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If we define Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) as a scholarly movement specifically interested in theory formation and critical analysis of the discursive reproduction of power abuse and social inequality, a detailed examination of the concept of power is a central task of CDS. Yet, as is the case for many fundamental notions of the social sciences, the notion of power is as complex as it is fuzzy. Not surprisingly, a vast number of books and articles have been dedicated to the analysis of this central concept in many disciplines. It is therefore imperative that I focus on those dimensions of power that are directly relevant to the study of language use, discourse and communication.

However, my object of study, namely the ‘discursive reproduction of power abuse and social inequality’, is hardly an unproblematic notion itself, and hence also in need of detailed theoretical analysis. For example, how do a specific intonation, a pronoun, a headline, a topic, a lexical item, a metaphor, a colour or a camera angle, among a host of other semiotic properties of discourse, relate to something as abstract and general as power relations in society? That is, we somehow need to relate typical micro-level properties of text, talk, interaction and semiotic practices to typical macro-level aspects of society such as groups or organizations and their relationships of domination.

Moreover, CDS is not merely interested in any kind of power but it specifically focuses on abuse of power, in other words, on forms of domination that result in social inequality and injustice. Such a normative notion (abuse is bad) requires analysis in terms of other normative notions and criteria of the social sciences, such as legitimacy, which in turn presuppose an applied ethics and moral philosophy. Thus, in this book I often deal with the discursive reproduction of racism, and a critical analysis of such discursive
practices presupposes that, at least from my point of view, racism is wrong because racist practices are inconsistent with norms of social equality.

The general aim of CDS to study discursive power abuse also involves differential access to social power, and I shall therefore pay special attention below to different kinds of access to public discourse as one of the resources of social power.

In other words, we see that many CDS concepts need to be formulated in terms of very fundamental notions of the social sciences. In this book, I try to contribute to this debate about the foundations of CDS by developing theoretical notions and applying these to concrete examples of critical analysis. In this Introduction, I present these different contributions within a coherent theoretical framework.

Critical Discourse Studies

Before presenting the theoretical framework for the study of the discursive reproduction of power abuse, I first need to make the case for the critical study of discourse in more general terms.

Although the label Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has now generally been adopted, I would like to propose to change it to Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) for a number of obvious reasons. The main reason is that CDS is not, as is very often assumed, especially in the social sciences, a method of discourse analysis. There is no such method. CDS uses any method that is relevant to the aims of its research projects and such methods are largely those used in discourse studies generally.

Indeed, and for the same reason, discourse analysis itself is not a method but rather a domain of scholarly practice, a cross-discipline distributed over all the humanities and social sciences. For the same reason, I prefer to use the label Discourse Studies (DS) for that discipline.

Methods of (Critical) Discourse Studies

Both within Discourse Studies generally, and within CDS in particular, we find the usual interplay of theory, methods of observation, description or analysis, and their applications. So, there is no more ‘a’ (one) discourse analysis, as a method, than there is a social analysis or a cognitive analysis. Both DS and CDS have many different methods of study, depending on the aims of the investigation, the nature of the data studied, the interests and the qualifications of the researcher and other parameters of the research context. Thus, in both fields we may find such ways of studying the structures and strategies of text and talk as:
• grammatical (phonological, syntactic, lexical, semantic) analysis;
• pragmatic analysis of speech acts and communicative acts;
• rhetorical analysis;
• stylistics;
• the analysis of specific (genre, etc.) structures: stories, news reports, parliamentary debates, lectures, advertisements, etc.;
• conversation analysis of talk in interaction;
• semiotic analysis of sounds, images and other multimodal properties of discourse and interaction.

These different types of analysis (observation, description, etc.) may combine and overlap in many ways, so that an investigation may focus on the semantics of narrative, the rhetoric of political discourse, the pragmatics of conversation, or the semiotics of style. Within each type of research there are again many alternatives (sometimes also described as ‘methods’ or ‘approaches’), such as formal analysis or functional analysis, which themselves may be quite different in the many theories, schools or ‘sects’ in each scholarly discipline. Most of the time such analyses will be qualitative descriptions of the details of discourse structure but depending on the data such descriptions may be quantified, as is increasingly the case in corpus linguistics, which provides new methods for CDS research.

Despite all these differences, we may nevertheless call these approaches ways of doing discourse analysis or description. Although it is not so common to speak of ‘methods’ in this case, in the traditional sense, there is no serious problem in describing these ‘ways of analysis’ in terms of ‘methods’.

Besides these different analytical approaches, research in discourse studies has recourse to the usual methods of the social sciences, such as:

• participant observation;
• ethnographic methods;
• experiments.

Discourse is not only analysed as an autonomous ‘verbal’ object but also as situated interaction, as a social practice, or as a type of communication in a social, cultural, historical or political situation. Instead of analysing a conversation among neighbours, we may, for example, have to do fieldwork in a neighbourhood, observe how people talk in cafés or other public places, and describe many other relevant aspects of these communicative events, such as temporal or spatial settings, special
circumstances, the participants and their communicative and social roles and the various other activities being accomplished at the same time.

Whereas these different forms of observation and analysis are quite typical of the social sciences, many types of psychology may engage in controlled laboratory or field experiments in order to test specific hypotheses. There is a vast amount of research on the many mental parameters that influence discourse production and comprehension, and often we are only able to know what these are, and how they operate, by examining in an experiment how special experimental conditions (circumstances, data, tasks, etc.) have special consequences for the way we talk or understand discourse.

In sum, both discourse studies and critical discourse studies make use of a vast amount of methods of observation, analysis and other strategies to collect, examine or evaluate data, to test hypotheses, to develop theory and to acquire knowledge.

**Special analytical focus in CDS**

It is important to notice, however, that despite this methodological pluralism there are preferences and tendencies, given the special focus in CDS on aspects of power abuse and hence more generally on the social conditions and consequences of text and talk. First of all, CDS research generally prefers methods that in no way infringe upon the rights of the people it studies, and that are consistent with the interests of the social groups in whose interests it engages in research in the first place. In other words, CDS methods are chosen so as to contribute to the social empowerment of dominated groups, especially in the domain of discourse and communication.

Secondly, CDS methods specifically focus on the complex relations between social structure and discourse structure, and how discourse structures may vary or be influenced by social structure. For instance, certain syntactic structures of sentences are obligatory (such as articles preceding nouns in English), independent of the social situation of discourse, and hence will not directly vary as a function of the power of the speaker. Whether you are on the Left or on the Right, the grammar of the language is the same for everyone. In other words, power abuse can only manifest itself in language use where there is the possibility of variation or choice, such as calling the same person a terrorist or a freedom fighter, depending on your position and ideology. Similarly, news reports in the press always have headlines, whether or not they play a role in the reproduction of ethnic prejudices. So, it is rather the form and meaning
of a headline than the structural property of a headline itself that may be related to the social situation. Although such a perspective is generally correct, there are cases where structures of domination not only influence options or variations of language use or discourse, but whole semiotic or discursive systems, genres and other social practices.

We may conclude that CDS will generally focus on those systems and structures of talk or text that may depend on or vary as a function of relevant social conditions of language use, or that may contribute to specific social consequences of discourse, such as influencing the social beliefs and actions of the recipients. More specifically, CDS prefers to focus on those properties of discourse that are most typically associated with the expression, confirmation, reproduction or challenge of the social power of the speaker(s) or writer(s) as members of dominant groups.

Such properties may range from special intonation or visual and auditory properties (colour, typography, image configurations, music), to syntactic structures (such as actives and passives), lexical selection, the semantics of presuppositions or person descriptions, rhetorical figures or argumentative structures, on the one hand, to the selection of specific speech acts, politeness moves or conversational strategies, on the other hand.

Racist discourse, and more generally ideological discourse of ingroup members, for instance, typically emphasize, in many discursive ways, the positive characteristics of Our own group and its members, and the (purported) negative characteristics of Others, the Outgroup. Authors may do so by selecting special topics, the size or the colour of headlines, the use of photographs or cartoons, by gestures or by choosing special lexical items or metaphors, by arguments (and fallacies), storytelling, and so on. We see that one general strategy involved in the discursive reproduction of (for instance, racist or sexist) domination, namely ingroup–outgroup polarization (ingroup praise vs. outgroup derogation) may be realized in many ways and at many levels of discourse.

In such an analysis, polarized discourse structures play a crucial role in the expression, construction, confirmation and hence the reproduction of social inequality. Note though that such a relation between discourse structures and social structures is not a simple correlational or causal relationship. Rather, we have to take into consideration a very complex sociocognitive process, involving for instance the mental models or other cognitive representations of the participants. We also have to take into account how these are influenced by discourse structures, on the one hand, and influence interaction (and hence future discourse), on the other hand.
**General aims of CDS**

Despite the large diversity of methods being used in CDS, it has some quite general aims most scholars in the field agree on. I already formulated one of these aims above, namely *the study of the discursive reproduction of power abuse*. In other words, CDS is specifically interested in the (critical) study of social issues, problems, social inequality, domination and related phenomena, in general, and the role of discourse, language use or communication in such phenomena, in particular. We may call this the special *domain* of CDS: specific social phenomena, specific problems and specific themes of research.

However, this is not all. The notion ‘critical’ also needs to be made more explicit. Studying social issues or problems is a normal task of the social sciences, but such mainstream studies are not inherently ‘critical’. In other words, there is in CDS a normative aspect involved, a perspective, an attitude, a special way of doing socially relevant research.

It is not easy to define the precise properties of such a critical perspective or attitude, and the following is neither fully explicit nor exhaustive. Discourse Studies more specifically may be defined as ‘critical’ if they satisfy one or several of the following criteria, where ‘domination’ means ‘abuse of social power by a social group’:

- relations of domination are studied primarily from the perspective of, and in the interest of the dominated group;
- the experiences of (members of) dominated groups are also used as evidence to evaluate dominant discourse;
- it can be shown that the discursive actions of the dominant group are illegitimate;
- viable alternatives to the dominant discourses can be formulated that are consistent with the interests of the dominated groups.

These points clearly imply that scholars in CDS are not ‘neutral’, but commit themselves to an engagement in favour of dominated groups in society. They take position, and do so explicitly. Whereas much ‘neutral’ social research may well have an implicit social, political or ideological position (or, indeed, deny taking such a position, which obviously is also taking position), scholars in CDS recognize and reflect about their own research commitments and position in society. They are not only scientifically aware of their choice of topics and priorities of research, theories, methods or data, but also sociopolitically so. They do not merely study social problems or forms of inequality because these are ‘interest-
ing’ things to study, but explicitly also with the aim of contributing to specific social change in favour of the dominated groups. They self-critically examine whether the results of their research might benefit the dominant position of powerful groups in society. In addition to taking the perspective of dominated groups, CDS scholars may also attempt to influence and cooperate with crucial ‘change agents’ or ‘dissidents’ of dominant groups.

There has been a great deal of debate about whether sociopolitically committed scholarly research is at all ‘scientific’. Accusations of ‘bias’ against critical research are routine occurrences, and themselves in need of critical analysis – if only because not committing oneself politically is also a political choice. However, as critical scholars we should take all serious criticism seriously. It is crucial to emphasize that a critical and socially committed perspective does not imply less rigorous research. None of what has just been described about critical research in the social sciences implies that the theories and methods of CDS should be less scientific.

On the contrary, CDS scholars are aware that discourse studies of social problems that may effectively benefit dominated groups and that may contribute to the abandonment or change of illegitimate discursive practices of the symbolic elites usually require research programmes, theories and methods that are complex and multidisciplinary. It is one thing to formally study, for instance, pronouns, argumentation structures or the moves of conversational interaction, and quite another to do so, equally rigorously, as part of a much more complex research programme that shows how such structures may contribute to the reproduction of racism or sexism in society.

As we have seen above, this will often mean relating discourse structures to cognitive structures on the one hand and social structures on the other. This requires multidisciplinary theories and methods.

In other words, CDS specifically deals with complex social problems, for which it needs to apply or to develop complex theories and methods from several disciplines, and at the same time, it must satisfy the social criteria mentioned above – such as being relevant for dominated groups. This means that, on the whole, the criteria for CDS research are often more demanding than those for other forms of discourse studies.

Notice also that we are not saying that all discourse studies should be critical studies, only that critical studies are not less scientific because they are critical. Critical studies should be theoretically and methodologically adequate because otherwise they would be unable to contribute to their sociopolitical goals. In sum, bad discourse analysis, also in CDS, does not
meet the very high criteria of CDS, namely to be able to contribute to social change.

CDS scholars may well engage in theory development that as yet does not have direct applications, but that may contribute to improve the foundations of CDS research. If CDS scholars are especially interested in the general topic of the discursive reproduction of power abuse in society, they may have to examine, also in more general terms, the relation between discourse and power, or what makes power abuse illegitimate.

It should also be stressed here that despite its general aims and principles of critical social research, CDS is not a homogeneous movement – as is true for any social movement. Thus, I have chosen to focus CDS on power abuse, that is, on domination, and on its consequences: social inequality, and how these are reproduced by discourse. However, one may opt for a broader aim, and include the study of power and the relations between power and discourse, more generally – as is also the case in many chapters in this book. Similarly, we may also count as one of the aims of CDS the study of the relations between discourse and society. No doubt a study of the relations between discourse and power, or between discourse and society more generally, are at the basis of CDS, and presupposed by its more specific research projects. However, I prefer to formulate more specific aims for CDS, because otherwise CDS would collapse with or even include sociolinguistics, the sociology of language, linguistic anthropology, political science and related (sub)disciplines, with which CDS is obviously related. The reason for my decision to focus on the normative notions of power *abuse* and *social inequality* resides in the rationale of critical research. Such research critically analyses what according to specific social norms and values is *wrong, illegitimate, misguided* or *bad*. We do not pretend to be able to study all social and political relations of power in society, but focus on illegitimate power and want to know how and why such power, and specifically its discursive dimension, is illegitimate. We want to examine the many ways in which discourse may be abused, for instance by a systematic study of (and distinction between) discursive manipulation, misinformation, lies, slurs, propaganda and other forms of discourse that are aimed at illegitimately managing the minds and controlling the actions of people with respect to the reproduction of power. I shall summarize this complex aim with the two notions of *discourse* and *domination*. This is already a vast task, a task which I hold to be the core task of CDS. As we shall see below and in the rest of this book, this means that we need to borrow or develop theoretical instruments of a more general nature, such as those of power, social structure, social groups, ideology, context and other general notions involved in the study of discursive domination.
Discourse and the Reproduction of Social Power

It is within such a broader perspective of the aims and foundations of Critical Discourse Studies that I examine the complex relations between discourse and power.

Although there are many concepts of power in philosophy and the social sciences, in this book I essentially define social power in terms of control, that is, of control of one group over other groups and their members. Traditionally, control is defined as control over the actions of others. If such control is also in the interest of those who exercise such power, and against the interest of those who are controlled, we may speak of power abuse. If the actions involved are communicative actions, that is, discourse, we more specifically deal with control over the discourse of others, which is one of the obvious ways discourse and power are related: people are no longer free to speak or write when, where, to whom, about what or how they want, but are partly or wholly controlled by powerful others, such as the state, the police, the mass media or a business corporation interested in suppressing the freedom of (typically critical) text and talk. Or conversely, they must speak or write as they are told to do.

Such control is pervasive in society. Few people have the total freedom to say and write what they want, where and when they want and to whom they want. There are social constraints of laws (e.g., against slander or racist propaganda) or of norms of appropriateness. And most people have jobs in which they are required to produce specific kinds of talk or text. In that respect, discourse control seems to be the rule, rather than the exception. To investigate the abuse of such discourse control, thus, we need to formulate specific conditions, such as specific violations of human or social rights, to be discussed below.

Control does not only apply to discourse as social practice, but also to the minds of those who are being controlled, that is, their knowledge, opinions, attitudes, ideologies as well as other personal or social representations. In general, mind control is indirect, an intended but only possible or probable consequence of discourse. Those who control discourse may indirectly control the minds of people. And since people’s actions are controlled by their minds (knowledge, attitudes, ideologies, norms, values), mind control also means indirect action control. Such controlled action may again be discursive, so that powerful discourse may, indirectly, influence other discourses that may be in the interest of those in power. With this summary we account for the fundamental process of the reproduction of power through discourse. Let me examine this process somewhat closer.
If discourse controls minds, and minds control action, it is crucial for those in power to control discourse in the first place. How do they do so? If communicative events not only consist of ‘verbal’ text and talk but also of a context that influences discourse, then the first step of discourse control is to control its contexts. For instance, powerful elites or organizations may decide who may participate in some communicative event, when, where and with what goals.

This means that we need to examine in detail the ways access to discourse is being regulated by those in power, as it is typically the case for one of the most influential forms of public discourse, namely that of the mass media: who has access to the (production of) news or programmes, and who controls such access? Who is capable of organizing press conferences that will be attended by many journalists? Whose press releases are being read and used? Who is being interviewed and cited? Whose actions are defined as news? Whose opinion articles or letters to the editor are being published? Who may participate in a television show? And more generally: whose definition of the social or political situation is accepted and taken seriously?

In all these cases we are talking about active access, that is, participation in control of the contents and forms of the media, and not about the more or less ‘passive’ access of consumers (even when these consumers may actively resist media messages through dispreferred interpretations). Also, it should be emphasized that enhanced, global access to powerful media may mean the obliteration of small, alternative media that have fewer financial and technological resources. In other words, the very notion of access needs to be further analysed because it has many dimensions. In this book, I shall only deal with access as a form of active contribution to, or participation in, the production of public discourse – for instance the ways organizations or citizens have access to journalists and are able to influence media coverage.

Once it is established how such parameters of the context and the production of discourse are controlled, we may investigate how structures of discourse itself are being controlled: What (from global topics to local meanings) can or should be said, and How this can or should be formulated (with which words, more or less detailed, precise, in which sentence form, in which order, more or less foregrounded, etc.)? And which
speech acts or other communicative acts must or may be accomplished by such discourse meanings and forms, and how are such acts organized in social interaction?

Mind control

For each phase of the reproduction process we need detailed and sophisticated social, cognitive and discursive analysis. Many of the relationships just mentioned are as yet barely understood. We are beginning to understand how discourse is being understood, but much less about how such understanding leads to various forms of ‘changes of mind’: learning, persuasion, manipulation or indoctrination. ‘Mind control’ involves much more than just understanding text or talk, but also personal and social knowledge, previous experiences, personal opinions and social attitudes, ideologies and norms or values, among other factors that play a role in changing one’s mind.

Once we have insight into such complex cognitive representations and processes, we might be able to show, for instance, how racist reporting about immigrants can lead to the formation or confirmation of prejudices and stereotypes, which in turn can lead to – or be controlled by – the formation of – racist ideologies, which themselves can be used to produce new racist text or talk in other contexts, which finally can contribute to the discursive reproduction of racism. We understand much of this today in very general terms but, again, the details of such processes of discursive influences on the minds or people are barely understood.

The study of media influence in terms of ‘mind control’ should take place within a broader sociocognitive framework that relates the complex structures of today’s (new) media landscape to the uses of these media, and finally the many complex ways such uses may influence the minds of people. True, ‘mass’ media have given way to an enormous diversity of alternative media, special ‘niche’ media, and especially the vast possibilities of internet, cell phones and their more individual uses of news, entertainment and other ‘content’. Readers and viewers may have become more critical and independent. Yet, it remains to be seen, and needs much more critical analysis, whether such diversity of technologies, media, messages and opinions also means that citizens are better informed and able to resist the sophisticated manipulation by messages that seemingly address them more personally – but that might well implement dominant ideologies that have not changed much. The illusion of freedom and diversity may be one of the best ways to produce the ideological hegemony that will be in the interest of the dominant powers in society, not
least of the companies that produce the very technologies and media contents that produce such an illusion.

**Discourse Analysis as Social Analysis**

Similar theoretical and empirical problems characterize the definition of powerful groups or organizations; in other words, the very origin of the cycle of the discursive reproduction of power. What characteristics do groups of people need to have in order to be described as powerful?

This may intuitively be clear for governments, parliaments, state agencies, the police, the mass media, the military and big business corporations, and it may be for some professionals such as doctors or professors, or some social roles, such as parents. But although this may be the case for the mass media as organizations and enterprises, does this also imply that individual reporters are powerful? Most of them will probably deny such an assertion, even if they do realize that they have the power to influence the minds of hundreds of thousands, if not millions. Power in this sense should not be defined as the power of a person, but rather as that of a social position and as being organized as a constituent part of the power of an organization. Therefore, we need to engage in much more sophisticated social analysis so as to pinpoint who controls public discourse, and how.

Similar examples may be given for another major field of ‘symbolic power’, namely education. We know that teachers and textbooks influence the minds of students, and we can hardly deny that we expect them to do so if we want our children to learn something. But it is very difficult to distinguish between learning that really serves the students in their present and future lives, on the one hand, and the indoctrination of ideologies of powerful groups or organizations in society, or the prevention of students developing their critical potential, on the other hand. Still, one would hardly focus on and blame one teacher or one prejudiced passage in a textbook because the form of influence may be much more diffuse, complex, global, contradictory, systematic and barely noticed by all involved: indeed, from the Ministry of Education issuing a curriculum, from the authors, teams and publishers who produce textbooks or the teacher committees that approve them, finally to the teachers that teach them, all may be convinced that what these textbooks teach is good for the kids.

These examples may be multiplied for all domains of society, that is, for politics, the law, health care, the bureaucracies and state agencies and corporate business, and from top to bottom, from the leading elites to
those who execute the policies, the guidelines and the plans decided
above.

Again: power and access

In sum, when we ‘do’ discourse analysis as social analysis we become
involved in vastly complex structures of organization, control and power,
of which public texts and talk may only be one of many other social
practices to be scrutinized. Moreover, such a critical study of complex
and powerful organizations has its own methodological problems, for
instance serious limitations of access. For instance, we can critically
analyse a public news report or an editorial, a textbook or classroom
interaction, the propaganda of a party, or the advertising of a company,
but seldom have access to the kind of discursive interaction at the top:
the cabinet meeting, the editorial meeting at a newspaper, the meetings
of the top of a political party or the deliberations at the board of a busi-
ness company.

In the practice of fieldwork, the general rule is that the higher up and
more influential the discourses, the less they are public and the less they
accessible for critical scrutiny – sometimes so by law, as is the case for
cabinet meetings.

For instance, in my own field of research on racism and the press, as
far as I know, no researcher has ever been able to get access to editorial
meetings of a newspaper. And everyone who has done fieldwork knows
that interviewing the elites is always vastly more difficult than getting to
talk to ordinary people in their own environment – people who are
often happy to talk, because usually no one asks their opinion or about
their experiences in the first place.

This is why we do have public data about the racism of political debates,
news reports, textbooks or party programmes, but not about how cabinet
ministers, party leaders, editors, board members or high-placed bureaucrats
speak and write, internally, about immigrants and minorities.

Power as control over public discourse

In this book, I show how critical social analysis is closely intertwined
with contextual discourse analysis. Traditionally, the social power of
groups (classes, organizations) was defined in terms of their preferential
access to, or control over, specific material resources, such as capital or
land, to symbolic resources such as knowledge, education or fame, or to
physical force.
Many forms of contemporary power, however, should be defined as symbolic power, that is, in terms of the preferential access to, or control over, public discourse, following the logic of reproduction sketched above. Control of public discourse is control of the mind of the public, and hence, indirectly, control of what the public wants and does. One needs no coercion if one can persuade, seduce, indoctrinate or manipulate people.

In these terms, then, the symbolic elites today, such as politicians, journalists, writers, professors, teachers, lawyers, bureaucrats and all others who have special access to public discourse, or the business managers who indirectly control such access, for instance as owners of mass media empires, are those who should be defined as powerful by such a criterion.

Symbolic power may be derived from other kinds of power. Thus, politicians have access to public discourse because of their political power, and professors because of their knowledge resources. If power is defined in terms of the control of (the members of) one group over others, then such forms of political, academic or corporate power really become effective if they provide special access to the means of discourse production, and hence to the management of the minds of the public.

Whereas classically power was defined in terms of class and the control over the material means of production, today such power has largely been replaced by the control of the minds of the masses, and such control requires the control over public discourse in all its semiotic dimensions.

We should therefore go beyond the (usually correct, but too simple) slogans of the popular critical literature about the power of politics or the media in terms of ‘mind managers’ and examine in close detail what exactly this means: how specific groups in society are able to control the definition (that is, mental models) of, and the emotions about, public events, general sociocultural knowledge and common sense, attitudes about controversial issues or, most fundamentally, the basic ideologies, norms and values that organize and control such social representations of the public at large.

Re-analysing hegemony

We see how closely social analysis is related to discourse analysis and how in various ways such a relationship also requires cognitive analysis. We see how the classical notion of hegemony, as defined by Gramsci in his Prison Notebooks, is given substance by a much more explicit analysis of the processes involved, namely how ideologies are reproduced and how
people may act, out of their own free will, in the best interest of those in power.

This account of the discursive and cognitive means of the reproduction of social power in society obviously should also go beyond the usual macro-level analyses of sociology or political economy. Politics and the media undoubtedly mutually influence and control each other, both being in turn controlled by fundamental business interests, the market and what is financially ‘viable’. Such macro analyses may be further refined by an analysis of the relations and forms of control of classes, groups or organizations.

The micro analysis of power

Discourse analysts, however, tend to study these general relationships at a more local and micro level, such as the daily interaction routines in which politicians and journalists are involved, how press releases are manufactured and distributed, how press conferences are conducted, how critical questions of journalists are strategically answered, and so on.

If those in power need to control their image in the mass media so as to garner support and influence public moods and minds, then they need to control the discursive and interactional details of the production of public discourse – such as the timing, the detailed contents and style of a press release, a business report or advertisement or the conversations and interviews with journalists. Through a detailed analysis of such organizational discursive practices – aimed at controlling the production of public discourse – we are able to show how social macro structures are related to the structures of public discourse, and finally how these may influence the minds of the public at large.

It should be stressed that such social processes of reproduction are not deterministic. For example, despite many forms of influence by the state or by powerful organizations, newspapers as organizations and journalists as individuals may resist (up to a point) such pressure and formulate news according to their own perspective and interests.

The same is true for the audience of news organizations. Of course, people are influenced by the news they read or see, if only in order to acquire and update knowledge about the world. But their comprehension of the news and the way they change their opinions or attitudes depends on their own earlier attitudes or ideologies (shared with other group members) as well as on their personal experiences. It is this personal interpretation of the news, this mental model of events, which is the basis of specific personal action of individuals.
In other words, the link between macro structures of societal power, on the one hand, and individual agency, on the other, is very complex and indirect, for the discursive reproduction of power we are examining here.

**Discourse, cognition and society . . .**

The brief analysis of the discursive reproduction of power given above establishes fundamental relationships of a triangle of concepts that organize most of my research, also in other publications: discourse, cognition and society. In my view, any kind of CDS needs to pay attention to all three dimensions, even when, occasionally, we may want to focus on one or two of them. The general tendency in critical research is to directly link society – and especially power and domination – with discourse, social practices or other phenomena we study.

According to my theoretical framework, such a direct link does not exist: there is no direct influence of social structure on text or talk. Rather, social structures are observed, experienced, interpreted and represented by social members, for instance as part of their everyday interaction or communication. It is this (subjective) representation, these mental models of specific events, this knowledge, these attitudes and ideologies that finally influence people’s discourse and other social practices. In other words, personal and social cognition always mediates between society or social situations and discourse. Hence, in CDS we need to study social problems in terms of the discourse–cognition–society triangle. None of its three dimensions can be really understood without the other.

. . . and history and culture

That these three dimensions are necessary does not mean that they are sufficient. There are at least two more dimensions that are fundamental in CDS research: history and culture – although I take these both as part of the social dimension. That is, most of the issues dealt with in this chapter and this book, such as racism, the mass media, politics or education, have an important historical dimension whose analysis will contribute to our more complete understanding of contemporary social problems. Racism is not an invention of today but has a history of centuries. On the other hand, there are also vast social changes of the last decades, such as those of class, gender and ethnicity, and many contemporary societies in Europe, North America and Australia have
undergone sometimes dramatic changes when compared to how they were only 50 years ago. CDS should examine these changes, also in the discursive reproduction of power, and on the other hand show whether and how fundamental power relations may precisely not have changed.

Finally, the same is true for culture. All we have said here also should be qualified culturally. Discourses and the ways they reproduce power are different in different cultures, and so are the social structures and the social cognitions that are involved in such a reproduction process. Due to increasing globalization, some discourse genres may have become quite uniform, as is the case for much international news and even some forms of entertainment. Yet, also the members of different cultures may understand and use such discourses in different ways, consistent with their own culturally shared knowledge and attitudes. The same is true for the production of discourse and its social conditions, which also may be different in different societies and cultures. This means that also CDS should always make sure it examines the discursive reproduction of power against the cultural background of the participants – and increasingly how discourse is being influenced by the cross-cultural experiences of many contemporary societies.

From Power to Power Abuse: Domination

It is a common misunderstanding that power is inherently ‘bad’ and that the analysis of discourse and power is by definition ‘critical’ analysis. This is, however, a rather limited conception of power and of CDS. Power obviously and trivially can be used for many neutral or positive ends, as when parents and teachers educate children, the media inform us, politicians govern us, the police protect us and doctors cure us – each with their own special resources.

This is not merely a disclaimer to introduce a limiting ‘but . . .’. On the contrary, society would not function if there was no order, no control, no checks and balances, without the many legitimate relationships of power. In that sense, much social analysis involves analysis of power and related notions.

CDS presupposes insight into social structures in general and into power relations in particular. Only then are we able to examine power abuse, how such abuse may hurt people and how social inequality may be produced and reproduced in everyday life. Only then are we able to understand how power is unequally distributed in society.
The illegitimate uses of power

CDS is interested in the critical analysis of power abuse of politicians rather than in their legitimate exercise of power, in how the media mis-informs rather than informs them, or in how professionals and scholars abuse their knowledge to harass students, clients or other citizens rather than to educate or cure them. I call such forms of power abuse domination, a notion that implies the negative dimension of ‘abuse’ and also the dimension of inequities, injustice and inequality, that is, all forms of illegitimate actions and situations.

Domination covers equally the various kinds of communicative power abuse that are of special interest to critical discourse analysts, such as manipulation, indoctrination, or disinformation. Other, non-discursive, examples of domination readily come to mind, and everyday experiences, stories and news reports are full of them: sexual harassment of women by men, parental violence, political corruption, harassment and violence by the police, terrorism and counter-terrorism, wars, and so on. I just mention these to emphasize that CDS is able to study only a small (but important) part of all forms of domination and inequality.

In order to contribute to a well-founded practice of critical discourse study, we therefore should be much more explicit about the definition of abuse. How do we distinguish between the use and the abuse of language, discourse or communication, of news and argumentation, of parliamentary debates and laws, of scholarly studies or of professional reports, among a vast number of other genres and communicative practices?

Thus, we may expect the mass media to inform us about civil unrest, but when exactly does such ‘information’ about ‘riots’ slip into prejudiced text about black youths or the Third World, or class ideologies about the poor? Or when does a research project about immigration or the everyday lives of minorities lapse into confirming stereotypes, e.g., about drug abuse or violence, and ignore the ways these minorities are daily discriminated against by the authorities, the police and the symbolic elites?

In sum, the study of the obvious ways discourse is being abused, as in explicit racist propaganda or pseudo-science, needs to be complemented by much more subtle analyses of everyday practices in which ‘good’ and ‘bad’ may go together in text and talk.

So when exactly do we start to speak of ‘abuse’ when describing such everyday discursive practices? We have begun to describe such abuse in terms of legitimacy: abuse of power is illegitimate use of power. Such an analysis soon leads us to the foundations of social and political analysis. Power abuse, thus, means the violation of fundamental norms and values
in the interest of those in power and against the interests of others. Power abuse means the violation of the social and civil rights of people. In the area of discourse and communication, this may mean the right to be (well) taught and educated, to be well informed, and so on.

The normative notion of legitimacy is, however, very complex, and its adequate analysis relevant for the very foundations of CDS. If we want to analyse and criticize domination, and if domination is defined as illegitimate, we need to be very explicit about the norms, criteria or standards of legitimacy. Crucially, then, the question is: who defines what is legitimate in the first place? A well-known answer in liberal democracies is that such is the task of democratically elected representatives, such as those of a parliament, a city council, etc. However, we know from history that there have been many racist, sexist and classist laws and regulations so that laws, as such, do not guarantee legitimacy as soon as we apply other norms and criteria. This is even the case for the formulation of international human rights – which we also know to have changed historically. In other words, as is the case for all our norms, values and knowledge, the standards of legitimacy are relative and change historically and vary cross-culturally – even when we claim each time that they are ‘universal’.

If we have legitimate power use and illegitimate power abuse, we must accept that we may also have legitimate forms of inequality that are produced by them. This is not only the case in the obvious differences of political power but also wherever else power resources are not distributed equally – beginning with the material ones, such as money. Relevant for us is that this is also true for non-material, symbolic resources of power, such as knowledge and the access to public discourse. We thus find ‘normal’ inequalities as the differences of power between professors and students, professionals and their clients, experts and lay persons or journalists and their audience. The crucial question in CDS is therefore which of such power differences are legitimate by today’s standards of justice and equity, or on the basis of international human rights, and which represent cases of illegitimate power abuse. When are the power resources of the journalist, such as special knowledge and information as well as direct access to the mass media, used legitimately, e.g., to inform the citizens, and when is such power abused of to misinform, to manipulate or harm citizens.

We see that much of the definition of the (il)legitimacy of text and talk is framed in terms of the negative mental consequences of discursive domination – disinformation, manipulation, stereotypes and prejudices, lack of knowledge and indoctrination – and how these may mean or lead
to social inequality, for example, because such mental consequences in turn can influence (illegitimate) social interaction, such as discrimination.

Although we can accept the general definition of discursive domination in terms of its negative social consequences for the recipients, specifying the precise norms and values that make such negative consequences explicit is very hard and of course depends on one’s perspective.

It is not difficult to formulate why racist reporting is ‘bad’, for instance because it helps form and confirm racist stereotypes and ideologies, which in turn are the basis of racist discrimination – which by definition is against the best interests of those who are discriminated against and violates their fundamental rights. This is also why racist reporting or political propaganda is prohibited by law in many countries.

An example: racist reporting

But what if a newspaper covers, for instance, looting by black youth during a ‘riot’, as we have seen on several occasions in the UK or the USA, and as I analysed in my book *Racism and the Press?* Obviously, covering criminal actions of members of minority groups is, as such, not racist nor otherwise an infringement of their civil rights, even when such ‘negative’ reporting may confirm ethnic prejudices among many white people. So, one needs to engage in a detailed analysis of text and context in order to be justified to conclude that such reporting is racist. For instance, such coverage becomes more or less racist if the following conditions hold:

- if only the negative actions of black youths are represented, and not those of other youths or, indeed, of the police;
- if the negative actions of black youths are emphasized (by hyperboles, metaphors) and those of the police de-emphasized (e.g., by euphemisms);
- if the actions are specifically framed in ‘ethnic’ or ‘racial’ terms, instead of actions of, say, youths, or poor people, men or another, more relevant category;
- if riots, looting or violence are focused on as events without social causes, for instance as a consequence of frequent police harassment, or within a broader pattern of poverty and discrimination;
- if the newspapers systematically engage in this kind of racist coverage, and hence seem to have a policy of negative reporting about minorities;
• if only or predominantly ‘white’ sources are used that tend to blame black youth and exonerate the police.

We see that the norms that are violated here are not controversial. On the contrary, they are part and parcel of the professional norms of adequate reporting which require balanced representations of events, explaining them in terms of social causes and contexts, and a watchdog function against abuse of power of agencies or forces of the state. Journalists know and should know the possible consequences of racist reporting about minority communities and hence should be very careful to respect the general norms of professional reporting. They need not close their eyes to minority misdeeds, nor apply self-censorship, but only apply their own professional norms consequently when covering the Others.

**Legitimate partiality**

Even the example of racist reporting of ‘riots’ is still relatively straightforward because we can apply general norms and values of professional reporting to evaluate such reporting critically. However, there are many other examples of more or less ‘bad’ or partisan reporting that do not violate existing norms, and that do not have negative social consequences, for instance when a leftist newspaper highlights the positive qualities of a leftist candidate in elections and the negative qualities of the right-wing candidate. Such obvious bias may be motivated when most of the press is conservative and represents left-wing candidates (more) negatively.

Similarly, the press may want to represent negatively politicians that are corrupt, industries that pollute or discriminate, and so on, and such coverage may be ‘biased’ against such parties, but obviously the consequences are no doubt for the public good.

Thus, we can conclude that for each discursive practice we need to examine carefully the specific context, norms and values that define adequate practice. However, as a general rule of thumb, we can speak of illegitimate use of discursive power, that is, of domination, if such discourse or its possible consequences systematically violate the human or civil rights of people. More specifically, such is the case if such discourse promotes forms of social inequality, as when it is favouring the interests of dominant groups, and against the best interests of non-dominant groups, precisely because the latter do not have the same access to public discourse.
For each discourse genre or discursive practice, we then need to specify its particulars. We have given the example of news in the press, but of course we need to develop such criteria for all types of public discourse, such as parliamentary debates, political propaganda, advertising, corporate discourses, textbooks and classroom interaction, legal discourse, scientific discourse, or bureaucratic discourse.

The counter-argument: The inability to control the consequences

Another complication in such a theory of discursive domination is that it is not just formulated in terms of discourse structures, that is, structures that authors can (more or less) control, and hence for which they are (more or less) accountable, especially also in terms of the (mental) consequences of such structures. Politicians and journalists routinely defend themselves against accusations of prejudiced talk or text by saying that they have no control over how people read, understand or interpret their discourses.

Such a defence is not entirely without ground, because there is no causal relation between discourse and its interpretation: we know from the psychology of discourse comprehension that discourses themselves are only one factor in a complex set of conditions that influence understanding and interpretation, such as the context of reading, the given knowledge and ideologies of the readers, their personal biography and current experiences, their current intentions and goals, their current role and status, and so on.

Yet, despite such individual and contextual variations, this does not mean that discourses themselves are irrelevant in the processes of social influence. There is general insight into the ways knowledge, prejudice and ideologies are acquired, also through discourse. Hence, especially, professional authors and organizations should have insight into the possible or likely consequences of their discourses on the social representations of the recipients.

There is little doubt, for instance, that repeated emphasis and focus on the deviant or criminal characteristics of minorities creates and confirms socially shared racist attitudes in society, and not just the opinions of some bigoted individuals.

There is also little doubt that most of our ideologies are formed discursively. In this sense, then, the lack of direct control of the minds of recipients is no excuse for discursive malpractice, given professional knowledge about the likely tendencies of the overall influence of such practices on the minds and actions of recipients. Indeed, the same elite
groups and organizations perfectly well know what effects their ‘infor-
mation’, their advertising and their propaganda have on the public –
otherwise they would not engage in public communication in the first
place.

The Practical Relevance of Critical Discourse Studies

What has been said above applies primarily to CDS research. Such
research, we hope, produces useful insights into how discourse plays a
role in the reproduction of domination and how such power abuse leads
to social inequality. Crucial though for CDS is that such insights also
should have practical relevance for dominated groups. Although there
have been many examples of practical ‘applications’ of CDS research, this
dimension of CDS is most in need of further development and self-crit-
ical analysis. So let me briefly formulate some of the options.

Mediation and consultancy

If a politician, journalist or professor claims not to know (or have known)
the possibly negative social consequences of their discourses, there is
obviously a mediating role for critical discourse analysts. They can show,
in detail, how topics, headlines and leads of news discourse, or abstracts
and conclusions of scholarly articles, or slogans in political discourse can
be used and abused to ‘define the situation’, that is, how these discourse
structures may be used to build the upper level (macro) structures of
mental models of events. As critical analysts, we can show how specific
lexical items or metaphors are used to construe the details of events or
the characteristics of people in such mental models – or indeed how
mental models tend to be generalized to prejudices or other commonly
held social attitudes.

CDS can and should intervene in the discursive education of profes-
sionals, so as to show how the public discourses of the elites may influ-
ence the minds of the citizens, and how such influence plays a role in the
reproduction of social structure. To be aware of the consequences of one’s
discourse (and of any public action) is one of the conditions of account-
ability, as is also the case for our knowledge about the effects of chemi-
cal products on the environment. In such a case the excuse ‘We didn’t
know!’ (or the German variant, used as an excuse after World War II: Wir
haben es nicht gewusst!) is no longer valid, as is also the case for the criti-
cal evaluation of polluting practices.
**Teaching, obviously**

Teaching CDS is also relevant for citizens more generally because they can learn to be more aware of the goals of the discursive elites and how public discourses may misinform, manipulate or otherwise harm them. That is, the main social and practical goal of CDS is to develop strategies of discursive dissent and resistance.

**Professional advice, codes of conduct**

In order to be able to reach such goals, we need to investigate in detail which discourse properties, which discourse genres, and in what communicative contexts, are likely to have which sociocognitive consequences on the formation of knowledge, attitudes and ideologies. Such investigation requires the cooperation of discourse analysts with linguists, psychologists and social scientists, each examining some of the components of the complex discursively based reproduction process of social inequality.

Although teaching CDS is crucial as a form of resistance against discursive domination, it is not sufficient. Few newspapers have changed their practices of racist reporting as a consequence of CDS analyses. The same is true for most critical studies. Yet, as we have seen for the successes of the feminist and ecological movements, resistance may have effects even on the most powerful.

The long road traditionally has been the one through the institutions, that is, by educating journalists and other professionals with the basic results of our insights. That is, in the university our aims are clear: to teach students how to critically analyse text and talk, how to teach that to others and how to develop new theories to improve such analyses.

More direct forms of resistance that have been successful in other domains may also be effective for CDS, for instance in the area of racist or sexist reporting or by providing critical expert testimony to international bodies who do have at least some power, such as the United Nations or the Council of Europe – both have repeatedly taken action against racism.

For instance, if we are able to show how such racism is reproduced by the mass media, we may at the same time formulate concrete recommendations which may take the form of voluntary professional codes, as they exist in many areas. Such codes can formulate criteria for the diversity of newsrooms, news gathering, news topics and news sources, among other recommendations – that is, the enforcement of general professional
norms and values. They can explicitly suggest the elimination of all irrelevant references to the ethnic background of news actors, especially in negative (crime, etc.) news. The same is true, and has been suggested, for the coverage of the Third World or of Islam – in the same way that has repeatedly been proposed for the media coverage of gender.

Racism is bad for business

Besides teaching, research and political action involving influential international organizations, another important strategy of CDS resistance affects the core of neoliberal ideologies and practices: profits. We should argue and show that racist or sexist discourse, or a lack of diversity in general, is bad for business. In the increasingly multicultural society of the USA, Europe or Australia, in which many non-European people have become citizens and consumers, it is obviously hardly wise to antagonize these potential customers by racist policies, reporting, teaching, or other discursive practices. If such citizens have the choice between a racist and a non-racist newspaper or TV programme, school or business, we can imagine what most of them will choose, especially if they themselves have become explicitly aware of racism.

Diversity in the newsroom may not be enough. Minority journalists, if recruited at all, are selected for the similarity of their values with those of the owner or chief editor of newspapers, or because such journalists soon adapt to their colleagues in order to maintain their job or liveable working conditions. In that case, it is the diversity of the buyers of newspapers that is a very powerful incentive to change editorial policies. More generally, businesses will tend to discriminate less when their management understands that both for in recruitment of qualified personnel as well as in satisfying their clients, such racism is bad for business.

Alliances and cooperation

CDS research is especially efficient through its strategic alliances with those organizations, NGOs, minority groups or institutions that are engaged in the struggle against all forms of social inequality in general, and against discursive discrimination in particular, such as racism, sexism and classism in politics, the media, education and research. This may not be the whole field of operation of CDS, but large enough for a vast amount of research projects and forms of cooperation and social action.
What to Do?

Summarizing, the practical relevance of CDS can be found especially in the critical education of students as future professionals, in its role in preparing expertise for powerful international organizations as well as for grass-roots organizations, and by showing to corporate enterprises that any form of discursive discrimination ultimately will be bad for business.

CDS scholars can critically analyse textbooks and propose new ones to publishers and education authorities. They can offer to teach courses of non-racist news writing to journalists. They can intervene in workshops on non-racist interaction with clients in many businesses. And so on and so on.

It should finally be repeated again that such important practical goals of CDS can only be realized if based on a vast amount of detailed research into the crucial discursive practices in society, and especially in politics, the media, education and research, that is, on the symbolic or discursive elites and their daily practices and products. The articles collected in this book are intended as contributions to that collective research effort.
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