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

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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 its 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 its 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 *ivandrare ≠ 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.