Media Discourse and the Question of (New) Minority Definitions: Three Methodological Approaches

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Abstract

One of the most central and fundamental challenges of minority studies in the European context is the lack of a clear definition as to what constitutes a minority. This challenge becomes even more apparent when considering the groups commonly referred to as new minorities—that is, minority groups that are formed by the movement of people, rather than shifting borders or changes in the state structure. As the scope of minority studies changes, this challenge can become problematic. Political definitions of minorities are generally complicated by vested interests and power structures, while academic discourses become mired in the problems associated with political recognition and established norms, rendering them indecisive. This uncertainty calls for new approaches to the question of defining the term "minority", and the analysis of media studies provides several possibilities for such approaches. This article will propose three broad methodologies in the examination of news media discourse regarding minorities, which variously consider the discourse as having its own definition(s) of minorities, as being a reflection of and/or challenge to existing political and academic definitions, and as providing a forum for groups themselves to assert claims to minority identity.

Keywords: new minorities; methodology; media discourse; discourse analysis; minority definitions

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Professor Tariq Modood coined the term "middle-aged minorities" during the conference 'What's in a Name? Extending the Existing Scope of Protection for National Minorities to Migrant Communities in Europe'[1] to describe the diverse ethnic groups of Europe, and particularly the UK, that have been formed by migration waves of the mid-twentieth century. These groups pose a particular challenge for the field of minority studies, both from a legal and political standpoint, and in terms of academia—a challenge that the entire conference was designed to grapple with. Falling outside the current scope of national minority protection, but largely no longer having the same concerns as recent migrants, these groups of people are situated in a grey area with regards to their group rights and recognition as part of the fabric of European societies. Although, as Modood pointed out, they are made distinct from "new" groups by virtue of the time the community has been present in the country, they are still largely referred to as "new minorities".

The focus of institutions, organizations and research centres concerned with minority rights is increasingly turning towards the question of "new" minorities and whether the shifting parameters of their field demand a reconsideration of the definition of a "minority" to include or exclude them. A number of potential strategies to answer this question have been proposed, primarily from a legal-political perspective that examines, for example, how existing legal instruments might be extended (Medda-Windischer, 2011; Medda-Windischer, 2016; Pentikäinen, 2015; Sloboda, 2016). However, when we discuss European nation-states, it is not enough to simply talk about the recognition or definition of a "minority" from the *state*, or institutional, perspective—we must also consider the realities and implications within the *nation*, and all the complex realities that the term encompasses. The existing frameworks and discussions of minority studies and policies on the continent primarily focus on the "problematic" minority cases of Central and Eastern European states, arising from the dissolution of the USSR and Yugoslavia, without giving sufficient consideration to the current minority situations of Western European countries. These latter countries have undergone significant demographic change due to the effects of post-colonialism, the guest worker agreements of the 1960s and 1970s, and the influx of refugees from conflict areas in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s—and the groups resulting from these movements are almost universally excluded from minority status. While excessive attention is given to security issues and legal measures, such as the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) drawn up by the Council of Europe in 1995, there is insufficient discussion about the

cultural-societal implications of recognized minority status and the provision of rights to diverse groups. All of these gaps—both theoretical and practical—give rise to the need to examine how we might define the term "minorities" from a social-discursive perspective.

Katharina Crepaz (2016) uses the interrogation of national narratives as a framework to discuss a rights-based approach to the distinction between autochthonous[2] and new minorities, which examines the marginalizing function of "othering" within the discussion of immigration and securitization. Modood's suggestion within the aforementioned conference was to learn from the British model of multiculturalism, and to engage in the process of building a shared concept of citizenship and nationality—a topic on which he has written extensively, both in academic texts and in the media (Modood, 2011; Modood and Meer, 2011; Meer and Modood, 2009). The concept of national narratives is rich with potential for investigating the (re)definition of minorities, but how might we go about such an investigation?

Benedict Anderson's (2006) discussion on the role of news media (in the form of print newspapers) in the creation of national consciousness makes consulting media discourse on the matter a natural choice. The power relationships inherent in access to and production of media illustrate similar disparities between the powerful and the disenfranchised in a broader sense, and definitions of the included and excluded of a society are built and reinforced within news media discourse. As Simon Cottle points out, however, 'At the same time ... the media can also serve to affirm social and cultural diversity and, moreover, provide crucial spaces in and through which imposed identities or the interests of others can be resisted, challenged and changed' (Cottle, 2000: 2). So how might we best approach the nebulous entity of "the media" in order to find constructive (and instructive) input on the definition of minorities, particular (new) minority groups and their place within a particular society, or minorities within European societies in general?

The purpose of this article is twofold: firstly, to highlight the important role media analysis can and should play in this debate, and secondly to provide several "jumping off" points from which such research might begin. These points take the form of broad approaches to media analysis, rather than specific methods, within which certain methodologies might be formulated.

Media and methodology

This section will give a brief overview of the three different approaches to media analysis discussed in this article, and outline a number of central themes prevalent in the study of new minorities and the media. The types of research described in this article draw on the field of cultural studies which—as Pickering notes in the introduction to his textbook *Research Methods for Cultural Studies* (Pickering, 2008)—is marked by a conspicuous lack of rigorously developed or traditional methods and methodology. This is partly due to its hybrid nature, situated at an intersection of the humanities and social sciences. Virtually all discussions on methodology across these fields involve extensive caveats and critical re-evaluation of methods and epistemology, resulting in contested definitions of "established" methodologies. Moreover, despite the necessity for rigorous and well-developed methods when carrying out empirical research in the field, methodologies generally need to be carefully and specifically tailored to the needs and circumstances of each study.[3] For this reason, while this article discusses a number of established methodologies that could possibly be employed under the three approaches outlined here, the intent is to create epistemological frameworks within which studies of media analysis might be formulated.

These three approaches, then, are as follows:

1)   *A media-based definition of minority*. This approach views the news media as a discourse separate to those in academia or other political or legal arenas, and uses purely the discussion within media to generate a definition of the term "minority". This is based largely on Grounded Theory Method (GTM), which operates on the principle of the dataset itself giving rise to theories, as the researcher identifies categories, trends and ideas within the data.

2)   *Critical and comparative discourse analysis.* This approach looks at the intersection, overlap and contrast between the media discourse, and the legal-political definition of "minority". By engaging various aspects of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this approach examines power and structures within media discourse as it relates to its context in society. There is potential for both quantitative and qualitative analysis within this framework.

3)   *Media as a forum.* Here the media is viewed not just as a collection of texts, but also as an institution that allows for diverse groups to make claims to minority status and identity themselves. This approach examines the ways in which minorities participate and negotiate in defining the term, and in doing so actively represent themselves within the larger narrative. A

combination of both grounded theory and critical discourse can be applied here, as well as examination through the lenses of various cultural theories, such as Orientalism.

Each of these approaches frames media discourse differently, i.e. as a lone source of data, as one strand of a larger discussion, or as a structural institution that is subject to the influence of various performances of power, both as individuals attempt to gain access to the discussion and as they participate within that discussion.

The current academic, political and media discussions are all subject to various pitfalls in their reliability and usefulness in informing the definition of a minority. While the legal or political definition of a minority—that is, the one recognized by various state legislations—is generally well defined in its scope by the respective state, it is simultaneously complicated by a number of interests including the distribution of resources and international relations. Academic discourse, meanwhile, is often ensnared by the established norms and has difficulty breaking free of the political ramifications of the definition. So, too, can the mainstream media discourse be criticized for a lack of coherency, and the absence of expertise in the field of minority issues and politics among journalists or the general public. However, until the intertwined discourses of policy and academia can also take into account the general, vernacular use of the term minority and a broader understanding of the way a society's various communities are viewed by the members of that society, they will remain incomplete.

Indeed, the discussion on minority issues in Europe is complicated by the ambiguity of definition and usage of the term "minority" between continental Europe, the UK, and the broader international context. Differentiating between references to national minorities, the British term Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (or BAME), or minorities in a broader sense—encompassing concepts of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, and other defining identity traits—becomes increasingly difficult in a globalized world, particularly in the media. For this reason, it is both relevant and instructive to involve discussions on media, race and representation, such as the works of Stuart Hall, Teun van Dijk, Edward Said, Simon Cottle, and others. While the academic discussion specifically regarding the definition of new minorities is still developing, the study of the intersection between media studies and, in particular, ethnic minorities yields a rich and varied spectrum of analysis. The volume *Ethnic Minorities and the Media*, edited by Cottle, brings together a number of different perspectives from the field of cultural studies and media, and despite being nearly two decades old (and thus describing a very different media landscape) is still highly relevant in its discussions of power and representation.

While recent literature on the question of new minorities has largely focused on legal and political frameworks and concerns, Crepaz' article arguing that the distinction between old and new minorities encompasses the aspect of identity, not just rights, provides an important perspective. She bridges the gap between these two aspects in her assertion that 'By including a minority in the country's legal framework it is not only granted protection measures, but also recognition as an integral part of the population – an especially important and symbolic act for minorities, who often feel discriminated against and detached from the majority population of the state they live in' (Crepaz, 2016: 203-4). Her argument frames immigrants as an "out-group" and national minorities as accepted "in-groups", primarily focusing on security concerns—an argument that warrants further examination.

Finally, it is worth noting—before we move on to the discussion of our three approaches—the importance of Foucauldian theories of power and hegemony in analysing the creation of "knowledge", how this knowledge is passed on, and the function and impact that knowledge has within and upon a society. Siegfried Jäger examines knowledge as being 'all kinds of meanings used … to interpret and shape the surrounding reality. People derive this "knowledge" from the respective discursive contexts into which they are born and in which they are involved for their entire existence' (Jäger, 2001: 33), including the discursive context of the news media. This helps frame our understanding of the way a definition of (new) minorities is not only informed, but actually created and further perpetuated by, discourses such as those in media (and other political and social forums), which leads us to our first approach.

1. A media-based definition of minority

The purpose of news media is to describe the world from the perspective of current events, and as such it intersects almost every kind of discourse in myriad ways, across a range of disciplines and topics. However, it can also be observed as a separate entity, which serves our purposes here in that it frees the media discourse from the restrictions imposed by academic and political discourses that dictate which groups should be considered under the label of "minority". By examining news media from, for example, a perspective based on Grounded Theory Method, we can formulate theories around a definition using only what is contained within the discourse itself.

The reason this is a useful and interesting exercise has to do with the vital role of news media in shaping the worldview not only of individuals, but of societies, to create collective

systems of meanings and understanding. Van Dijk (2000), in his analysis of the means of production of racism, argues that media in the modern information society have perhaps the most powerful role in influencing discursive and symbolic ideas, and that they are a primary source of knowledge, attitudes and ideologies. Jäger elaborates on this with relation to discourse theory, stating that '… in discourses reality is not simply reflected, but [rather] discourses live a "life of their own" in relation to reality, although they impact and shape and even enable societal reality' (Jäger, 2001: 36). He emphasizes that discourse theory is a "materialistic theory" that regards discourses as having the means to produce their own subjects in a concrete manner, rather than being "merely" ideologies.

This, in turn, has significant and concrete ramifications, not merely philosophical ones. In this context, it creates a societal expectation of the field of interest for minority departments, research centres, organizations, legal instruments, and so on. But it can also have consequences at a personal level for minorities, in that ideas reinforced in the media can shape a group's identity. 'Labelling Roma, Gypsies and Travellers as "other" is actually making them "other",' explains Jo Richardson, in an empirical study of media reporting on Roma communities in the UK. 'Their identity is reconstructed as different in the public imagination and this can result in physical and social exclusion' (Richardson, 2014: 58-9).

The Grounded Theory Method is a research approach that aims, as the name suggests, to generate a theory or theories, rather than to seek concrete answers. As Bryant and Charmaz explain, it is an approach whereby there is a simultaneous collection of data and analysis of that data, and the collection and analysis inform and streamline each other: 'The GTM builds empirical checks into the analytic process and leads researchers to examine all possible theoretical explanations for their empirical findings' (Bryant and Charmaz, 2013: 1). It is one of the most popular methodologies in the social sciences, and in the forty years since it was first formulated it has accumulated a number of varied and contested interpretations under a kind of methodology "umbrella". Two of the earlier and most recognized methodical approaches to conducting GTM include Glaser's 'six Cs': causes, context, contingencies, consequences, covariances and conditions; and Strauss and Corbin's 'conditional matrix'. Whichever approach one takes, Grounded Theory Method will generally contain certain core elements of the research process: theoretical memos; theoretical sampling; repeated comparison of data to categories throughout the research process; and a focus on the development of theory, rather than verifiable findings (Bryant and Charmaz, 2013).

So how might the researcher generate a dataset to analyse? One strategy might be to use a keyword filter for "minority/ies" in a newspaper archive, in order to generate theories related to the usage of that specific term. Another might be to examine articles within a specific time frame, using a coding system to determine relevance to the concept of minorities (although not necessarily the term itself), based on topic and scope. Or, indeed, a combination of these and other limiting factors. The process of creating this dataset will necessarily affect the outcome of the study, however there is little to suggest that one approach is more correct than the other; they may simply answer different questions, such as whether one should in fact restrict such a study only to the term "minority" or rather to a broader range of related lexical terms.

Bryant and Charmaz assert that it is important for a researcher to be familiar with Grounded Theory Method in some depth in order to usefully employ it as a methodological framework and thereby construct appropriate methods. While there is a relatively large body of literature concerning the use of GTM, and plenty of examples of research models actually using it, there is an understanding that researchers will interpret, develop and adapt their own methods according to the requirements of their study rather than follow a prescriptive set of rules (Bryant and Charmaz, 2013).

The rather imaginative nature of Grounded Theory is one reason why it lends itself well to this particular research problem. The pragmatism afforded by legal experts and political science requires a balancing viewpoint from a cultural studies or sociology point of view to challenge the established rhetoric, and generate new ideas at the point where existing debate breaks down or becomes mired in problems that can't be resolved. Without this balance, the focus on law and policy runs the risk of being trapped in outdated frameworks.

However, there are a number of problems to consider in this approach. The first is that despite the beneficial aspects of this flexible conceptualization of minorities, there is a risk of overshooting the boundaries of relevance for the field of minority issues, in the sense that it is confined to the study of ethnic, national, linguistic and religious diversity. By adhering to a dataset limited by specific terminology such as "minority", the researcher may generate theories that are diluted in their usefulness for this specific field as they are required to consider gender, sexuality, disability, and so on.[4]

There is also the problem of the shortfalls of mainstream media as a "representative" discourse. One aspect is the influence of "news values" in the production of news media, which dictate the coverage and prevalence of certain themes. As Cottle warns us, there is a tendency for ethnic minorities to be portrayed within the frames of conflict and controversy, and 'the

question … is not whether these news values are exclusive to ethnic minority reporting because clearly they inform other news stories as well, but rather to what extent they figure in a disproportionate number of stories about ethnic minorities framed in such ways' (Cottle, 2000: 21). With this in mind, we cannot regard such news values as universal or unbiased, and we should be aware how that may affect a given dataset and the patterns or categories it contains.

Even more specifically, theorists such as Stuart Hall describe how the representations of minorities themselves are driven by certain principles, in that they are 'frequently exposed to [a] *binary* form of representation. They seem to be represented through sharply opposed, polarized, binary extremes – good/evil, civilized/primitive, ugly/excessively attractive, repelling-because-different/compelling-because-strange-and-exotic. And they are often required to be *both things at the same time*!' (Hall, 1997: 229). According to Hall, binaries also have a defining function in establishing meaning through contrast and difference: the majority is able to define itself by what it is not, in the sense that, for example, '"Britishness" is not-French, not-American, not-German, not-Pakistani, not-Jamaican and so on …' (Hall, 1997: 235). This demonstrates the way in which the acceptance of diversity in a national narrative and—importantly—in a national identity can pose a perceived threat to the structural integrity of that narrative or identity. Dominant voices within a discourse may respond to this perceived threat by rejecting notions of inclusivity and acceptance, even subtly. Hall notes, with reference to Derrida, that binaries are rarely neutral and often have an inherent dominant power structure.

These problems of power are something that will be considered in the later sections of this article; however, before we continue there is another practical concern to briefly examine. As Bryant and Charmaz note, in GTM one cannot use the same data both to formulate ("discover") a theory and to validate it; that is, having generated a theory on the definition of a minority using a certain sample of media discourse, we cannot then test that theory on the same sample to get "results" (Bryant and Charmaz, 2013). In one sense, we might reject this assertion with reference to Jäger's arguments about the ability of discourses to live a life of their own—the ideas generated by such an analysis about what constitutes a "minority" could be regarded as being indicative and substantial in and of themselves. But there is also the option of testing these newly generated theories against other discourses, as we will discuss in our second approach.

2. Critical and comparative discourse analysis

This approach considers the ways in which media discourse intersects, overlaps and contrasts with the legal-political definition of a minority in the European context, namely the groups recognized under respective national legislation and European documents such as the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (ECRML) and the FCNM. The legal-political definition might be understood to encompass legislative procedures, political negotiation, and compliance and monitoring commentary, and thus also constitutes a discourse, particularly as the definition changes over time.

A comparison could take the form of either quantitative or qualitative analysis, or both: if we regard the legal-political framing of the term minority to be concrete and well-defined, we can quantitatively test the frequency of cohesion between that framing and usage of the term in news media discourse, and use qualitative indicators to test degrees of cohesion. However, any examination of this kind should take into account the inherent structures and functions of power at work in both arenas, as mentioned earlier. One way of doing this is by employing Critical Discourse Analysis.

Critical theory, as explained by van Dijk, is discourse analysis that 'focuses on social problems, and especially on the role of discourse in the production and reproduction of power abuse or domination. Wherever possible, it does so from a perspective that is consistent with the best interests of dominated groups' (van Dijk, 2001: 96). Like Grounded Theory Method, van Dijk posits CDA as an interdisciplinary, multifaceted methodology, rather than a simple method or set of methods. Each separate study requires careful examination in order to select structures and texts to analyse, and the ways in which to examine them.

Jäger tells us that '… discourses are not interesting as mere expressions of social practice, but because they serve certain ends, namely to exercise power with all its effects. They do this because they are institutionalized and regulated, because they are linked to action' (Jäger, 2001: 34). He proposes a model for conducting CDA built on a number of "structures" that help us understand the different functions of discourse, as well as the way that context factors into analysis. These structures include:

•   *Discourse fragments*, which are texts or parts of texts that deal with a particular theme. Together, a number of discourse fragments make up a strand.

•   *Discourse strands*, which extend through time.

- *Discursive events/context*, terms which primarily refer to politically significant and emphasized events around or within which the discourse is occurring

- *Discourse planes,* or wider thematic forums of discussion, for example science, media, politics, education, everyday life, administration, and so on.

- *Discourse position*, which is the ideological location of a person, media outlet, or other actor within the discourse. A position is created as the result of being "knitted into" discourses.

Van Dijk uses a comparable model that invokes "global" and "local" meanings, with the former referring to "semantic macrostructures" of meaning attached to terms through associations in myriad contexts, and the latter to the most dominant meanings in each context. Contexts, too, can be viewed as global and local; global contexts are the social, political, cultural and historical structures in which a communicative event takes place, and local contexts consist of the particular circumstances and properties of each communicative interaction itself—the participants, the politics, the form and medium of the communication (van Dijk, 2001).

These approaches provide the researcher with a number of tools with which to examine the way that a political definition of minorities might interact with media discourse, as contextual norms, laws, values and rights surrounding a discourse—elements that are themselves influenced by exposure to the media—play an important role (Jäger, 2001; van Dijk, 2001). The positioning of the researcher is similarly important to consider, in that they are also a product of exposure to a variety of contextual and discursive influences.

The elements or tools of CDA should not just be applied individually, however. Discourse strands are by their nature entangled in one another, and various ideas grow within this entanglement in a non-static mass (Jäger, 2001). These ideas result in a "collective symbolism", which is the abstraction from which discursive expressions about specific groups—"migrants", for example—stem. 'In the store of the collective symbols that all the members of a society know, a repertoire of images is available with which we visualize a complete picture of societal reality and/or the political landscape of society, and through which we then interpret these and are provided with interpretations – in particular by the media' (Jäger, 2001: 35). Through this, we can understand that the political usage of the term "minority" is not only fundamentally influenced by the media, but is also susceptible to change because of the ways in which the two strands are entangled.

This methodology reveals the interplay between the media and political discourses. One interacts with the other; there is tension, pushback, and influence in both directions. This is particularly interesting to our discussion when one considers that the very identity of migrants and their descendants as part of the nation's fabric, without even focusing particularly on the question of minority recognition, goes through a similarly tumultuous process between social (including media) and political contexts. Everything from the processes of bureaucracy and citizenship to everyday social interactions is affected by and contributes to this tumult. 'As [new minorities] are not regarded as a constitutive part of the nation, further efforts to integrate, adapt and to a certain extent even assimilate are required of them', notes Crepaz (2016: 211)— and yet the fundamental nature of both institutions and societal framings of "us" and "them" work to continually marginalize these groups.

Located as this discussion is at the juncture between political science, law, social sciences and the humanities, it is worth listening to van Dijk's "plea for diversity" in critical discourse analysis, particularly as regards multidisciplinary research (van Dijk, 2001). Jäger explicitly addresses this kind of analysis, noting that 'in this context the question would have to be answered, if and how the political discourse strand dovetails with that of the media and the everyday discourse strand, how and whether that of the media "influences" that of the everyday discourse strand and thus "eats into it" as it were, and so on' (Jäger, 2001: 51). The substantial existing body of research on the legal and political standing of new minorities, and the lengthy and possibly unresolvable debate over the definition of a minority (and whether such a definition should exist), form a useful foundation from which to base an empirical study of this kind.

This is also an opportune moment to return to Crepaz' analysis of an identity-based approach to framing new minorities, as she also discusses the two discursive "planes" of media and policy/law. She points out that '… autochthonous minorities receive group rights as they are citizens and part of the self-identification of the nation, while immigrants remain excluded from these processes, even after they have acquired their country-of-residence's citizenship' (Crepaz, 2016: 211). A good starting point for research would be to critically examine Crepaz' claim that the provision of rights within a political framework creates more widespread social cohesion and acceptance of recognized minorities within the fabric of the nation, and specifically that 'while "old" minorities have become accepted into the "national narrative" of their countries of residence, this has not happened for new minorities' (Crepaz, 2016: 204). There is much to suggest that this might not be entirely accurate, particularly considering that

autochthonous minorities are also subject to forms of racism and discrimination in a variety of forms across Europe.

Another starting point might be to consider the complicated nature of minority identity; she describes in her argument that 'An open approach to identity, where more than only one kind of identification is possible, enables minority members to identify as both minority members and citizens of their respective nation-state, often combined with a regional or a European dimension to this identity' (Crepaz, 2016: 211). One particularly interesting way of investigating this complexity would be to consider the ways in which members of recognized national minorities interact with migrant communities (both recent and "middle-aged"), and how they might resist or perpetuate exclusionary discourse around those groups. This interaction of "old" and "new" minorities within the nation state encompasses a variety of the structural elements and tools described by both Jäger and van Dijk, especially when considered over periods of time in which migration becomes an especially contentious issue, such as during the conflicts in the Balkans or in Syria, which both resulted in large numbers of refugees moving and settling throughout Europe.

Within a critical comparative discourse analysis of the ways in which a definition of a minority is contested or reinforced between the news media and political frameworks, it is also important to consider what is not said. As Jäger points out, the nature of discourse is self-regulating in that there are things that can't be said—taboo language or themes that elicit negative sanctions unless framed in a particular way (Jäger, 2001). These vary from context to context, and might encompass particular forms of violent speech such as hate speech, or political stances that could harm the popularity or re-election of a public figure. Depending on the political climate of a particular nation, this could apply both to ideas that are too exclusionary of minorities (both new and old) to the extent that they are perceived as indications of undesirable forms of nationalism, or explicitly inclusionary statements in that they are seen to pose an existential threat to the integrity of national borders, culture, and/or cohesion.

There is also the question of who has access to participating in these discourses in the first place, and which voices are given priority. Van Dijk argues that CDA has both scholarly and social responsibilities that demand rigorous, complex theories to 'account for the complexities of the relationships between discourse structures and social structures' (van Dijk, 2001: 96). These theories require that we engage with the fact that news media discourse is produced within institutional structures that are deeply infused with a number of power

dynamics that regulate who can participate in the discourse, and how. This idea forms the basis of our third approach.

3. Media as a forum

Camilla Nordberg, in her examination of the representation of Roma in Finnish newspapers, identifies the role and ability of the media 'to serve as an arena for negotiation and contestation. Not only elite actors but also ordinary citizens can participate through letters to the editor and interviews. The potential diversity of voices turns the daily press into a powerful arena for empirical analysis of citizenship agency' (Nordberg, 2006: 88). Especially when a particular contentious issue is covered by news media, 'access to the media brings about the power of influencing those claims which successfully reach the public arena' (Nordberg, 2006: 100). While these arguments might seem to frame media discourse as an empowering and facilitating forum for representation of marginalized voices, the reverse side of this coin is that those who have disproportionate access to the media (and particularly editorial discretion) can dominate the discussion to the extent that the views expressed are homogenized to suit a particular agenda or worldview.

Thus, in our third methodological approach, we apply a critical eye to the structures of media itself—gatekeeping, journalistic integrity, editorial guidance or imperatives, and so on. We also combine the two main methodologies described in the previous sections of this article, but confine our interest only to certain voices, namely minority voices, instead of the entirety of the discourse. This is a concept that has been discussed by Barry Gibson, who examines 'how the productive tension between the twin goals of emancipation and the production of a comprehensive social theory will become central to any accommodation of critical theory with grounded theory' (Gibson, 2013: 436). This kind of methodology might be viewed as grounded theory formulated such that it takes the view that 'the best position from which to view society is from the perspectives of people themselves' (Gibson, 2013: 437). Gibson describes one justification for this idea, from the perspective of Adorno: namely that sociology, as a product of a capitalist society, has the potential to reinforce power structures inherent in that society. This is especially true of grounded theory that does not delve beyond the immediate appearances of social interactions.

There are hazards in combining GTM with critical theory, however. Gibson argues that there is a risk of "forcing", in which a pre-existing theory drives the interpretation of the data,

leading to the phenomenon of "emergence" and a theory that is not reliably grounded in the empirical data available. This, he argues, necessitates the researcher reflecting on how their bias may affect their coding and sampling. He also argues that the researcher must exercise caution in the very act of conducting research as a form of representation:

> One of the central debates in critical theory is the nature of the research relationship. Traditionally this has been interpreted as an objectifying relationship. What this means is that the relationship between the researcher and researched is a relation where the researcher has considerable power to (*mis*)represent the researched by turning them into an object. By this we mean that participants in research are human subjects and that they become represented by the categories of the research. (Gibson, 2013: 442)

This consideration is crucial to research of this nature, especially since it is particularly ideological. Of course, it is difficult to say that research of any kind is entirely free of subjectivity. However, in examining minority access to discourse there is an especially potent risk for hypocrisy in reproducing the power imbalance that the researcher seeks to investigate. This is challenging territory. The necessity for reproducible results in the social sciences, as in all sciences, presupposes that two people will be able to read the same text in exactly the same way, which would, according to critical theory, only be possible if they had the exact same experiences and values. This is not to discount the scientific value of the field, nor its integrity; it is merely to highlight the absolute necessity of considering and controlling for the biases and position of the researcher.

How one goes about doing so is also subject to mechanisms of power, however; in pursuing this avenue of thought there is a tendency to fall into a dizzying and potentially infinite spiral of problematizing the context of the person problematizing the context—an experience that can leave one with a kind of theory-induced vertigo. At some point it becomes necessary to make general caveats and simply proceed with the research. However, it is worth touching on one more problem in critical grounded theory, namely that of reification and homogenization of diverse groups. Gibson describes it thus: 'The problem is that as the critical grounded theory project seeks to build knowledge grounded in experience that we would end up making claims about groups, such as women or black people. Critical grounded theory might be able to make general predictions or statements that cover all groups of people, however it would also have to remain sensitive to variable differences within groups' (Gibson, 2013: 449). The phenomenon of reification refers to the essentializing of minority identity, reducing members of a minority to a singular and undifferentiated identity, which in a sense discursively segregates a minority community from their larger context (Alexander, *et al.*, 2007). It is important to

resist this homogenization, as it is a misrepresentation—minority communities, like all communities, contain internal diversity, and varying degrees and spectrums of belonging.

This reduction and essentialization of identity speaks to the importance of minority voices being able to represent themselves, and to contribute to the debate on how minorities are defined. Orientalism is one of a number of cultural theories that informs this field of discussion. The pioneering and definitive author on Orientalism, Edward Said, points out a similar starting point for black, feminist, socialist, and related studies, 'all of which take for their point of departure the right of formerly un- or mis-represented human groups to speak for and represent themselves in domains defined, politically and intellectually, as normally excluding them, usurping their signifying and representing functions, overriding their historical reality' (Said, 1985: 3). The focus of his Orientalism theory is on the power structures that allow the West to describe (and thus create knowledge of) the East and ascribe characteristics to marginalized groups—a phenomenon that is evident in this discussion as well, when "new minority" groups are excluded from defining themselves as such. Post-colonial political frameworks, which feature prominently in Said's theory, also play an important role within the European context particularly with regard to migration and migrant groups, as the large majority of communities described by the term "new minorities" are impacted by the legacy of European colonialism in one way or another.

We can observe some of the concrete ways in which these ideas manifest. Cottle describes how the various mechanisms of "media production", including contextual cultural discourse, the productions of systems of signification, processes of identity formation, market forces, and other aspects, interact in dynamic combination, under the influence of the political sphere:

> Viewed through a wide-angled lens, media production is shaped by prevailing state policies and socio-political responses to ethnic minorities, as comparative studies of different multicultural nations demonstrate. Political ideas of assimilation, integration, pluralism, multiculturalism and/or anti-racism can all variously inform the regulatory frameworks and cultural climates in which mainstream and minority production can either flourish or flounder... State regulatory frameworks and media policies are themselves subject to international forces including ... impinging geopolitical realities. (Cottle 2000: 17)

Van Dijk (2000) also outlines the many structural barriers to (ethnic) minority participation in the news media, including a lack of diversity among journalists and editors, the perception of minority voices as being less valid, authoritative or reliable, the prevalent topics of news stories, quote selection, and dominant negative localized meanings around terms associated with minorities.

But beyond simply identifying the problematic nature of access to the media and the marginalization of minorities within its institutions, these theories allow us to investigate solutions to these obstructions, and fulfil the ideological promises of critical theory. One such example is Charles Husband's development of ideas around the "right to be understood"—that is, the right not only to speak, but to be heard and for a mutual effort to be made towards comprehension of the other (Husband, 2000). While this is a two-way street, in many ways minority groups already fulfil these demands with regard to the majority, and so the emphasis is on majority comprehension of minorities. He discusses, for instance, the role that public service broadcasting plays or might play in circumventing market pressures on media production, to ensure that minority voices are heard beyond the boundaries of their own communities.

This also draws the aspect of minority media—media produced by, and often for, minorities—into this particular methodological approach. While public broadcasting funds and access for minority media is provided to recognized groups under Article 11 of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (Council of Europe, 1992), other groups that might fall under the "new minority" category also produce their own media, and there is a body of literature already on the ways media policy for national minorities affects methods of representation (Horsti and Hultén, 2011). Research on (for instance) diaspora and transnational media, and the narratives they build and propagate, has been around for some time—Marie Gillespie (2000) and Annabelle Sreberny (2000) discuss a number of studies within the British context. But the role that these types of media play in building the definition of a minority, including its semantic connotations and societal framing, and with regards to new minorities, could prove fruitful. Indeed, Husband describes how media policy providing for media run by and for Indigenous[5] peoples contributed to the inclusion of policies regarding the preservation of language and traditional law in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Husband, 2000: 204).

This final methodological approach spans a broad array of ideas and theories, which is consistent with Said's assertion that Orientalism and related fields are 'interventionary in nature, that is, they self-consciously situate themselves at vulnerable conjunctural nodes of ongoing disciplinary discourses where each of them posits nothing less than new objects of knowledge…' (Said, 1985: 13). The goal of such theories is to in fact draw attention to and alter norms around knowledge production, which brings us full circle to the Foucauldian ideas of hegemony and meaning, where we began. Such is the nature of cultural and discourse theory, particularly in

media studies—ideas, structures, action and texts are inextricably linked, constantly at work upon one another and upon social knowledge.

Conclusions

Restricting the field of "minority studies" only to those groups that are covered by the FCNM does not make any sense; in Western and much of Northern Europe the model breaks down, as it was an instrument designed to address conflicts and tensions arising from recently redrawn or re-established borders in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. In order for the field—academic, political and legal—to meaningfully engage with the issues of ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity in Eastern Europe, it must consider so-called "new minorities".

The problem with power and the media can be found in Said's assertion that 'Orientalism is never far from … the idea of Europe, a collective notion identifying "us" Europeans as against all "those" non-Europeans, and indeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures' (Said, 2003: 7). In terms of "new minorities" resulting from migration, this clearly demonstrates the issues that nations and their societies have in accepting groups of (especially) non-European origin as part of their national fabric. The media, as an agent of this discursive practice, presents a biased and deeply problematic reality in terms of the way diverse ethnic groups may be perceived or accepted as in- or out-groups. However, using media analysis as a tool in the definition of new minorities allows us to bring these problematic power structures to light, and to critically engage with assertions that certain groups do or do not require protection and recognition by academic, political and legal institutions and structures.

Cottle brings this exact criticism to bear on the discussion of methodology in the field of media analysis. 'Studies of media representation often lack a theory of "mediation" and, in consequence, collapse the forces of production into culturally defined "frameworks of knowledge" … as such, they tend to overlook Hall's recognition of the "relations of production", the "technical infrastructure" and the "institutional structures" that also condition and shape the practices and output of media workers' (Cottle, 2000: 16).

The importance, and in some sense the urgency, of developing interdisciplinary discussion and research on the framing of new minorities with relation to minority issues is multifaceted. On the one hand, Gibson describes the aims of promoting the research subject's

perspective within critical theory as a research method being less about accuracy or validity, and more about 'trying to enable emancipation from the things that enslave' (Gibson, 2013: 450). While this may sound overly dramatic, it speaks to the magnitude of power disparities that have an enormous influence on the way research is produced. On the other hand, as Crepaz notes, European societies have a vested interest in gaining a more thorough understanding of the social dimensions of minority recognition, as the exclusion of marginalized groups is a self-perpetuating cycle: 'As long as immigration is mainly seen as a threat to our societies' prosperity and security, the distinction between "us" and "them" is likely to persist, and inclusion of immigrants into national self-identification is very difficult' (Crepaz, 2016: 212).

With such a variety of rich and complex theories, methodologies and fields of study to draw upon, there are in fact almost endless ways in which empirical and theoretical studies of the role of news media discourse in contributing to the debate on minority definition/s might be conducted. And in fact, if we look at Husband's (2000) views on the right to be understood, we might view it as a moral imperative to investigate this field in the course of making decisions that have such a serious impact on the scope of academic inquiry and political activity, as it is our duty to seek comprehension of the full spectrum of communities affected by the definition of minority recognition and rights.

Notes

[1] The conference, held at Villa Vigoni on April 11-12, 2017, was co-organized by the European Centre for Minority Issues and the European Academy of Bozen/Bolzano.

[2] The term "autochthonous" in relation to minorities generally refers to groups on a territory that have been situated there for a sufficiently long period of time that they are not considered to have migrated there (see note 5).

[3] Aeron Davis' chapter on 'Investigating Cultural Producers' in the same textbook provides a very useful overview of a diverse range of research approaches in this field, touching variously on political economy, textual analysis and social/ethnographic work. It is an excellent starting point for considering methodological options in media analysis, and gaining an idea of major theorists and research practitioners in each approach.

[4] Which is not to say that there is no use for such theories at all; one might examine categorizations of marginalization with such a theory, for example.

[5] The use of the term Indigenous to describe certain groups as per the UN definition is distinct from the more general usage of the term minorities (and qualifiers such as "national" or "autochthonous") to refer to ethnic or national groups not formed by migration.

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