

Representations of Ethnicity in Journalism

Multiculturalist Transitions in the Pages of a Finnish Daily

SARI PIETIKÄINEN

The increasing multiculturalism in Nordic countries proposes a challenge for journalism. Given the signifying power of the news media, the ways in which news represents various ethnic communities, issues related to multiculturalization and the changing society bear significance to the position of various groups and to the relations between them (Tufté, 2003). After all, news is one of the most influential public spaces of contemporary society, perceived as offering trustworthy and accurate stories about the world, its events and people (Allan, 1999; Berkowitz, 1997; Cottle, 2000). It can be argued that news contributes to the ways in which we see the world and what we see in it (Grossberg, Wartella & Whitney, 1998).

In the light of the previous research, journalism seems to have an ambivalent role in ethnic relations. In everyday talk and public discussions, much of ethnic prejudice, the disadvantaged position of ethnic minorities and even racism, are attributed to news publicity. The news coverage of ethnic minorities is often described as biased and partial, favouring majority groups over ethnic minorities, and ethnic representations conveyed by news are claimed to be stereotypical, often negative and sometimes racist (Allan, 1999; Campbell, 1995; Cottle, 2000; Hall, 1995; ter Wal, 2002; van Dijk, 1991). Also, minority groups have continuously expressed their worry about negative reporting and have argued that news reports about them are, at best, one-sided or irrelevant and often negative and discriminatory (Aikio & Aikio, 2001; Ross, 2000). At the same time, however, national and international journalist associations have stated their commitment to fair ethnic reporting in order to prevent and resist racism. Journalists have

also defended their independence and their duty to report on “things as they are” – negative points about ethnic minorities included; and have drawn attention to the practical limitations and conditions of their daily work – lack of time, money and other resources (Pietikäinen & Luostarinen, 1997; Zelizer, 1997). Further, individual cases of ethnic reporting, as well as continuous attempts of various ethnic activity groups to gain access to the news, point towards an empowering potential of the news media.

This potential of journalism to contribute both the communal and national belongingness and strengthening the activity of citizens as well as its power to feed in differentiation and separation (Pietikäinen, forthcoming), makes it vital to examine how news media cover ethnic issues. This research interest is underpinned by the constructivist approach emphasizing that news is a result of complex combination of journalistic values, commercial imperatives, journalistic practices and individual choices (see e.g. Allan, 1999, Hujanen & Pietikäinen, forthcoming). This means that although there are conditions that a news report must meet, there is always a degree of variety and freedom involved in composing news stories. A further relevant aspect is that the news is discursive. That is to say that the ways in which news are made, presented and interpreted are profoundly tied with the use of language. This kind of understanding of news stems from a view on discourse as a part of social practices, advocated in critical discourse analysis. From this perspective, news is seen as being shaped by situations, institutions and social structures, and conversely, also shaping them (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 1992; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Jäger, 2001). This means that different social, historical and political events and phenomena are partly manifested discursively and it is therefore possible to study, for example eth-

Department of Communication, P.O. Box 35, FIN-40014 University of Jyväskylä, sapapi@cc.jyu.fi

nic representations and relations, through analysis of news discourse.

This article examines ethnic representations in mainstream press news. I explore the dynamics of ethnic representations of minority and majority groups through critical discourse analysis of news texts dealing with ethnic changes in Finland published in the leading Finnish daily, the *Helsingin Sanomat*. The article is based on a more comprehensive study on ethnic differentiation in the Finnish news discourse (Pietikäinen, 2000). The time under scrutiny (1985-1993) captures a change in this Nordic country from a place of emigration to a (more) multicultural society, thus presenting a challenge to journalism; as relatively rapid multiculturalization was novel for the Finnish media at the time studied, the period can be considered as a kind of transition in which journalism – as well as the whole society – sought a way to deal with new ethnic groups. It is therefore interesting to examine how the leading quality newspaper, the *Helsingin Sanomat*, reported on these changes.

I begin by locating the present study in relation to social context as well as to previous research in this area. Then I introduce the critical discourse analytical approach to examine ethnic representations in the news and the data and methods of this research, followed by a presentation of the findings of the study. In conclusion the significance of ethnic representations in news is discussed

Background

Finland is a Nordic country with the reputation of being, ethnically, one of the most homogeneous nations in Europe. Until recent years, emigrants have outnumbered people moving to Finland. Also, traditional ethnic groups are relatively few and small. Finland takes pride in the organization of human rights issues within the country, exemplified by the position of one linguistic minority, the Finnish-Swedish.

The period under investigation, 1985-1993, is particularly interesting in terms of ethnicity: it was a period of the gradual development of Finland from a relatively homogenous country to an increasingly multicultural society. In 1985, Finland agreed for the first time to receive an annual quota of one hundred refugees per year, which meant setting up new organizations, systems and legislation. These changes speeded up discussion about 'Finnishness,' 'otherness' and 'usness'. The next major change came in the form of the collapse of the former Soviet Union. A practical consequence of the collapse of the Soviet Union

was that, for the first time, the long eastern border between Finland and the Soviet Union became reachable by asylum seekers. Finland was the first safe country they entered and was, therefore, under obligation to process their applications.

Some hundreds of refugees, particularly from Somalia and former Yugoslavia, arrived via this passage and applied for asylum in Finland; consequently, Finland's principles, legislation, and attitudes towards immigration and refugees were all tested. Although the number of applicants was marginal in comparison to those of other European countries, the rapid growth in numbers led the government to believe that there would be many others to come. Also, a deep economic recession and a high number of unemployed people characterized the last few years studied. This worry manifested itself in the new strict legislation concerning asylum seekers that came into force in 1993. Since the early 1990's, the preparation for the membership of the EU, which became reality in 1995, impassioned the discussion about Finnishness. In sum, these relatively rapid and striking changes proposed a challenge to Finnish journalism, which has a pivotal role in representing and interpreting them. To examine the characteristics of HS coverage on ethnic issues, therefore, given an opportunity to see reactions and development in line of reporting in one of the leading Finnish news media.

Ethnic Minorities in the Press

News coverage of marginalized ethnic groups across decades, continents and media seems to be surprisingly – and depressingly – homogenous and unchanging. The conclusion already made by the Kerner commission in 1968 – news media had kept itself for too long in the white world, looking at the world from a white perspective – (Kennedy, 1998, 76-77; Newkirk, 1998, 58-59) has been repeated in different versions in a considerable body of research conducted both in Europe and the US (e.g. Allan, 1999; Barker, 1999; Campbell, 1995; Critcher, Parker & Sondhi, 1997; Hartman & Husband, 1974; ter Wal, 2002; van Dijk, 1991). The collective findings of these researches paint a rather depressing picture of under-representation, negative problem-orientation, voicelessness and stereotypical juxtapositioning of ethnic minorities in news.

One prevailing feature of the news coverage of ethnic minorities is the lack of it. Typically, only one or two news reports are published per copy – a finding established previously in the news coverage of the British press in the late 70's (Troyna, 1981)

and found again ten years later in British and Dutch press news coverage (van Dijk, 1991) and, during the 1990's, in German (Butterwegge, 1996) and Swedish (Löwander, 1997) press news coverage. In terms of quantity, journalism does not seem to give much space to ethnic minorities. Only exceptional ethnic events – such as dramatic changes, crimes, or totally new situations – make exceptions to the scarcity of ethnic news. The newsworthiness of ethnic minorities is – similar to many other marginalized and powerless groups – tied with extraordinariness and conflict.

Another reiterated finding is the representation of ethnic minorities within the context of problems, crime and disturbance (see, e.g. Campbell, 1995; Löwander, 1997; Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; ter Wal, 2002; van Dijk, 1991). Already a study on the news coverage of race in the British press in the 1960's by Hartman and Husband (1974) established that the topics most frequently covered were immigration, race relations and crime. In a study of the British and Dutch press, van Dijk (1991) found that in 1985 the British press most frequently reported topics that involved “urban disturbances”, “race” relations and politics, while the Dutch press focused on immigration, discrimination, and crime. Shah and Thornton (1994) discovered in their study of the US news magazine coverage of Black-Latino interaction in 1980-1992 that the most common topics included conflicts, racism and violence. Similar frequencies have been found in other European countries (Löwander, 1997, Butterwegge, 1996; Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; Wodak 1996)

Also the voicelessness of ethnic minorities characterizes news coverage of them. For instance, van Dijk (1991) discovered that minority organizations, leaders, and spokespersons had less frequent access to the media than their white mainstream counterparts, even when the topics concerned them directly and even if there were minority experts available to give their opinions. Similarly, Teo (2000) found out in his study of the Australian press coverage of Vietnamese gangs that ethnic minority members were quoted less than one-quarter of the time as compared to white members. Löwander (1997) noticed an interesting difference in the use of news sources by Swedish television broadcasters when reporting on racism and anti-racism; when the news coverage dealt with racial violence, racism and Nazism, the broadcasters used the police as their main informant whereas, in the case of anti-racism, they tended to use politicians. Immigrants or anti-racist activists were rarely used as sources of information in either case.

Stereotypical representations of ‘us’ and ‘them’ pertain to news coverage of ethnic minorities. For instance, in the study of the press coverage of Mike Tyson's trial, Lule (1995) discovered that the portrayals drew from the stereotypes of the African American: the animal, sex-obsessed savage and helpless, hapless victims (see also Fiske, 2000). According to Brookes' (1995) study, Africans were portrayed in the British press news with stereotypes of the primitive, savage, murderous and violent, and the whole African continent appeared as a homogeneous block embodying violence, helplessness, human rights abuse, and lack of democracy.

Detailed linguistic analyses have also shed light on how language works subtly in terms of, for instance, who is represented as an active or passive actor, who is the receiver of what kind of actions and whether some actors are omitted; in brief, who is doing what to whom. For instance, Brookes (1995) argues that the general trend in the British press in terms of agency was for African participants to be consistently structured as direct agents of processes like violence, repression, verbal wrangling, and requests for help. When describing processes of peace and negotiation, the agency was, in turn, allocated to western participants and the African participants were generally backgrounded by attenuation or omission. (Brookes 1995, pp. 474-478, pp. 482-483.) Also a linguistic analysis of news texts of the Sami, the indigenous people of Scandinavia, showed that the majority members were allocated most frequently the roles of doers and decision makers, whereas the Sami were mainly presented as objects of these actions, regardless of their own political activity (Pietikäinen 2003).

Even the new journalistic innovations and attempts to report ethnic minorities differently and more positively seem doomed to reproduce old, negative stereotypes and generalizations (Parisi, 1998, pp. 238-239). For instance, Cottle (2000, pp. 11) argues that, despite the best intentions, ‘multiculturalist’ representations of ethnicity may actually serve to reinforce culturally sedimented views of ethnic minorities as “Other” and simultaneously appear to give the lie to ideas of structural disadvantage and continuing inequality. For example, an unintentional outcome of portraying African Americans in more positive ways can create an impression of black people's social advance and thus undermine black people's claims on white resources and sympathies (Campbell, 1995; Lule, 1995). In sum, the press news tends to represent ethnic groups negatively and ignore structural inequalities and racism experienced by ethnic minorities.

A Critical Approach to Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a broad term for theoretical and analytical frameworks in sociology and linguistics interested in power of discourse (for overviews, see e.g. Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Toolan, 1997; Wodak, 2001). The focus is on socially conditioned and consequential use of language: on the structures, routines and norms which frame, limit and enable the ways in which language is used but, also, on the ways in which the use of language contributes to the construction of knowledge, identities and relations between groups of people. This dialectical view of the relationship between language and society is, as Fairclough (1992, pp. 64) puts it, an import from Foucault's discussion of the discursive formation of objects, subjects, and concepts. In CDA literature this view is captured in conceptualization of discourse as social practice (Chouriaraki & Fairclough, 1999, pp. 28-29; Fairclough, 2001, pp.122-123; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, pp. 258-259; van Leeuwen, 1993, pp. 193; Wodak, 1996, pp. 15).

This kind of conceptualization of discourse gives it a powerful position. Discourse is seen not only as representing the world, but also as constructing it. Because it is action, it also has certain consequences and conditions. Due to the social embeddedness, various social, historical, and political phenomena, structures, and events are partly manifested in discourse. It is therefore possible to study, for instance, racism, sexism, political and social conditions, and historical events through analysis of discourse. This also explains why discourse is considered to be a salient feature of contemporary societies and, as such, an interesting area of research.

This conceptualization of discourse leads us to the second central tenet of CDA, namely that of criticality. Sharing the goals and aims of critical theory, CDA concentrates on the discursive side of power (Fairclough, 1992; van Dijk, 2001; Wodak, 2001). Discourse may have ideological effects: it can help to reproduce, maintain and resist unequal power relations between, for instance, social classes, genders, ethnic groups through the way in which it represents events and positions people (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, pp. 258). In the domain of ethnicity in journalism, this means that there is nothing inherently fixed about news representations of ethnic minority and majority or relationship between them. Rather, ethnic representations are socially formed and fixed in and through discourse. Consequently, the aim of the analysis is

to show systematic links between texts, discourse practices and social practices (Fairclough, 1995, pp.116-117). This means mapping different aspects of discourse simultaneously at work in a particular piece of text, namely 1) the actual usage of language, 2) the practices of production and consumption of the text, and 3) the wider socio-political context and significance of the text. The analysis involves utilisation of different types of methods, including e.g. linguistic, textual, intertextual, and content analyses (Wodak, 2001).

In many respects this study is critical discourse analytical. I take discourse as social practice as my point of departure. Accordingly, by discourse I mean use of language constructed by, and constructing, the social. Here, this refers particularly to the assumption that news discourse about ethnic minorities contributes to the representations of ethnic identities and relations between them. At the same time, social, institutional, professional and contextual norms, routines and values contribute to the ways news discourse is used. I focus particularly on journalistic practices impinging on ethnic representations in news. The critical dimension means that my aim is to contribute to the awareness of the power of news discourse and of the significance of ethnic representations.

Analysing Ethnic Representations in News Discourse

The data of this study comprises of 1,189 domestic news reports and editorials about ethnic affairs published in the leading Finnish national daily, *Helsingin Sanomat*, during the period of 1985-1993. The *Helsingin Sanomat* (HS) was selected since it is the largest Finnish daily, regarded as the leading quality newspaper and widely respected. In terms of its resources as regards finances, the number of journalists and the standards of reporting, HS is often considered superior. On the whole, HS has almost an institutional position in Finnish society, and it acts as an official voice in the public sphere. As a capital located newspaper HS was in the frontline of reporting about multiculturalization of the Finnish society: the vast majority of the newcomers, as well as organizations and political decision making, centred around the capital, i.e. Helsinki, area. *Helsingin Sanomat* was obvious choice also because the regional newspapers started to cover ethnic minorities more extensively only during the (late) 1990s after their readership and regions had been modified to (more) multiculturalist. In brief, given the position and resources of the

Helsingin Sanomat, its news reports on ethnic minorities are significant and powerful, and news can be expected to be reported according to the best journalistic standards.

News discourse about ethnic minorities, then, is analysable in terms of textual features contributing to the ethnic representations and indicating journalistic practices impinging on the news discourse. Taking the CDA stance to the analysis of news discourse, and by drawing on the earlier research on news coverage on ethnic minorities and on discursive representations of ethnicity, I analyse a set of textual features potentially central in representing ethnicity in news. They are 1) topics of news texts, 2) topic hierarchization in news texts, 3) text participants and quotation patterns and 4) intertextuality of the news texts in terms of discourses drawn on. News topics form the domain of ethnic representation and give some indication as to what the HS journalists found newsworthy as regards to ethnic minorities. The topic order, i.e. which topics were put in the headlines and at the beginning of the news texts, highlight the generic structure of the news reports as well as the journalistic prioritization of different topics. Text participants and quotation patterns indicate who, by the journalists, were given access to news and seen as relevant and trustworthy news sources in a given topic. Intertextual analysis in terms of discourses shed light on the ways in which the texts echo previous texts, borrow significations across different situations, institutions and contexts and rearticulate them. Following CDA framework (Fairclough 1992, 2003; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997) a discourse, as a countable noun, is here understood to mean language used in representing a given social practice from a particular point of view. There can, therefore, be different discourses available and used of one social phenomenon.

To use different types of methods to analyse discourse is yet another characteristic of CDA. To examine the textual features of HS news discourse of ethnicity systematically, I have employed several methods. The patterns of ethnic representations in terms the topics, topic hierarchization, text participants and quotations were examined with the help of content analysis. As the data comprised over 1,000 news items, it was analysed using quantitative means; the news items were coded into SPSS database in terms of 37 variables including, e.g. main topics, topic order in texts, majority and minority participants, direct and indirect quotations (for details, see e.g. Pietikäinen, 2000). Statistical analysis of the frequency and patterns of these

variables provide an overview of the characteristic ways of representing ethnic groups. Discourses drawn on in texts are analysable in terms of a set of textual features expressing a particular discursive meaning related to ethnicity. The starting point of this analysis was to identify these discourses, supported by an amalgam of textual features that cue the discourses. The explication of discourses involves an interplay of several categories of textual features including topic, participants, vocabulary, and grammatical choices. Further, intertextual analysis presupposes social, cultural and contextual knowledge about other texts available, social context and practices of text production as it aims to locate a particular text in relation to other texts and discourse practices impinging the production of the text (Fairclough, 1995, pp. 61). In terms of this study, this meant acknowledging the socio-political context where the texts were made as well as the journalistic practices framing them. Next, I present and discuss results that are particularly relevant for ethnic representations in news discourse. By bringing together findings of different analyses my aim is, following the CDA perspective, to shed light the various complementary textual aspects of news discourse each contributing to ethnic representations.

Patterns of Ethnic Representation in the HS News Discourse

To be able to participate in the public discussion mediated by journalism, one must first gain access to this public arena. This happened rarely to ethnic minorities in the *Helsingin Sanomat*: during the time studied, the paper published, on average, only 132 ethnic articles per year and less than 0,4 items per copy. This number is very low when compared to the tens of domestic news reports and the two to three editorials published in the paper daily (Pietilä & Sonderman, 1994), or reporting frequency found elsewhere (Löwander, 1997; van Dijk, 1991).

The analysis of topics of news texts offers a way to map the domains in which the ethnic minorities were represented and will also be indicative of journalistic practices applied, particularly that of news criteria. Altogether, HS reported on 47 different topics during the nine years examined. Most topics were mentioned only in passing: 16 topics out of 47 were reported less than 20 times. These topics were closely related to ethnic minorities' everyday life in Finland, such as housing, education, employment and their own culture. Instead, the aspects of the multiculturalization of the society closely related to the officials and authorities

were emphasised: the most frequently covered topics dealt with permits, numbers, legislation and politics.

A look at the topic frequency per year examined illustrates reactions to the ethnic change and the gradual development in the journalistic line of reporting. During the first four years under scrutiny HS focussed on Finnish alien and refugee policy and law. This topic was discussed particularly against the critique from other Nordic countries towards Finland's very strict refugee policy and the reactions and opinions of various Finnish politicians. Although the novelty of the situation may offer an explanation for the extensive coverage of these topics at the time, wittingly or not, through a coverage like this HS contributed to the concern for Finland ethnically changing. A period of more heterogeneous news topics was seen in 1989-1991. HS wrote about the 'flood of foreigners' and numbers of foreigners, but also about discrimination and racism as well as about the political rise of the Sami. The emphasis of the coverage shifted from (international) politics to the sphere of domestic affairs; the actual consequences of multiculturalisation of the Finnish society. However, during the last years under study, a rather homogeneous consensus was reached on what was particularly newsworthy about ethnic minorities: residence permits and crime. Thus, in a rather short period of time HS ended up representing ethnic minorities and newcomers as a potential source of problems – a line of reporting that still seems to continue in HS and is being adopted in other news media in Finland at the turn of the millennium (Raittila, 2002).

The frequency and also the generic structure of news texts indicate the importance of various topics: topics expressed in the headlines and at the beginning of news texts are considered most relevant, striking and captivating aspects of the event (Bell, 1998). In the case of the HS news coverage, these aspects were the nature of change, tools for controlling it and one easy-selling consequence of it; thus, the most frequently occurring topics in the headlines were *immigration to Finland*, *residence permit decision*, *Finnish alien law* and *crime*.

If we turn to look at the patterns of how minority and majority groups were represented in the coverage, the two participant groups were described differently; the imbalance between ethnic minorities and the majority in terms of mentions, details given or quotations patterns found in previous studies (Butterwegge, 1996; van Dijk, 1991) applies to HS too. On average, members of the majority were mentioned 1,5 times more often than minority

members. Particularly, various officials, authorities and politics were granted space. Further, in over 70 % of the texts further details of the majority participants were provided, such as their name, occupation or status. In comparison, this number in the case of minorities was a little over 40 %. In this way, Finns were given an identity whereas the minority members remained faceless, abstract refugees or foreigners. Furthermore, while the majority members were quoted on average 1.3 times per text, minority members were quoted in every third text only. This means that the majority was predominantly used as a news source and given access to the news.

Discursive Identifications at the Borders

Out of the various aspects of multiculturalization of the Finnish society, HS reported most frequently on issues and events focussing on the borders – literally or figuratively – of Finland and Finnishness. The three most frequently reported topics were *residence permit decisions*, *number of newcomers* and *immigration to Finland*. The frequent reporting of these topics establish them as the most newsworthy and legitimate domains in which to write about in conjuncture of ethnic change in Finland.

The most frequent topic, *Residence permit decisions* (24 % of 1 189) typically dealt with questions of whether a particular group or individual are allowed to enter to or to stay in the country, and if so, what status should be granted. The following headlines illustrate this topic:

Fewer residence permits granted to asylum seekers than before (HS 7.4.1992)

Yugoslavians arriving to Finland are granted a residence permit (HS 13.8.1992)

The reoccurrence of this topic establishes the question of legal grounds for entering and staying in the country as a primary area to discuss multiculturalization of Finland. Residence permits are a majority, official perspective to the ethnic change, emphasized in the texts by the patterns of text population and quotations: the most frequently mentioned majority participant was the Finnish parliament whereas the most frequently mentioned minority participant was the anonymous, abstract "refugees". This means that, rather than actually focussing on groups arriving Finland, the news texts dealt with anonymous, often nonspecified refugees. Further, the majority participants were quo-

ted in this topic almost five times more often in comparison to the minority participants. This indicates that the HS journalists used overwhelmingly majority participants as their primary news source. Given that the most frequent minority participant was abstract refugees, this is no wonder: it is hard to interview 'a refugee' nor do they produce PR-materials or organize press conferences. On the whole, the discussion about residence permits was, above all, discussion amongst the Finnish authorities about ethnically changing Finland and Finnishness.

This is also realized in intertextual features of the news texts about the topic: the texts frequently draw on discourse that can be named as *Identification*-discourse. In terms of ethnic representation, this discourse generated attempts at providing a criteria for a "real Finn" and for a "genuine" refugee, and, conversely, for "non-Finns" and "false" newcomers. The simultaneous identification of 'us' and 'other' is typical for ethnic representations, as construction of identity inevitably means defining the other and the difference between the two (Hall, 1996). Often the identification of the authenticity of the newcomers in regard to their Finnishness or to being a refugee, worked in synchronation in the texts, as the examples below show.

The first example comes from a news report dealing with Ingrian remigrants. This ethnic group form a heterogeneous and, to an extent, contested minority, who used to live nearby St Peterburg and to have a strong connection to the Finnish culture and language. However, due to the suppressive ethnic politics of the Soviet Union, ethnicities were depressed during the communist rule resulting in, for instance, generations of Ingrians without a command of Finnish language. In 1992, in accordance with the proposal of the Finnish president, Mauno Koivisto, a new law of Ingrian remigration was passed: As a consequences, Ingrians who can prove that she or he herself/himself, one of her/his parents or at least two of her/his grandparents can be classified in Russian Documents as Finns, have a right to (re)migrate to Finland, regardless of whether any of them have actually ever lived in the territory of Finland. So far, over 20 000 Ingrian remigrants have arrived (Davydova, 2001, pp. 55). However, the multiple identities of these remigrants, as well as the lack of command of Finnish language, have been a source of ambiguity in Finland. The following example illustrates these reactions. The first excerpt is a direct quotation from the statement given by Markku Leijo from a special social security office in Helsinki. The subtitle is given by the newspaper.

From real Finns to the totally Russian

"Personally, I think the problem is the notion of remigrant itself. Traditionally, it was used to refer to such people, who had stayed in Australia for, say, ten years and who wanted to return to Finland. They were clearly Finns, they had Finnish names, they talked Finnish and knew Finnish culture. The background of Ingrian remigrants can be anything. From obvious Finns to complete Russians. Despite permits, some of them clearly have nothing to do with Finnishness". (HS 31.8.1992)

This excerpt exemplifies explicitly a great deal of public discussion of multiculturalization of Finland. It assumes an essentialistic view on Finnish identity relying on the idea of one clear, authentic Finnishness, which can be identified and displayed by a set of unchanging features, such as language and names (Woodward, 1997). The excerpt echoes the slogan 'one nation – one language' used during the national appraisal and independence struggle during the late 19th and early 20th century, ignoring now, as then, that Finland has always been culturally and linguistically heterogeneous although not due to vast immigration (Dufva, 2002).

Another aspect of *Identification* discourse was positioning the newcomers into a continuum of honest-dishonest. This is illustrated by the next example, which comes from a news report with a headline *An increasing number of Eastern tourists try to pass as an Ingrian*.

...some of them (Ingrian remigrants) are economic refugees moving with sincere intentions after hearing gossip that promises them a better future. Some, on the other hand, enter the country by misleading the authorities. In addition, some of the real remigrants have been found out to abuse the social security. If the applications for remigration were handled in the country of departure, real and honest remigrants would probably not have any reason to come to stay in Finland on a tourist visa. The possibility to get money from social security while staying on a tourist visa should be removed. (HS 1.9.1992)

The discourse positions the newcomers in a restrictive passcontrol; it is not enough to be a 'genuine' Ingrian remigrant or asylum seeker, one also has to be impeccable. The Finns are represented as sensible and responsible people: welcoming and assuming a responsibility towards 'genuine' and 'honest' newcomers, and watchful and rejective towards

other kinds of migrants or refugees. These types of texts may be interpreted to belong to a wider frame of reference, namely that of ethnic juxtaposition, a typical characteristic of the relations between different ethnic groups (see e.g. van Dijk 1991; Hall, 1997). Characteristically, ethnic juxtapositioning sets up a symbolic difference between two ethnic groups by contrasting them and referring to differences in appearance, habits, languages, or personal characteristics such as honesty, trustworthiness, or working habits. Ethnic juxtapositioning, also at work in the texts examined, often involves positive self-representation and negative other representation.

The second most frequently covered topic was *number of foreigners* (19 % of 1 189). This topic involved issues such as the actual or preferred numbers of foreigners living in or entering Finland, and the number of refugees that should be admitted into the country. Many news items about this topic were full of numbers, as the following example illustrates:

The number of foreign children living in Finland exceeds 10 000

There are over 10 000 foreign children living in Finland, half of them in the province of Uusimaa. The number of refugee children is 1,200. Half of them have arrived in Finland alone, without their parents. (HS 4.9.1993)

Also in this topic, the most frequently mentioned majority participant was parliament and the most frequent minority participant, yet again, the anonymous refugees. The huge imbalance in quotation also continued: 87 % of quotations within the topic belonged to the majority and 13 % to the minority. Besides using majority members as a news sources far more often than minority participant, the intertextual features of the texts indicate that ready-made materials were utilized without much journalistic mediation. Namely, a discourse of *Statistics*, leaking from another domain of society, i.e. that of official, numerical information production, surfaced in the texts. This discourse represents ethnic minorities as an anonymous, non-identified mass, particularly in terms of their quantity and increase. Textually, this is achieved by frequent usage of numbers and comparisons. The frequent use of the verb 'be', which is typical in Finnish science texts (Karvonen 1995), contributes to the 'factual' character of this discourse in comparison of action (material) verbs usually favoured in news texts (Pietikäinen 2000). The majority members were often left un-

specified and often featured by referring to a location *in Finland, to Finland, in Helsinki, in the capital*. The representation of ethnic minorities in terms of their quantity and increase and the majority via location reduces the multi-culturalization of Finland in a matter of numbers and changes, and dislocated from the human aspect of it.

The topic of *Immigration to Finland* (16 % of 1 189) came third in frequency. The texts about this topic were, too, populated by parliament and abstract 'refugees'. Also the voice was, again, given to the majority (85 %) and only occasionally to the minority (15 %). The texts focussed on the actual or potential immigration to Finland from three angles, namely those of migration, changes in the Soviet Union/Russia, and the global refugee situation. The migration aspect emphasized the necessity of Finland to accept migrants because of the considerable increase of elderly people among the citizens. This angle is exemplified in an excerpt from an editorial:

No alternatives left to the coming of migrants

The Finland that has closed its borders will change to a country of migration in 1990s. Foreigners are needed to get the work done and to keep the population figures steady. An employment expert predicts that the number of migrants to arrive in Finland will be as high as 300 000. (HS 16.12.1990)

The consequences of political and social changes in the former Soviet Union for Finland's situation were another angle. The following example from the beginning of a news report illustrates this.

Most Finns do not approve of the refugee flow from the East

According to a recent Gallup Poll, four out of five Finns consider that Finnish authorities should close the border to the large groups of refugees, possibly coming from the Soviet Union. About half of the people interviewed think that it is likely that hoards of refugees will try to cross the Eastern border. (HS 2.12.1990)

The third aspect of the topic of *Immigration to Finland* dealt with the global changes in both the number and the directions of migration, and its possible effects in Finland. Somalis arriving at the eastern border of Finland asking for asylum were seen as a proof of this change. Consequently, the following types of headlines began to emerge:

Wave of immigration will flood the Nordic countries in the 1990 's. (HS 11.3.1990)

The flow of refugees flooded reception centres

More Somalis coming again to Finland from the Soviet Union (HS 15.10.1990)

These various aspects of Immigration to Finland feature a discourse that I call '*Nearing change*'. It represents the newcomers as anonymous, numerous groups of people which may also be compared to the destructive powers of nature, as in usage of metaphors such as *wave of refugees*, *flood of people*, *flow of refugees*, or *surge of migration*. Their disturbing effect is also conveyed by the use of verbs: although the newcomers *come* and *live*, they also *surge* and *flood*. On the whole, the use of action (material) verbs emphasizes the construction of these events as happenings, changes, and transitions. The Finns, instead, are represented as a homogeneous group of people -*citizens*, *population*, *us*, *Finns*, and via the state of Finland. Briefly, the discourse of *Nearing change* represents the newcomers as bringing a change to Finland, effecting on 'us'. Thus it could be speculated that, since the newcomers are at times described in words usually associated with the nature's catastrophes, there is also an implicit suggestion underlying this discourse that the change is for the ominous.

Controlling Ethnic Change – Legally and Politically

The developments and discussions on political and legal aspects of multiculturalization of Finnish society were also frequently covered in HS. The topics of *Finnish alien law* (15 % of 1 189) and *Alien and refugee policy* (13 % of 1 189) came fourth and fifth in terms of frequency. At the time studied, the Finnish legislation and refugee politics underwent drastic changes; the legislation was changed three times, and it turned from being one of the strictest in Europe to a more tolerant one in 1988, just to be tightened up again in 1991. Further, under the pressure of international politics, the Finnish parliament tried to formulate a coherent guideline for Finland's official refugee policy, but the three cabinets during that time failed to accomplish this. Following headlines illustrate these topics:

Danes frown upon Finnish refugee policy (HS 16.4.1985)

Government decision: Finland Admits 100 new refugees annually (HS 25.10.1985)

Legal changes, and often the resulting political discussions and debates, are a powerful tool to regulate and control the position of 'Others' in the country. In the coverage examined, the implications of legal actions were rarely explicated, but rather the texts focussed on 'technical' aspects of forming new laws and politics, thus contributing to the representation of these changes as abstract, without effects on everyday lives of people, on both the Finns and newcomers. This kind of detachment from the lives of people was further emphasized by the patterns of text population and quotation; the most frequently mentioned majority participant was, in both topics, the Finnish parliament and the most frequently mentioned minority participant, the unspecified refugees. In addition, majority participants were quoted five times more often than minority members. The journalistic practice to follow closely the events in the arena of politics and legislation and to grant a relatively easy access to the official actors of these domains were, thus, realized in these texts contributing to the reporting of legal and political decisions from the majority perspective.

The 'technicalization' of these topics was reinforced by the intertextual characterises of the texts. Namely, the texts about alien and refugee law and politics display a discourse of *Political jargon*. This shows in use of passive voice, legal and political wording and long sentences.

As a consequence, the texts remained on a rather general and abstract development, mainly dealing with the sayings and suggestions of various politicians, as the next extract from a news report illustrates:

Cabinet amends Aliens Act

The cabinet aims at amending the new Aliens Act which is now being processed by the Parliament. In its evening session on Wednesday, the cabinet agreed that the articles dealing with the right to complain about the asylum decision will be rewritten in the bill that is now being kept waiting in the Legal Affairs Committee of the Parliament. (HS 18.10.1990)

The discourse of *Political jargon* contributes to a representation of ethnic and immigration issues as an administrative and legal question and as such detached from the lives of people that these decision have effect upon. Since the people were rarely referred to, the discourse sets up the discussion between institutions rather than between groups of people or citizens.

Crime and Racism: Unrest in Arcadia

Also crime and racism were frequently covered in HS. The two topics were covered particularly during the early 1990s after the number of ethnic minority members had increased.

The crime (12 % of 1 189) came sixth in frequency and the imbalance in quotations characterises also these news texts: 88 % of all quotations went to the majority and only 12 % to the members of the minority. These texts typically dealt with crimes committed by foreigners and members of ethnic minority groups in Finland. Among the crimes reported there were prostitution, shop lifting, organized crime, and drug crimes, as the following news headlines illustrate:

Customs seized 100 g of heroin from a Tanzanian man (HS 2.10.1992)

Eastern media is grouping for a foothold among Finnish power elite

Police keep an eye on eastern crime (1.11.1993)

Crime is a frequent topic in news. Thus it can be expected that crime gets its share in ethnic reporting, too. The problem arises, however, when crime news forms a significant part of the news publicity, brings up the ethnic background of the offender or connects certain types of crime to a specific ethnic group. All these problems surfaced in *Helsingin Sanomat's* news coverage. The crime news formed a significant part of the publicity of ethnic groups, ethnic background of the offenders were mentioned in the texts and headlines without obvious relevance for it, and one of the ethnic groups, namely the Russians, was predominantly covered in crime news only, thus labelling the whole group negatively. Indeed, in the crime news the most frequently mentioned minority participant was the Russians. The most frequently mentioned majority participant was the police. This kind of negative news publicity concerning the Russians seems to continue in the Finnish press; during a two month media monitoring in 1999, crime news characterised the news publicity of the Russians, particularly in the regional newspapers located close to the eastern border (Raittila & Kutilainen, 2000, pp. 56).

Issues of *discrimination and racism* (12 %) were also frequently covered and the experiences of minority members were typically focussed on. Also, discussion over the Finns' real or assumed attitudes to-

wards ethnic minorities was taken up, as well as prejudices and xenophobia in Finland in general. The reasons for journalists' interest in racism and discrimination can be various. At the time under study, the phenomenon appeared as new in Finland. From a minority point of view, these results indicate that although the crime aspect was prominent, injustices of the situation were of interest as well. A pessimistic reading is that discrimination and racism, like crime news, attract attention because of their conflict-based nature as exemplified in the next news headlines:

Racial hatred sneaking its way into Finland (HS 9.9.1988)

Attitudes towards foreigners have got harder (HS 3.12.1993)

In terms of text population and quotation patterns the news texts about racism and discrimination differ from the other frequently covered topics. Namely, the most frequently mentioned majority participant was the Finns, i.e. *citizens, local people, 'us'*. The most typical minority participant was 'foreigners'. Although this category is also abstract and nonidentified, it shifted the attention from refugees and asylum seekers to foreigners, who can be in the country for various reasons, including marriage, working etc. For the first time, the minority members were used more often as a news source and in quotations; 23 % quotation within this topic were those of minority members and 77 % went to the majority members. Although the imbalance is still clear, giving more voice to ethnic minorities indicates that this was seen as an issue that the minority members' opinions and experiences have bearing on.

Although these two topics, crime and discrimination, may come across as opposite to each other, both feature trouble and disturbance. In my reading, many news items about these topics draw on the same discourse that can be labelled as *Troubles* discourse. This discourse sets up a representation for ethnic minorities as being linked with disturbance, perhaps even as a source of troubles that foreigners and the growing diversity of population were believed to bring along. True or alleged crimes by foreigners and racial conflicts were often brought up as an illustration of troubles and future problems. The Finns, in turn, are represented in this discourse in a dual way: firstly, as the ones who are effected by these disturbances but are also as those called upon to act about this.

Conclusions

The *Helsingin Sanomat* news representations of ethnic minorities are characterized by polarization and anticipation of a change, most likely for the worse. Regardless of whether it was done by topics covered or comments asked, the news typically emphasized the majority perspective, and contributed to the construction of ethnic minorities as Them as compared to Finns as Us. The Finns were characteristically represented as actors, decision makers, masters of events even though at times suffering from the troubles brought on by the changing ethnic situation. Ethnic minorities were typically represented as faceless, nameless masses coming – uninvited – and causing trouble. In short, the ethnic majority was represented with the power to act and control, the ethnic minorities as lacking power, position and name.

News representations like these contribute to the fragmentation of society and set up borders between various ethnic groups. Rather than constructing a sense of community and belongingness, HS news representations contribute to ethnic differentiation. Hence the HS news representations seem to be quite similar to those found in previous studies (see e.g. Cottle, 2000; ter Wal, 2002). This kind of uniformity of ethnic representations in journalism, stretching over decades and different countries, may be a phenomenon to worry about: the news media seem to favour similar representations in different social, political, and cultural situations and with different ethnic minorities. The frozenness of ethnic representations in news implies that the otherness of ethnic minorities may be deeply embedded both in journalistic practices and in the societies where they are functioning.

The reasons underlying the homogenous ethnic representations may be found in a combination of journalistic practices and the powerless positions of many ethnic minorities. Language problems and safety issues may explain, partly, why some ethnic minorities are not in the news or do not want news publicity. Another reason might be that few ethnic minority groups are able to offer PR services, and that may explain, to an extent, why news makers do not know about related issues or the journalists, given the time available, do not find individuals for comments. However, these are, in my opinion, minor obstacles; problems that journalists overcome on a daily basis for news about different groups of

people or different news sectors, such as the economy, foreign news, etc. Also the shortage of the HS news coverage of the Sami, to whom the limitations mentioned above do not apply, gives an indication that the main reasons lie elsewhere (Pietikäinen 2003). One such reason might be what could be called the invisibility of ethnic minorities: they are not considered part of the society or, alternatively, not an important part of the society in terms of the criteria of news making, i.e. important decision makers, consumers, opinion makers, etc. Consequently, news is not made about them. Although this kind of invisibility in news may also apply to many other groups of people, the very position of ethnic minorities means that they are not better represented anywhere else.

The findings of the present study offer some explanations for the ambivalence regarding the role of journalism in ethnic relations. The scarcity of the news about ethnic minorities, clear emphasis on the majority interests in the topics, and the imbalance in terms of quotations, access to news and reporting order, all give support to the claims made by ethnic minorities that news coverage about them is unfair and imbalanced, and since they are not quoted or do not get equal attention in topics of importance for them, news and newsmakers discriminate against them. The ideals of objective news can be found underlying these arguments; according to the ideals, all parties involved should be treated equally. Journalists, instead, often argue that they apply the same rules when reporting about ethnic minorities as they apply in their news about anyone else, and treat ethnic minorities in an equal manner. Apparently, the news making practices mean that issues focussing on change, negativity, and people with a status are covered, and people belonging to the establishment and being in power get access to news easily. The topics, people, and points of view important to many groups other than ethnic minorities are not covered either. It may well be that journalists do not, indeed, report on ethnic minorities differently from other groups that are seen not to belong to the power elite, the decision makers, or the celebrities. The minority position of ethnic groups, however, makes them vulnerable to frequent negative coverage: As one of the most powerful public spaces for ethnic representations, the news portrayals contributes to the positions and rights of different ethnic groups.

