or *organisation* of ideologies. Discursive and experimental evidence suggests that ideologies tend to be *polarised*, e.g., as propositions about Us and Them, as is also suggested by the 'conflictual' or 'competitive' social basis of ideologies.

(10) I go on to assume that ideologies are organised by *fixed ideological schema* gradually learned and applied by social actors during their socialisation and identification with various social groups. Categories in this schema are, e.g., membership criteria, typical actions, goals, norms and values, group position (relations with other groups), and specific group resources. These categories and their contents are some kind of group *self-schema*, defining the basics of their 'socio-cognitive' identity.

(11) Ideologies along with the knowledge and attitudes they control are general, social, and shared by group members. However, ideological practices and hence discourses are engaged in by *individual group members* and in specific social situations, and are therefore unique. To describe and explain that uniqueness, I therefore need a cognitive Interface between social representations of groups and real action, the text or talk of individual social actors, namely *mental models*. These models are subjective representations (in episodic memory) of specific events or situations in which or about which social actors communicate or act (John son-Laird, 1983; Oakhill and Garnham, 1996; Van Dijk and Kintsch, 1983).

(12) Because mental models not only feature biographical representations of personal experiences but also *instantiations of shared social representation*, Ideologies may indirectly influence mental models. Because such 'biased' mental models are the cognitive structures on which social practices and discourse are based, this brings me, finally, to an explicit way of relating ideology with text and talk.

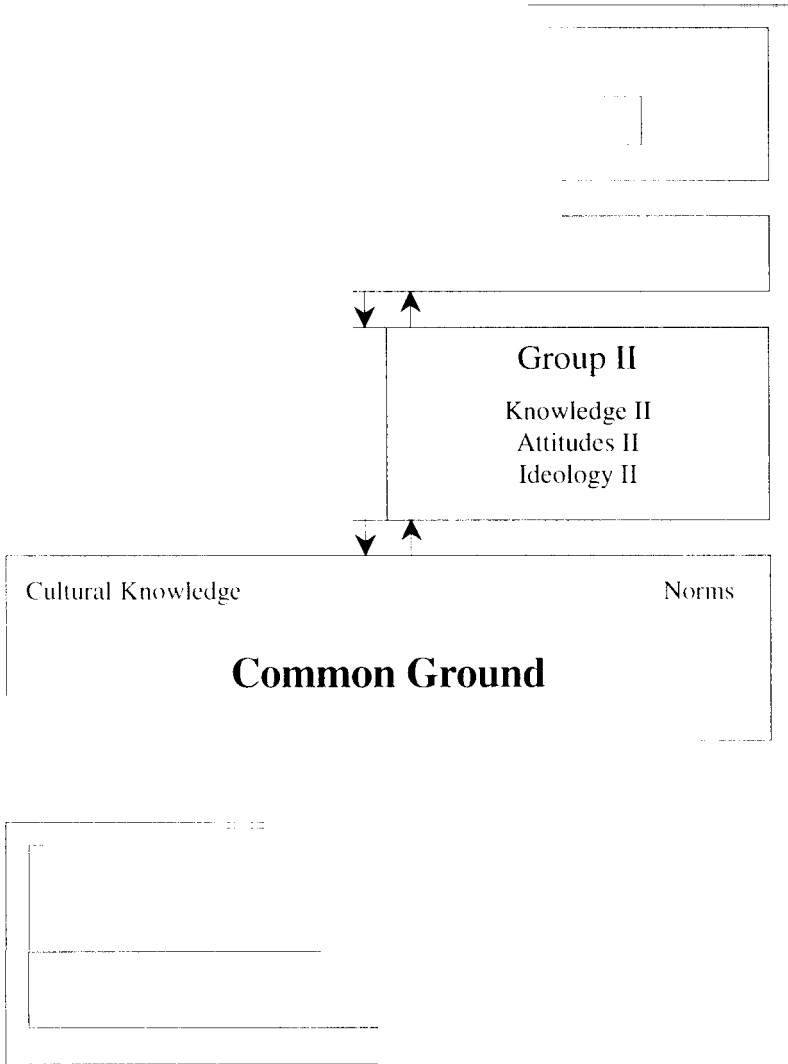


Figure 5.1 Political Discourse and Political Cognition

(13) Discourse is not only based on mental models of events that people think or speak about, but also on mental models of the *communicative situation* in which they speak, write, read or listen (Van Dijk, 1998b). It is this personal, subjective representation of the relevant features of the social situation that defines the notion of context. In other words 'semantic' event models and 'pragmatic' *context models* together give shape to the contents and variable Structures of a discourse in production or to their appropriate understanding in comprehension. Since context models may also be ideologically influenced (e.g., in the ways interacting participants are represented as own or other group members), also contextually controlled structures of discourse may be ideologically based.

Taken together, this provides the cognitive basis for a theory of contextualisation.

Racist Ideologies

Given this theoretical framework, it is possible to make the next step, and examine the nature of racist ideologies (for some earlier studies, see Barker, 1981; Guillaumin, 1973; Jager, et al., 1998; Yeboah, 1988). How do the main properties of ideologies distinguished above specifically apply to a theory of racist ideologies? Again, I merely summarise the main features (and problems) of such a theory.

(1) Since, by definition, each ideology must be shared by a social group, racist ideologies would be based in the group of *racists*. For several reasons, however, this group is not only ill-defined, but its identification would also imply a clear distinction between racists and non-racists, a distinction which is highly problematic. Moreover, this group is hardly self-defined as such. I therefore prefer to speak of racist practices that some members of a group (e.g., white Europeans) may engage in more or less frequently or intensely. In other words, the social basis of racist ideologies is a problem that requires further analysis.

(2) For the same reason, the definition of the *ideological self-schema* of 'racists' is problematic, because racists seldom identify themselves as such. However, even when not self-categorised as racist, this self-schema may feature the following categories: (a) *member-ship devices*: by color, 'race' or nationality, e.g., 'We white people', 'We Dutch people', etc.; (h) *activities*: racist practices/discourse (talking negatively about minorities, discrimination, differentiation, exclusion, inferiorisation and problematisation etc.); (c) *goals*: 'Keeping them down and out.'; (d) *values*: e.g., the purity and priority of the own group; (e) *position*: superiority and dominance over Others; (f) *resources*:

'our' territory, space, nation, and white color, and preferential access to all social resources.

In other words, for those group members (e.g., white Europeans) who have an ideology featuring these categories and their related propositions, one would say they have a racist ideology (whether or not they identify with such a group or self-define themselves as such).

(3) Racist ideologies govern other shared social representations, and especially *racist attitudes*, prejudices, etc. (Dovidio and Gaertner, 1986; Spears, Oakes, Ellemers and Haslam, 1997). These attitudes are negative opinions on (the role of) minorities in various social domains: immigration, housing, welfare, work or education. Given the structure of the ideological schema above, thus, we may expect that for each of these domain we find specific opinions such as keeping Them out of the country, the neighborhood, the job, etc. or assigning priority to ourselves in situations in each of these domains.

From Racist Cognition to Racist Discourse

As suggested before, these underlying racist ideologies and ideologically controlled ethnic/racial prejudices may finally be expressed in text and talk. For concrete news reports, everyday stories, or discussions about specific cases, this will occur on the basis of ideologically controlled mental models, that is, by biased definitions of the situation (for concrete case studies, see Jaiger, 1992; Wetherell and Potter, 1992; Van Dijk, 1984, 1987, 1991, 1993; Wodak, Nowak, Pelikan, Gruber, de Cillia and Mitten, 1990). Ideological propositions may also be expressed directly as generic expressions about Us and Them in other discourses, especially those of politics, scholarship and education. Us and Them may be the prototypical form for racist propaganda.

Given these underlying structures, and those of specific contexts that may favor or prohibit them (the same people will speak differently about the Others in different situations), we may expect overall interactional, pragmatic, semantic and stylistic strategies that select or emphasise positive information about Us, and negative information about Them (or avoid negative information about Us and positive information about Them). The effects of these ideologically based strategies of positive self-presentation and negative Other-presentation may be observed at all levels of discourse structures in text and talk. Conversely, these 'biased' discourse structures may in turn lead to the desired biased mental model about ethnic events or general representations about ethnic minorities among the recipients. Note again, though, that, both in production and in comprehension, this process of 'racist discourse processing' is also a function of *context*. Social domain, setting, situation, other

participants as well as their roles and goals, among other things, may favor, modify or block racist text or talk.

Parliamentary Debates

Parliamentary debates are also partly defined by their complex, institutional context. Indeed, people sometimes say something very similar in other genres (in e.g., a school textbook, the classroom, or the media), for instance, about immigration, but only when uttered in the context of a congress or parliament will such discourse be part of a political debate.

Many of the structures of a political debate are a function of the context: Chair-controlled allocation of speaking time, duration and order, as well as interjections; the reading of prepared speeches; a strict etiquette of address; formalised rules of interjection; as well as overall strategies of persuasion, and the polarisation between government and opposition speakers.

According to my theory and analysis, parliamentary debates are, by definition, ideologically based. MPs do not speak as individuals but as group (party) members. Parties are the quintessential ideological groups, because party formation is largely ideological. This (theoretically) implies that contributions to a debate are a function of the ideology of the party as interpreted by the speaker. In other words, the social representations of MPs are one of the cognitive categories that form part of a context (that is, of a context model).

This is not merely an analytical category, but also a practical, group member's category. Not only will MPs express (intentionally or not) their ideologically based mental models of a particular event (e.g., the immigration of asylum seekers), but other MPs (and the public) will typically hear such discourse as 'partisan' and hence as ideological. Conversely, parliamentary discourses may also contribute to the changes of context, such as the relations between groups, for example, between government and opposition parties.

I will show that even such variable forms as those controlled by the context may have an ideological basis, much the same as for the variation between the emphasis on Our good actions as opposed to Their bad ones. Indeed, as mental models, contexts by definition inherit some of the ideological orientations of the group with which the speaker identifies (e.g., MP Conservative, male, white. Western, middle class, representative of a specific region, etc.). Such ideological mental models will, therefore, also control the 'ideological' structures of a discourse. Members of dominant elite groups, for instance, may use specific language forms to derogate dominated minority groups or to highlight their own expertise, credibility, moral standing or status, as well as doing the same for their constituents, their fellow MPs or the media.

Semantics

Members of a parliament engage, then, in parliamentary debates constrained by the context models they have for each specific session of parliament. They do so first by selecting or constructing relevant propositions from the event models, that is, of all they know about an issue, such as the immigration of a specific group of asylum seekers. Of course, given the severe time constraints, only small fractions of event models may be relevant for expression. Generally speaking, each selection of meaning should be a function of the political aims, rules or strategies that define a debate. Among other things, they should enhance the role and prestige of the speakers or their parties. Thus, polarisation of 'content' may be the result. Moreover, both the global and the local meanings of a discourse should be a function of the politico-ideological aim of the debate as a whole, such as legislating on immigration restrictions.

The global topics of parliamentary debates are often stereotypical (see also Reeves, 1983; Van Dijk, 1993a): (a) Some social or political phenomenon has been noted, and will now be defined according to the ideology of the speech participants, usually as a *problem*. Such problem-definitions of the situation may also apply to current policies (or Bills of law) of the government. (b) The (usually negative) *consequences* of such events (or policies) will be 'spelled out' if no appropriate action (policy, legislation) is taken. (c) Government parties or, more critically, opposition parties will positively or negatively deal with current policy and action. After examining the problems associated with such actions in the past, or conversely having blasted the policies of the opponents, they will make proposals and argue for an expedient policy, extolling the beneficiary consequences of new policies or laws or of the actions recommended by an MP. At this stage, other MPs may intervene or interrupt, and participate in the ensuing debate.

The semantic macro-structures (thematic Structures) that organise such debates are (mentally) selected from event models providing a speaker's definition of the situation. In principle, these main topics are selected from the high-level propositions of the speaker's models, but in some cases, for contextual (political) reasons, lower level 'details' may be focused on, for example, when these are detrimental to the opponent(s) (the government and/or opposition party, or a particular politician). Such 'biased' definitions of the situation (event models) are based on attitudes and hence are ideological; indeed, the contextually monitored selection of main topics of a debate may also be ideologically controlled. For example, if current or proposed legislation harms asylum seekers, anti-racist speakers may apply their anti-racist ideologies and attitudes to call such legislation 'racist'. This may also apply to apparently irrelevant details, such as with whom an MP has been seen having lunch.

In general, then, ideological topic selection in most discourse, and even more so in parliamentary discourse, will involve the selection of any topic that contributes to the formation of positive models and social representations of the ingroup, and negative ones about the outgroup (that is, the opposition or the outgroup(s) under discussion, for instance, asylum seekers).

An Example

Let us examine a concrete example. On March 5, 1997, a debate on asylum seekers was held in the British House of Commons. The debate was initiated by Mrs. Teresa Gorman (Conservative MP for Billericay, Essex), who sets out to speak about what she defines in her own words as:

the particular difficulties faced by the London boroughs because of the problems of asylum seekers. (P1)

As expected, a phenomenon (arrival of asylum seekers) is introduced, defined as a problem, and its consequences for Us are highlighted. Note that the ambiguous phrase ‘problems of asylum seekers’ for her clearly means ‘the problems caused by asylum seekers’. Her speech in no way expresses any understanding for the problems *experienced* by asylum seekers.

Other *topics* (macro-propositions) that control her speech are:

- a) We Should distinguish between genuine and bogus asylum seekers.
- b) A recent document found that asylum seekers cost 200 million pounds per year.
- c) London ratepayers should not have to pay For this.
- d) Many asylum seekers are illegal immigrants.
- e) Previous legislation [by the Conservative government] cut benefits and thus halved the number of bogus asylum seekers.
- f) Current proposals for legislation [by the Labour opposition] aim to reverse these measures, and will cause massive immigration of asylum seekers.
- g) Recent court decisions have resulted in many millions of extra expenditure for London borough councils.
- h) Some illegal immigrants cost the taxpayer a lot of money.
- i) Some illegal immigrants are involved in crime.
- j) Especially the borough of Westminster has to pay a lot lox- everyday living costs of asylum seekers.
- k) Contrary to what is sometimes said, people in Westminster are not very rich.
- l) Elderly people should not have to pay for the up keep of illegal asylum seekers.
- m) Some bogus asylum seekers are ‘playing the system’.
- n) This is 1 national problem, and these costs should be paid nationally.

- o) Many people in Westminster have below average incomes.
- p) Asylum seekers go through many appeals against deportation.
- q) The opposition should be serious and not change current legislation.

Further reduction of these topics would globally define the topics of her speech as:

- A) Many asylum seekers are bogus and break the law.
- B) We (Westminster) have no money to pay for them.
- C) The law that reduced the number of bogus asylum seekers should not be abolished.

It is obvious from this example that the selection of topics is ideological, and controlled by racist attitudes about asylum seekers (from outside of Europe) being bogus, frauds, and criminals. Throughout her speech thus, also at the local level, Mrs. Gorman will enumerate examples and engage in descriptions that are negative about asylum seekers.

However, following the positive ideological self-image, she presents Us first as MPs who should uphold current law, second as caring representatives of a constituency (Westminster), and third, more implicitly as (white) English threatened by massive immigration ('this would open the floodgates again').

Part of the strategy of positive self-presentation is in the form of a number of pity-moves, in which poor elderly (British) people are contrasted with bogus asylum seekers who 'play the system'. The racist nature of her speech (its title next speaker also points out) is exclusively based on a focus on a few negative examples, and the whole orientation towards asylum seekers as causing problems and difficulties, costing lots of money, or entering the country illegally.

Her main Labour opponent, Jeremy Corbyn (Islington South, a seat in London) on the other hand, speaks from the position of an anti-racist, humanitarian ideology. The topics of his speech include:

- a) We should think about why people seek asylum.
- b) The Geneva Convention guarantees people a safe place.
- c) Britain has few asylum seekers compared to other countries, especially outside of Europe.
- d) It is an exaggeration to say that we have too many asylum seekers.
- e) Asylum seekers, who already have terrible experiences, now also have these in Britain, IN, instance, gained front the immigration authorities and the police.
- f) Seeking asylum is becoming increasingly difficult.
- g) Many people, also Conservative MPs, have negative opinions about them.

- h) (Replying to interruption) People seek asylum like those who fled from Nazi Germany. It is nonsense not to admit them.
- i) Asylum seekers are destitute. They should be able to live during appeal processes.
- j) We should listen to their terrible experiences of asylum seekers.
- k) Many regimes (also 'democratic' ones in Eastern Europe) violate human rights.
- l) (After an interruption by Mrs. Gorman claiming that over 90 per cent of asylum seekers are not genuine) Some 'democratic' regimes violate human rights and thus cause people to flee, for example, Kurds from Turkey or people from (the) Ivory Coast.
- m) Many people here do not listen to the terrible stories of asylum seekers.
- n) In Britain many asylum seekers are put in prisons.
- o) Many asylum seekers are badly treated.
- p) That there has been a hunger strike by asylum seekers shows that their problems are serious.
- q) This is a blemish on the Human Rights record of Britain.
- r) Asylum seekers should be helped and respected.
- s) The Government's regime creates serious problems for asylum seekers.
- t) Many (e.g., Churches) have been protesting against imprisonment of asylum seekers.
- u) Why does the British government not protest against human rights violations in many countries?

Obviously, these topics derive from a definition of the situation (a mental model) of asylum seekers in Britain that is ideologically opposed to that of the previous speaker. Instead of presenting asylum seekers in a bad light, their plight is highlighted, and the British authorities and Government are criticised for their policies and actions. The basic ideological and attitudinal propositions expressed here deal with the imperative of international law, with Human Rights principles, and with humanitarian principles to help those in need. The main value expressed here is that of Solidarity with the oppressed. The complex attitude that inspired the mental model being conveyed here features propositions about how asylum seekers are tortured and otherwise persecuted by oppressive regimes; how in this country they are badly treated by immigration authorities and police, as well as being put in prison: and how they need financial support to live. The specific model of the current situation features further details about specific countries, and specific events (y hunger strike) and examples of bad treatment.

That is, the selection of topics is largely controlled by an ideologically based model and general social representations organised by anti-racist and humanitarian ideologies, as they are usually associated with a more progressive (Labour) position.

Local Semantics

Ideologies not only monitor the overall, global meaning (or topics) of discourse, but also their more local meanings, as they are actually expressed in, and implied by a debate's words and sentences. Again, in the racist contribution to this debate, we may thus expect to find many concrete examples of negative Other-presentation.

A first move of this strategy is to properly define or *categorise* the relevant sub-groups, namely as 'bogus' asylum seekers and as genuine ones respectively (numbers indicate paragraphs from which the examples are taken):

There are, of course, asylum seekers and asylum seekers (P2)
Genuine asylum seekers... [vs.] ...economic migrants... benefit seekers on holiday (P2-3)²
alleged asylum seekers (P16)
Genuine applicants ...are frustrated and suffer from delayed applications because of those who are not genuine (P47)

We see in the last example that the negative presentation of 'bogus' asylum seekers is enhanced by emphasising how they hurt genuine ones. This is also part of the strategy of positive self-presentation, because it implies first that 'We' are not simply against (all) asylum seekers, and secondly that We care for the 'genuine' asylum-seekers.

Once the 'bogus' asylum seekers are properly defined, identified and categorised, the speaker will proceed to describe who the bogus asylum seekers are and what they do, thereby focusing first on the problems and difficulties They create, and what they cost Us:

[difficulties] ...because of the problems of asylum seekers (P1)
the burden of expenditure that those people are causing (P3)
£200 million a year cost ...[that] would again become part of the charge on the British taxpayer (P6)
The problem of Supporting them (P8)
She cost the British taxpayer £40,000 (P14)
at the expense of the British public (P14)
an enormous financial burden on the tax payers (P15)
[they have to be housed in] expensive accommodation (P16)

Note the important strategy of creating a pitiful image of poor, old ratepayers, in order to emphasise that these cannot share the burden, a populist

move which also enhances the problematic nature of immigration, and further contributes to the positive self-image of the speaker as caring for poor old people. Note also the semantic ploy of using presuppositions. That immigrants cause difficulties It is not asserted as a debatable opinion, but simply presupposed as a fact.

The next move in the strategy of negative Other-presentation, appears in the following examples, where the Others are seen to break 'Our' norms, if not the law.

[A man from Romania] He has never done a stroke of work in his life (P22)
 [they] are milking the social services (P23)
 playing the system ...addicted to the social services (P24)
 racket of evading our immigration laws (P7)
 I am sure that many of them are working illegally, and of course work is readily available in big cities (PR)
 She was arrested. of course, for stealing (P14)
 or to do a bit of work on the black economy (P18)

Note that where the speaker refrains from (over)generalising, she uses vague quantifiers such as 'many'. Obviously, the attributes focused on here are consistent with prevailing stereotypes and prejudices about Others (especially non-Europeans): They are lazy, They cheat, They abuse Our system, They work illegally and They steal. Basically, They violate Our laws and morals. That is, racist ideologies articulate evaluations in relation to Our values, and will derogate the Others its fundamentally different from Us: They are inconsistent with whatever We stand for.

On the other hand, positive self-presentation of the (British) ingroup may be observed in the following example. of which the first, positive part introduces a *disclaimer*:

The Government are keen to help genuine asylum seekers, but... (P7)

Apart from emphasising the good We do for Them, part of this strategy of positive self-presentation is a move that *euphemises* Our less positive actions:

To discourm-age the growing number of people from abroad (P2)

Severe restrictions on immigration and institutional harassment of asylum-seekers are thus mitigated by the word 'discourage'.

Another well-known move in the strategy of positive self-presentations is what we may call the move of *apparent empathy*. Here the speaker seems to

show positive feelings about a group, but (as is usual with disclaimers) this is followed by ‘but’ and a statement that implies something negative about Them:

I understand that many people want to come to Britain to work, but there is a procedure whereby people can legitimately become part of our community. (P4)

Note that in this example another ideology is emerging, namely that of legalism: Whatever happens, the law must be respected, including the rules and regulations of immigration. This formulation also implies that when the Others break those laws, We can legitimately take action against Them.

To avoid allegations of bias, speakers routinely engage in the well-known *apparent negation* disclaimer, which begins by denying a negative self-characteristic, but continues negatively about Them:

I did not say that every eastern European’s application for asylum in this country was bogus. However... (P46)

The point of analysing these semantic moves is to show that all properties of meaning of a discourse may be affected by some ideological component of event and context models. Positive self-presentation applied to speakers and their groups is a strategy that is based on context models, and aims at managing the impression speakers make on recipients. Thus, avoiding an impression of being racist can only be explained in terms of social representations and ideologies speakers have about racism—representations which may, of course, be inconsistent with those of a critical recipient or analyst, who may see such denials of racism precisely as a marker of racist speech.

Anti-Racist Ideology

Note that what has been argued for local semantics as controlled by racist ideologies, also applies to the influence of anti-racist, humanitarian, and other progressive ideologies. Here, instead of negative *Other*-presentation, one would expect to find various moves of *positive Other-presentation*, as well as genuine empathy with and sympathy for asylum seekers:

It is a major step for Someone with legitimate fear to seek refuge in exile (P34)
 They are now living [a] life of virtual destitution (P41)
 I wonder whether those who make decisions on refusing people asylum... have ever taken the trouble to sit down and listen to the stories of the people who have

been tortured and abused (P52)

It is difficult for people to talk about torture experiences (P53)

Hon. Members Should stop and think for a moment about the circumstances of those who come to this Country seeking asylum (P55)

Similarly, various semantic functional relations are to be expected, such as the provision of more general examples, for instance, about the terrible plight of asylum seekers:

[No MP] has been woken up by the police at 4a.m., taken into custody (P34)

If one has grown up in Iraq and has always been completely terrified of anyone wearing any type of uniform (P35)

areas of oppression (P39)

summarily imprisoned... beaten up etc. (P40)

We Should consider the experiences of people who have fled countries (P40).

[in the Ivory Coast] they crushed trade unions and they crushed student opposition, sending troops into various universities (**P50**)

Note that these examples are not merely expressions of knowledge about the horrors asylum seekers have lived through. They are also selected and formulated as a function of underlying ideologies and social representations, for instance, critical ones about the police, the military, or oppressive regimes. Harassment, imprisonment, beatings, and crushed oppositions are part and parcel of the social representations of oppressive groups or institutions, as organised by a progressive, anti-racist or humanitarian ideology. Such negative representations may also be relevant for self-critical discourse about Our people, institutions or country:

In the United Kingdom there has been a systematic erosion of people's ability to seek asylum (P3(,))

The UK, for example, prides itself on its close relationship with Turkey, yet... (P49)

Almost uniquely among European countries, this country routinely puts in prison people who seek asylum (P54)

In this country, people who say that get routine abuse from Home Office Ministers and Conservative Members (P55)

The Government's regime on asylum seekers is creating a serious situation (P57)

Note though that the ideological polarisation between Us and Them in these anti-racist examples is not between Us-English and Them-Foreigners, but presupposes a split within the ingroup itself. The speaker is not merely

exercising self-critique, but criticising ideological Others, namely Conservatives. The political implications of such ideologically based accusations are obvious when conveyed by a Labour speaker attacking a previous Conservative speaker.

As is the case in racist negative Other-presentation, also the Conservative Others in anti-racist talk are represented as violating basic rules, norms, principles or values, such as the norm (in fact: a law) that asylum seekers cannot be sent back, the norm not to have close relationships with oppressive regimes (a corollary of a democratic ideology), that innocent people should not be put in prison, that power abuse by the authorities is wrong, and so on. In other words, from another perspective, such anti-racist discourse presents the Conservative Others as violating the Moral Order, specifically all the principles of Human Rights. In the following examples, several of these principles are formulated even more explicitly:

I suggest that he [the MP] start to think more seriously about human rights issues (P38)

[on benefit rights] Not to do so is a gross abuse of individual human rights (P39)

democracy does not always follow multi-party elections (P49)

Is that how a democratic Government should behave? (P50)

Attitudes towards asylum seekers need to be changed (P56)

Routine imprisonment should end (P56)

I hope that we shall recognise that we should have a slightly more humane approach towards asylum seekers in this country (P57)

Europe must stop its xenophobic attitude towards those who seek a place of safety here and adopt a more humane approach (P58)

Where is the outright condemnation from the Government of the denial of human rights in ...It seem [s] more interested in trade and selling arms to those regimes than in defending human rights (P59)

Although specifically applied to the present, British, situation, these are examples that could easily be drawn, almost directly, from anti-racist and democratic social representations and ideologies. That is, they are generic statements, and not specific ones based on unique personal mental models. Apart from being critical statements, these examples are, at the same time, moral imperatives and exhortations. Finally, such critique may, of course, explicitly address the Others in terms of racist accusations:

There also has been a vindictiveness against asylum seekers—it has been parroted in this debate by some Conservative Members—which has been promoted by some newspapers, particularly the Daily Mail (P36)

The Hon. Lady seems to have moved on a bit from the cant and prejudice that she Produced in her earlier speech.

Rhetoric

What is true for semantics also holds for 'rhetorical' semantic figures. Generally, emphasising and de-emphasising meanings are rhetorical operations conventionalised as figures of speech such as metaphor, hyperbole, euphemism, and the like. It is, then, not surprising that the choice of such semantic figures of speech is also controlled by underlying ideological models, social representations, and ideologies.

Thus, in order to emphasise the threat of immigration, the speaker will hyperbolically refer to opening the floodgates (P6). Similarly, the negative characteristics attributed to the Others may be enhanced by specific *metaphors*, such as:

they are milking not only the taxpayers but the caring services (P23) They are simply parasites (P24)

Especially the implicit comparison of outgroups with threatening or disgusting animals, like parasites in the last example, is a standard metaphorical way to derogate minorities, and was also a familiar ploy in Nazi propaganda about the Jews.

Such metaphors are not merely discursive, rhetorically persuasive ways of expressing properties of mental models. They may be associated more deeply with thought and judgment. If minorities or Others are thus associated with proper-ties of animals, we may assume that also the social representations about minorities are connected to representations of animals. This may imply that in racist ideologies, the Others are basically also represented as less human, so that attitudes and specific models about minorities will tend to be associated with the appropriate animals: If asylum seekers are seen as a threat, they may be thought of in terms of threatening animals, and if they are seen as 'living off us', then parasitic animals may be the appropriate cognitive association. In other words, ideologies may influence the very thought processes that underlie discourse.

Another well-known rhetorical ploy found in discourse on immigrants and minorities is the mmther,s game: the use of figures to speculate about the number of new people entering the country. Often used by the press, its further rhetorical function is usually the same as that of hyperbole, i.e., by emphasising the numbers of immigrants (or what they cost) their threatening or problematic nature may be enhanced:

There are about 2000 families... the cost is estimated to be 2 million a year... but for London as a whole...£140 million a year (P10).

Over 90 per cent of People who claim asylum turn out not to be genuine (P47)

In sum, throughout the discourse, and at all levels, structures, strategies and moves are all geared towards the most effective expression and persuasive communication of ideologically based mental models and social representations. Whatever else may be said, the overall strategy is to present the Others, or their arrival and immigration, in a negative light.

The choice of these negative characteristics may be ad hoc, and tied to a unique model, but often it is controlled by the contents of ideological stereotypes, prejudices and ideologies. The same is true for the representation of Us, or the relation between Us and Them. For instance, also in this speech, We (or at least some of Us) are represented as victims of the asylum seekers, and more generally, if the 'flood' of asylum seekers does not threaten to drown us, they are, at the very least, a financial burden to us.

All these meanings derive from socially shared representations about minorities and immigrants, and are not merely the unique, contextually specific constructions of an individual speaker. And since many recipients share these representations, such discourse will also be eminently recognisable, and thus very likely to coincide with and the ethnic prejudices and ideologies that recipients may already have, or otherwise persuasively contribute to their development.

The same is true, *mutatis mutandis*, for the representation of the Others (the Conservatives) in dissident, anti-racist text and talk. Violating human rights and the moral order will be similarly emphasised. In the following concrete example, metaphor, hyperbole, and comparison are used to emphasize the negative actions and policies of the Conservative Government:

Britain has among the smallest number of asylum seekers of any European country (P33)

Many people sought asylum from Nazi Germany (P38)

History shows that unless we stand up for human rights (P59)

Argumentation

Of the many properties of parliamentary discourse, argumentation structures are paramount. That ideological positions are defended and attacked can be seen in the discursive moves which are made, some of which have already been examined above in terms of semantic or rhetorical structures. Globally, the Conservative argument is that the uncontrolled immigration of the many

'bogus' asylum seekers places a financial burden on the community, and that therefore the current restrictions should remain in place. Conversely, the Labour argument is that international legal, and moral imperatives do not allow us to prohibit asylum seekers to enter the country, and that therefore the restrictive law should be changed.

These global arguments and conclusions are supported, more locally, by a host of specific arguments. These provide, for example, evidence that many asylum seekers are indeed 'bogus', abuse the system, and break the law, as well as why (London) councils cannot bear the financial burden, or, conversely, that those refugees applying for asylum are doing so legitimately. Similarly, restrictions on immigration are judged untenable on account of basic Moral principles of human rights, as well as international law. Where the Conservative argument makes a rational appeal to practical consequences, lack of money, as well as more principled arguments that 'our' poor and elderly should not bear the brunt of the cost of taking care of asylum seekers. Again, these arguments all derive from general social representations of asylum seekers, oppressive regimes, the elderly, and so on.

More specifically, we find *argumentational moves*, characteristic of discussions about immigration, on both sides of the debate (sometimes critically categorised as fallacies). Thus, both main speakers will have recourse to arguing by authority. The Labour speaker supports his argument with recourse to the moral authority of, e.g., Amnesty or the Churches:

the opportunity to read (he papers from Amnesty International or from Helsinki Watch (Pd2)
The Churches Commission for Racial Justice... (P58)

On the other hand, the Conservative speaker refers to the conclusions of a bipartisan (and hence not-partisan) committee that established the costs of receiving asylum seekers.

Similarly, both speakers will make *appeals to the emotions* of the recipients by starkly emphasising the situation of those they speak for, viz., the elderly, poor tax payers, and asylum seekers, respectively:

Many of these people live in old-style housing...They are on modest incomes. Many of them are elderly... with a little pension from their work. They pay their full rent and for all their own expenses (P21)
I wonder whether those who make decisions on refusing people asylum ...have ever taken the trouble to sit down and listen to the stories of the people who have been tortured and abused (P52)

A typical fallacy of racist argumentation is to generalise from single examples, as also the Conservative speaker does when she gives concrete examples in order to claim or imply that asylum seekers are lazy, or criminal:

[A man from Romania] He has never done a stroke of work in his life (P22)

She was arrested, of course, for stealing (P14)

Similarly, racist discourse will attribute negative characteristics to Others, typically by arguing from impressions and not evidence:

I am sure that many of them are working illegally, and of course work is readily available in big cities (P8)

Conversely, the anti-racist speaker will typically resort to the *ad hominem* argument of accusing the conservative speaker of racism.

These few examples of argumentational moves (there are many others not dealt with here), also show that the nature of argumentation is ideologically controlled. It is true that, whatever the ideological position of speakers they may have recourse to the same types of moves and strategies. Both sides of a debate may exaggerate, use populist arguments, appeal to emotions, or invoke authorities when arguing. In that respect, argumentation, just like other discourse structures, is ideologically neutral. However, the specific contents being chosen for arguments and conclusions are obviously ideologically based, for example when the Conservative speaker sets out to prove that asylum seekers break the law and our norms, or when she argues that poor 'ratepayers' should not have to pay for 'able' asylum seekers.

On the other hand, there are also argumentational strategies and moves that, as such, appear to be more typical (though seldom exclusively so) of conservative, progressive, racist or anti-racist speakers. Racist discourse typically engages in unwarranted generalisations from individual negative examples of an immigrant breaking the law or violating Our norms. Thus, a fallacy is the argumentational counterpart of the 'cognitive' fallacy of generalising from models to social representations, as is the case for prejudice formation. Conversely, anti-racist discourse may resort to *ad hominem* arguments, attacking speakers as racists instead of arguing against their positions.

Conclusions

This paper has explored some of the relations between discourse, racism, and ideology. Within the framework of a new theory of ideology, I have argued that ideologies should be properly analysed in terms of social cognition, and

may be defined as the basic structures which organise the social representations of a group. In this respect, ideologies differ from the general, culturally-shared common ground of undisputed knowledge and attitudes. Ideologies may be represented in terms of ingroup self-schemata, featuring categories that define the basic characteristics of a social group, such as their membership criteria, activities, goals, norms, values, relations to specific other groups, and resources. Ideologies, and the social representations organised by them, may become specific in mental models of concrete events and situations, which in turn are the basis of discourse and other social practices.

Racism has often been defined in terms of (racist) ideologies. However, I argued here that this would be a reduction of the more complex notion of racism as a system of social inequality and dominance. This system has both a mental-level of analysis and reproduction, featuring racist ideologies and social representations of a group, as well as a social-level of analysis, featuring everyday discriminatory interaction and discourse, on the one hand, and group relations and institutions, on the other. As is the case for other ideologies, also racist ideologies are largely (though not uniquely) reproduced by text and talk.

These ideas were applied in a succinct analysis of a debate in the British House of Commons, in order to show that many properties of such political discourse are controlled by underlying ideological models and social representations. I emphasised, though, that this is only the case in a particular context, where I defined 'context' as a mental model of the discursively relevant properties of the communicative situation. For instance, the context here defined the nature and the aims within the specific genre of a parliamentary debate, the intentions of the speakers, and ultimately the political functions of the turn-taking, structures, meanings and other characteristics of the debate.

Ideological positioning occurred at all levels of discourse, for instance, in the choice of topics, local meanings, disclaimers, implications and presuppositions, descriptions, metaphors, hyperbole, and argumentation. The overall strategy in the speech of racist speakers is to focus on the negative characteristics of the Others, find to represent Us as the victims of these Others. Anti-racist discourse on the other hand, will focus on the plight of the asylum seekers, and on fundamental norms, laws and principles of human rights, and hence has a basically moral slant. Thus, we see how fundamental prejudices occur in racist discourse, in topics as well as in other structures, about non-European immigrants as being lazy, criminal, cheating, untrustworthy, etc., and can be marshaled to argue against less severe immigration law. Anti-racist speakers on the other hand, make extensive use of humanitarian, human rights ideologies, operate with positive attitudes about asylum seekers, and negative ones about conservatives, as may be expected.

My main point was thus, to show what racist ideologies are and how they may be expressed in discourses of social and political interaction, and how racist ideologies may thus be propagated and reproduced in society.

Notes

- 1 Ruth Wodak is Professor of Applied Linguistics at the University of Vienna.
- 2 All omissions and additions to the text of each MP's speech are mine. The text is from Hansard. The numbering given at the end of each line is my own.

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