NYHETER FRÅN GRÄNSEN
Tre studier i journalistik om "invandrare", flyktingar och rasistiskt våld
[News from the border. Three studies in journalism on immigrants, refugees
and racist violence.]

Swedish text and summary in English. 396 pages.
ISBN 91-88212-18-1
ISSN 1101-4652
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Abstract
The aim in News from the border is to show how the special logic of the news media
forms its subject matter and to highlight its potential to create symbolic identities
and boundaries. The analyses consist of interpretive readings, influenced by critical
discourse analysis, semiotics and narratology. The thesis is comprised of empirical
investigations on three different topics in news coverage:
— The representation of refugees in different news genres in 1993 with a point of
reference in 1976. Two genre-based methods of approaching refugee issues dominate
in news coverage. The ‘serious’ news takes it’s point of departure in a national ‘us’
that is decided by the frontier authorities, and refugees are portrayed as a concern or
a threat. The other interpretive package takes the side of an individual, threatened
with deportation, against those same authorities. It is established in popular media
and creates an ‘us’ protecting the rights of the ‘little guy’ against the superior force.
News division of refugee issues into two fixed interpretative packages is an expression
of the increasing professionalism of journalism, but none of the story types allows an
examination of asylum policies from humanitarian principles.
— News understanding and representation of racist violence during three similar (real
and media) events in 1976, 1987 and 1995. The main result is that news takes it’s
point of departure in a common sense, where ‘we’ — the news media, the traditional
news sources and the readership are enlightened and tolerant, and together guarantee
a safe society. This conception seems to form a stumbling block to any journalistic
ambition to analyze racist violence.
— News medias fixation of invandrare (immigrants). The official statistical
categorization invandrare ≠ svensk is a prerequisite for news accounts which in some
ways function as institutional racism. In news the abstract category is transformed
into human types. A number of more or less trivial techniques in news production
cooperate to construct differences between a mainstream media readership and the
category ‘immigrants’. News also conjures old time stereotypes, telling ‘us’ among
other things, that ‘we’ are normal.
The main result is that news routinely puts up or fortifies discursive borders between
Sweden and refugees, between ‘Swede’ and ‘immigrant’, and at the same time
confirms an antiquated notion of nation and people.

Key words: News logic, imagined identities, discrimination in discourse, racism,
stereotypes, media events.