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Discourse semantics and ideology

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ABSTRACT. This article presents fragments of a new, multidisciplinary theory of ideology and its relations with discourse, formulated in the broader framework of a critical discourse analysis. Ideologies are defined as basic systems of fundamental social cognitions and organizing the attitudes and other social representations shared by members of groups. They thus indirectly control the mental representations (models) that form the interpretation basis and contextual embeddedness of discourse and its structures. In this framework, it is examined how semantic structures of discourse (such as topic, focus, propositional structure, local coherence, level of description, implications and macrostructures) are monitored by underlying ideologies, as expressed in opinion articles in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*.

KEY WORDS: attitudes, discourse, editorials, ideology, meaning, models, *New York Times*, opinion articles, semantics, social representations, text, *Washington Post*

INTRODUCTION

Within the framework of a new, long-term, multidisciplinary project on discourse and ideology, this paper discusses some basic properties of ideologies and examines the discursive side of the discourse–ideology link, viz. the ways ideologies articulate themselves at the level of discourse meaning. If it is assumed that ideologies are preferably produced and reproduced in societies through forms of text and talk of social actors as group members, it seems plausible that some semantic structures of discourse do so more effectively than others. It is the task of this paper to identify and describe these structures, and to explain their ideological functions in terms of the sociocognitive conditions and consequences of discourse. Our data base for this analysis is a selection from the 5750 editorials and opinion-editorial (op-ed) articles that appeared in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* in 1993. The broader framework of this study of the relations between discourse and ideology is constituted by a critical discourse analysis which aims at making more explicit the ways power abuse, dominance and inequality are being (re)produced by ideologically based discourse.

BASIC CONCEPTS OF IDEOLOGY

The theory of ideology that informs our analysis in many respects differs from the prevailing philosophical and sociological approaches that characterize the hundreds of books and thousands of articles on ideology published since Destutt de Tracy's introduction of the concept in the 18th century (for earlier surveys and discussions, see, e.g. Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1978; Eagleton, 1991; Larrain, 1979; Rosenberg, 1988; Thompson, 1984, 1990).

There is no need (nor place) in this paper to retrace this historical and scholarly development of the concept of ideology during the last two centuries, nor to review the various contemporary approaches to this perhaps most elusive of theoretical notions in the humanities and social sciences. And although it is scholarlily presumptuous to want to start from scratch in light of such an abundant number of earlier attempts, our project nevertheless aims to provide a first sketch of a somewhat more explicit and theoretical framework, and does so from a multidisciplinary, sociocognitive and discursive, perspective.

Our major critique of earlier definitions and approaches is not that they are all misguided, or do not study important dimensions of ideologies, but rather that most of them remain formulated in rather vague philosophical or sociological jargon. Moreover, important questions, such as the precise internal structures of ideologies, or the detailed relations between ideology, discourse and other social practices, have seldom been made explicit. Obviously, this one article is not able to address the many complex issues involved in a theory of ideology, or in a theory of the relations between ideology and discourse, so we focus on some crucial aspects, and leave others on the agenda for future research in this project.

Summarizing our specific approach to ideology, partly in opposition to other approaches, we may highlight the following assumptions:

(a) Ideologies are cognitive. Although ideologies obviously are social and political, and related to groups and societal structures (see below), they also have a crucial cognitive dimension. In intuitive terms, they involve mental objects such as ideas, thought, beliefs, judgements and values. That is, one element of their definition implies that they are 'belief systems'. It is especially in the study of social and political cognition that such belief systems have been examined in more detail (Iyengar and McGuire, 1993; Lau and Sears, 1986). An adequate theory of ideology needs to bring to bear results from cognitive science, and should no longer use such vague traditional concepts as 'false consciousness'. On the other hand, we also emphasize that a definition of ideologies as belief systems is too unspecific: rather, ideologies should be taken as the abstract, 'axiomatic' basis of the socially shared belief systems of groups. This also implies that the fact that we define ideologies (also) in cognitive terms does *not* mean that they are individual cognitions. On the contrary, although used or applied by indi-

vidual social actors *as* group members, they are shared social represen-
tations (Aebischer et al., 1991; Rosenberg, 1988).

(b) Ideologies are social. At least since Marx and Engels, ideologies have at
the same time been defined in sociological or socio-economic terms, and
usually related to groups, group positions and interests or group conflicts
such as class, gender or 'race' struggles, and hence to social power and
dominance as well as their obfuscation and legitimation. Whether ideol-
ogies are limited only to relationships of domination is a matter of conten-
tion, but in our view largely a question of choice and definition, and not an
essential property of a useful concept of ideology. That is, 'dominant
ideologies', in the exclusive sense of ideologies of a 'dominant' group, or
ideologies imposed by a dominant group, are special cases of ideology, and
not characteristic of all ideologies (see the discussion in Abercrombie et
al., 1980, 1990). Thus, we assume that not only dominant groups, but also
dominated groups have ideologies that control their self-identification,
goals and actions. The same is true for other social groups, such as pro-
fessionals (journalists, professors), action groups (anti-racists, environ-
mentalists, Pro-Life anti-abortionists, etc.), or organizations and insti-
tutions (bureaucracies, the police).

(c) Ideologies are sociocognitive. Acting as an interface between the cogni-
tive and the social, there is the important dimension of social belief systems,
such as those of knowledge, opinions and attitudes. That is, ideologies are
essentially *shared* (or contested) by the members of social groups. In the
same way as there is no 'private' language, there are, according to our
definition, no personal ideologies. The notion of 'common sense', since
Gramsci often related to the social and political acceptance of ideologies
(Hall et al., 1978b), and theoretically developed in ethnomethodological
analyses of what social members 'take for granted' (Sharrock and Anderson,
1991), is a typical example of a notion that has both cognitive and social
dimensions. In the same way as (grammars, norms and rules of) natural
languages, ideologies are *both* cognitive, while involving basic principles of
social knowledge, judgment, understanding and perception, *and* social,
while being shared by members of groups or institutions, and related to the
socio-economic or political interests of these groups. They are socially
shared 'interpretive frameworks' that allow group members to understand
and make sense of social reality, everyday practices and relations to other
groups (Button, 1991). In this respect, ideologies also control our 'lived
everyday experiences' (Althusser, 1971). Although this is also true for
sociocultural knowledge and other beliefs, however, ideologies are here less
broadly defined as the more specific systems on which such shared social
representations and mental processes are based.

(d) Ideologies are not 'true' or 'false'. We do not define ideologies, as is
sometimes the case in traditional approaches, in terms of truth or falsity
(for discussion, see Eagleton, 1991; Larrain, 1979; Mannheim, 1936). This

does not mean that, for example, racists may not have 'false' beliefs about blacks, or male chauvinists about women. It does not mean either that feminists may not have 'true' beliefs about male dominance or environmentalists about pollution, given specific (scientific or other) epistemological standards and criteria of knowledge and truth (Kornblith, 1994). But these very examples suggest that ideologies in general are not specifically 'true' or 'false'. Rather they represent the possibly partisan, self-serving 'truth' of a social group. In that sense, they are more or less *relevant* or *efficient* frameworks of interpretation (and action) for such groups if they are able to further the interests of these groups.

(e) Ideologies may have various degrees of complexity. Ideologies as defined here need not be fully developed and explicit systems of belief. On the other hand, although research shows that not all people have very explicit political ideologies, they may well have more detailed ideologies about other, group-relevant social issues. These ideologies may range from simple to very complex, and consist of a few basic propositions or of large frameworks such as the ideologies of 'democracy' or 'socialism'. Indeed, unlike the use of the term 'ideology' in everyday text and talk, ideologies are not limited to the major philosophical or political '-isms' (Skidmore, 1993). Rather, they should be seen as (the basic axioms) of a naïve, implicit social theory of a group about itself and its position in society. Such ideological frameworks need not be very precise, well-organized or consistent. They may be fuzzy, vague, confused and inconsistent, as long as they function (more or less efficiently) in monitoring social interpretation and interaction. This variety may also be related to social stratification and social rules, in such a way that the leaders, elites or the better educated, and in general the 'ideologues' of a group, may have more complex and sophisticated ideological systems (for discussion, see Billig, 1991; Converse, 1964; Lau and Sears, 1986; Seliger, 1976; Tetlock, 1984, 1989, 1991, 1993).

(f) Ideologies have contextually variable manifestations. That ideological expressions of group members often appear to be absent, vague, confused, contradictory or incoherent does not imply that ideologies themselves are contradictory or that ideologies do not exist in the first place. Personal and contextual variation of ideological discourse and action may be due to, for example, (1) the fact that people are members of, or identify with, several groups, and hence may share several, sometimes mutually contradictory, ideologies and values (Tetlock, 1993); (2) general social norms or laws (e.g. against discrimination) constraining 'free' ideologically based action; (3) contextual constraints (goals, politeness, impression management, etc.); and (4) the personal experiences, biography, motivation, emotions, dilemmas (Billig, 1988) or principles of each social member. In sum, before basic ideologies can 'express' themselves in social practices, many other social, sociocognitive and personal factors may intervene that influence such expressions. This also means that ideologies are not deterministic: they may influence or monitor or control social discourse and action, but

they do not 'cause' or 'determine' these, nor are they the only mental systems controlling discourse production and comprehension.

(g) Ideologies are general and abstract. From an ethnomethodological perspective, the contextual variability of (the expressions of) ideology might be taken as evidence that ideologies are 'locally produced', and that no general, abstract system should or need be postulated (Button, 1991). In our theory, we propose an alternative approach, viz. that ideologies, as such (that is, as abstract systems) are situation-independent, and that only their possibly variable expressions are locally produced and contextually constrained. The main theoretical reason for our proposal is that, without an assumption of relative stability and continuity of ideological systems, we would be unable to explain why social members so often *are* consistent and similar in their ideological expressions. Strictly local, situational or contextual descriptions are unable to account for context-independent similarity of discourse and action of many group members. The same is true for sociocultural knowledge that defines 'taken-for-grantedness' in discourse and interaction. Accepting such context-free and socially shared knowledge implies that the same should be postulated for ideologies that control opinions and judgements. For instance, most members of minority groups will recognize racist practices when they are confronted with them, and hence are able to infer and compare, across contexts, basic racist ideologies underlying various forms of discrimination. Similarly, their own knowledge of racism will be based on anti-racist ideologies, for example featuring general axioms about the equality of different 'racial' groups (Essed, 1991).

TOWARDS A THEORY OF IDEOLOGY

Within this general approach, a proper *theory* of ideology makes explicit, among other things:

- what ideologies, defined as basic systems of social cognition, actually 'look like', that is,
- what their constituent components are;
- how they are internally organized;
- how they influence other social cognitions such as shared knowledge and group attitudes;
- under what societal conditions ideologies are acquired or changed;
- what social, cultural and political functions these ideologies have;
- and finally how ideologies are actually 'used', that is,
  — how they are enacted in discourse and other social practices,
  — how they are shared among the members of a group,
  — how they are changed,
  — and how they are reproduced as a fundamental sociocognitive characteristic of a social group.

Of these many complex tasks, which each require theories in their own right, we shall only summarize the sociocognitive ones, and then discuss in

some detail the relations between these cognitive structures and semantic structures of text and talk. Future work in this project will focus on the links between ideologies defined as sociocognitive frameworks and their social, political and cultural functions, conditions and consequences, as well as the relations between ideologies and other structures of discourse.

The theoretical framework to be developed here may be summarized as follows:

> *Ideologies are basic frameworks of social cognition, shared by members of social groups, constituted by relevant selections of sociocultural values, and organized by an ideological schema that represents the self-definition of a group. Besides their social function of sustaining the interests of groups, ideologies have the cognitive function of organizing the social represen- tations (attitudes, knowledge) of the group, and thus indirectly monitor the group-related social practices, and hence also the text and talk of its members.*

Before we examine the ways ideologies control discourse meaning, we briefly discuss some major concepts of this theoretical framework.

Values

Unlike knowledge, ideologies—as defined here—are systems of social cognition that are essentially *evaluative*: they provide the basis for judge- ments about what is good or bad, right or wrong, and thus also provide basic guidelines for social perception and interaction. It is therefore assumed that the basic building blocks of ideologies are sociocultural values, such as Equality, Justice, Truth or Efficiency. Typically, such values are not limited to specific groups, but have broader cultural rel- evance. This means that they may be culturally specific and culturally variable, although some values may be universal (Hofstede, 1980; Rokeach, 1973, 1979). Each social group is assumed to make a self- interested selection from these values, and assigns a hierarchy of relevance to them as a function of its social position and goals. For instance, feminists and anti-racists may emphasize the value of Equality, whereas corporate managers may stress Freedom (of the market), and professors and journal- ists the values of Truth and Reliability as a basic ideological criterion for their goals and actions (Eisenberg et al., 1989). Thus, for each group, these values may be expected to constitute the basic evaluative criteria for the opinions that define ideological systems.

Structures of ideologies

As is the case for most cognitive systems, ideologies are probably not an unordered set of evaluative propositions. Rather, they are *organized* in various ways. Thus, many ideologies, for example those underlying re- lations of social conflict, domination and resistance, may be organized by a polarization defining ingroup and outgroup(s) (Abrams and Hogg, 1990). For instance, racist and nationalist ideologies typically categorize people as

Us vs Them, and such ingroups and outgroups as whites vs blacks, our 'own' people vs foreigners, or the 'established' vs the 'outsiders' (Elias and Scotson, 1965). Because of the relevance of social structure and hence of position and competition for access to social resources, many groups may thus represent one or more reference-groups or outgroups as part of their own ideologies.

This ideological definition of the relationships with other groups is probably part of a more complex *schema* that organizes ideologies and other social cognitions (Fiske and Taylor, 1991; Iyengar and McGuire, 1993; Lau and Sears, 1986). That is, if all social members develop ideologies as a function of their group membership, and need to do so repeatedly and efficiently, then we may assume that they also develop a structural schema in which the specific and variable ideological axioms will fit. Such a schema consists of a number of basic categories, and some rules or strategies that define or process the relations between these categories.

In order to represent the basic interest of the (own) group, we shall provisionally assume that ideologies may be conceived of as some kind of *group self-schema*. Against the background of a sociological theory of groups and social formations, this schema consists of a limited number of basic categories organizing the evaluative propositions defining the (type of) group:

- *Identity/Membership*. Who belongs to the group and who does not, who is admitted to the group, and who is not? This is particularly clear for racist, ethnocentric, xenophobic or nationalist ideologies, according to which only 'we, white Europeans' belong in Europe, and others should not be admitted, at least not as (equal) citizens (Miles, 1989; van Dijk, 1984, 1987). The same may, however, be the case for ideologies of resistance, for instance of ethnic minority groups or feminists. This category typically features the self-defined fundamental (e.g. inherent or more or less permanent) properties of the group, such as those of Origin, Appearance, Ethnicity, Gender, Language, Religion, and so on. Discrimination of other groups usually focuses on these basic characteristics as attributed to these other groups, but they also form the basis of ideologies of resistance. This category is primarily used to define social categories as groups: women and men, white and black, old and young, citizens and foreigners or immigrants, etc.

- *Tasks/Activities*. What do 'we' typically do? What is expected of us? What is the role or task of our group? Thus, journalists are obviously (self-)represented as writing news stories, professors as teaching and as doing research, and feminists as engaging in action against male chauvinism. This category typically defines (ideologies of) professional groups and social roles, such as professors and carpenters, mothers and fathers, action groups and unions.

- *Goals*. Typical group actions are usually performed in view of one or

more overall social goals: journalists (see themselves!) as writing news to inform the public or to act as a watchdog of society; doctors as promoting health; professors as teaching to educate the young, or as doing research to find the truth; and environmentalists as protesting against pollution in order to protect nature and to promote health. Goals are primarily used to define goal-oriented groups, like anti-racists and feminists. Recall that these are *ideological* categories: it is not (necessarily) what group members really are, do or strive after, but how they see themselves.

- *Norms/Values.* For each group, tasks and goals are subjected to a group-specific selection of ideological criteria for judgement, viz. norms and values, such as Objectivity in the news (journalists), Justice in making or enforcing laws (politicians, judges), or Security in protecting the country and its citizens (police, military). Norms and values typically define political and religious groups, such as liberals and conservatives, Catholics and Protestants.

- *Position.* Each group defines itself not only by its inherent characteristics, tasks, goals and the values for their judgement, but also in relation to specific other groups: journalists with respect to their public (or their news actors), professors with respect to students, doctors with respect to patients, and feminists with respect to women and men in general (gender), and to chauvinist men in particular. That is, the category of Position defines friends and foes, allies and enemies, opponents and proponents, as well as social relations of domination and intergroup competition and conflict. Obviously, this is the core category of social group self-schemata defined as ideologies. Groups that are typically defined by their position are, for example, the elites and the masses (the 'people'), bosses and subordinates, and so on.

- *Resources.* All groups survive or reproduce themselves if and only if they have access to scarce social resources. Specific groups may thus have or be defined by their (preferential) access to specific material or symbolic resources, such as citizenship, residence, status, human rights, respect, employment, health, housing, welfare, income, knowledge or public discourse. Thus, journalists may want to protect their privileged access to information, professors to knowledge, managers to capital or profits, and feminists to equal pay. Access (or not) to resources define the rich and the poor, the employed and the jobless, the homeless, and in general the Haves and the Have-Nots.

All these categories together define what are traditionally called (but hardly analysed as) the *interests* of a group. Again, it should be emphasized that these categories and their propositional contents do not necessarily

reflect social reality, but are a self-serving ideological construction of it, a self-image of the group and its relations to other groups (Abrams and Hogg, 1990; Turner and Giles, 1981.)

Attitudes

One major sociocognitive function of ideologies is to organize more specific clusters of socially shared opinion-schemata about social issues, for which we shall use the traditional term *attitudes*. Thus, under the control of a racist ideology, for instance, we may expect more specific attitudes about 'racial' or ethnic Others in employment, education and other social domains, for instance about affirmative action, schooling, busing, 'political correctness', and so on. Without an underlying set of axiomatic ideological propositions, these clusters of attitudes would have no organization, whereas it may be assumed that they are multiply interrelated. Prejudices that are shared by various attitudes (such as "They are unfairly favoured" in education, housing or employment) may be directly controlled by underlying ideological principles.

In development, if not directly communicated in ideological discourse (as in socialization talk, propaganda, sermons or textbooks), ideologies are gradually inferred from attitudes before they can be used to allow the construction of new attitudes or the organization and changes of already present attitudes.

Note that our notion of 'attitude' is different from traditional uses that do not distinguish between socially shared, general opinions, on the one hand, and specific personal opinions, on the other hand (for discussion, see Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). That is, attitudes, as defined here, are schematically organized forms of evaluative social cognition, and hence social representations shared by the members of a group (Fiske and Taylor, 1991; Resnick et al., 1991).

Models

In order to link ideologies and the domain-specific social attitudes they control to text and talk, or other social action, we need a cognitive interface that is able to translate the general to the specific, social attitudes to personal opinions and general knowledge to personal knowledge about current events and situations.

This interface is formed by *models*, as stored in episodic (personal) memory. Models are mental representations of personal experiences of specific actions, events or situations (hence also called 'situation models', 'event models' or 'episodic models'). Thus, if a group of people share social attitudes about the environment in general, or about the construction of nuclear plants in particular, individual members of such a group may of course have a specific representation, that is, a model, about the building of this specific nuclear plant. Similarly, racist attitudes will be concretely 'applied' (instantiated) for particular ethnic events and specific minority

group members, in specific contexts of interaction and discourse (van Dijk, 1985).

This means that models form the mental basis for situated text and talk: they are what people talk about, or refer to; they feature the subjective construction of past, present or future events; they represent personal experiences as well as plans for action (Johnson-Laird, 1983; van Dijk and Kintsch, 1983; van Oostendorp and Zwaan, 1994). Since models are subjective mental constructs, they also explain why people may have biased, wrong, fictitious or misguided representations of reality, as is also clear in, for example, racist representations of ethnic events.

It is at this point that ideologies and other social representations may be linked with discourse meaning. Planning (part of) a text or conversation, as well as interpreting it, involves the construction of a new model or the updating of an old model of an event. Since we do so hundreds of times a day, an effective schema must be at play in these strategic processes of construction and updating. This schema may consist of such well-known categories as Setting (Place, Time), Circumstances, Actors, Actions, etc., each with its own qualifications. These schematic categories also appear in (and explain) the well-known, functional structure (semantic roles) of propositions expressed in the case structure and ordering of sentences. That is, model structures may be mapped onto semantic sentence structures, thereby providing the necessary link between our *knowledge* of events and the *meaning* of our discourses about them.

Models represent not only our knowledge of actions and other events and about the participants in such events, but also our specific, personal *opinions* about them. Hence, models are personal and evaluative, and hence subjective and unique: each person will have a specific model (plan, interpretation) of each text in each situation. Reading the same text later may give rise to a different, updated or modified model.

As the interface between social and personal cognition, models are mental representations that are used for processing (discourse production or comprehension) in both directions. On the one hand, they instantiate and apply social cognitions in specific, personal situations. On the other hand, models are the experiential basis of generalization, abstraction and decontextualization processes that are involved in the formation of knowledge and attitudes as shared by group members. That is, opinions in models are the basis for the formation of attitudes. Since models, under the influence of ideological attitudes, may be biased, their generalizations may also be biased, and thus confirm racist or sexist stereotypes and prejudices (Snyder, 1981).

Models provide an attractive theoretical explanation for the familiar paradox, discussed above, of personal, contextual variation and uniqueness of actions, discourse and their personal interpretation, on the one hand, and the continuity and similarity of discourse and action in different situations, on the other hand. The more a model resembles the (instantiated) general knowledge and attitudes of a group, the more standardized and stereotypical it will be. This is the case in prejudiced models, in which unique personal

properties of outgroup actors and circumstances of actions are largely disregarded in favour of group-based social cognitions (van Dijk, 1984, 1987, 1991, 1993; see also the contributions in, for example, Hamilton, 1981; Zanna and Olson, 1993).

Context models

There is one specific type of model that plays a crucial role in discourse and communication, viz. context models. Like other models, they are also representations of events, situations and actors, viz. those of the ongoing communicative event and context. That is, while reading the newspaper, I construct and continually update a model of the newspaper (and its characteristics), the authors of news reports or editorials, of myself as reader, as well as about other contextual features, such as the goal of my newspaper reading. The same is true for everyday conversations and other genres.

Context models are crucial in the planning and understanding of a large number of discourse properties, usually summarized in 'pragmatic' terms, such as speech acts, politeness and self-presentation. However, they also play a role in the monitoring and intepretation of style variation, since lexical choice and word order may be a function of the communicative context, or rather of our (possibly biased) mental representation of the communicative situation in context models. An 'informal' context, as represented in a model, will thus influence the choice of 'informal' lexical variants in the expression of meaning. That is, the information (knowledge and opinions) organized in context models monitors the ways the models of events and actions, as discussed above, will be 'formulated' in actual discourse. Context models also define the point of view and perspective and their associated opinions, from which the events of a model will be described in discourse, and hence explain the crucially ideological implications of social position. This is an aspect of language and discourse production (and comprehension) that so far has received little attention in earlier work on the psychology of language and discourse (Levelt, 1989; van Dijk and Kintsch, 1983).

Other personal cognitions

Event and context models may be generalized in the same way as all our personal experiences may abstract from time, place or other setting variables. Our personal knowledge is usually of this more general kind. The same may be true for our personal opinions, which also need not be 'invented' for each situation, but may be activated from general models we have about the same actors or types of events. Part of what is traditionally defined in terms of 'self' and 'personality', thus, may be defined in terms of such generalized personal models and their properties, including typical strategies of engaging in action and interaction ('traits' such as being extrovert or dynamic). These will not be analysed further here, but it should be borne in mind that, besides socially shared knowledge and attitudes, these

CONTEXT/INTERACTION

DISCOURSE

Pragmatics: speech acts

Expressions
-Non-verbal structures
-Phonological structures
-Graphical structures

Style
(variation
of forms)

Rhetoric
(special
operations)

Sentence form: Syntax
-Anaphora

Meaning: Semantics

-Local, sequential coherence
-Global coherence: Topics

Schematic
structures
(superstructures)
-Narrative
-Argumentative

COGNITION

Context model

Text representation

Event/Situation model

Old event models

Generalized models

Personal goals
and principles

Sociocultural
knowledge
-Grammar
-Lexicon
-Discourse rules
-Scripts
-etc.

Group attitudes

Ideologies

Values

EPISODIC MEMORY
(Personal cognition)

SOCIAL MEMORY
(Social cognition)

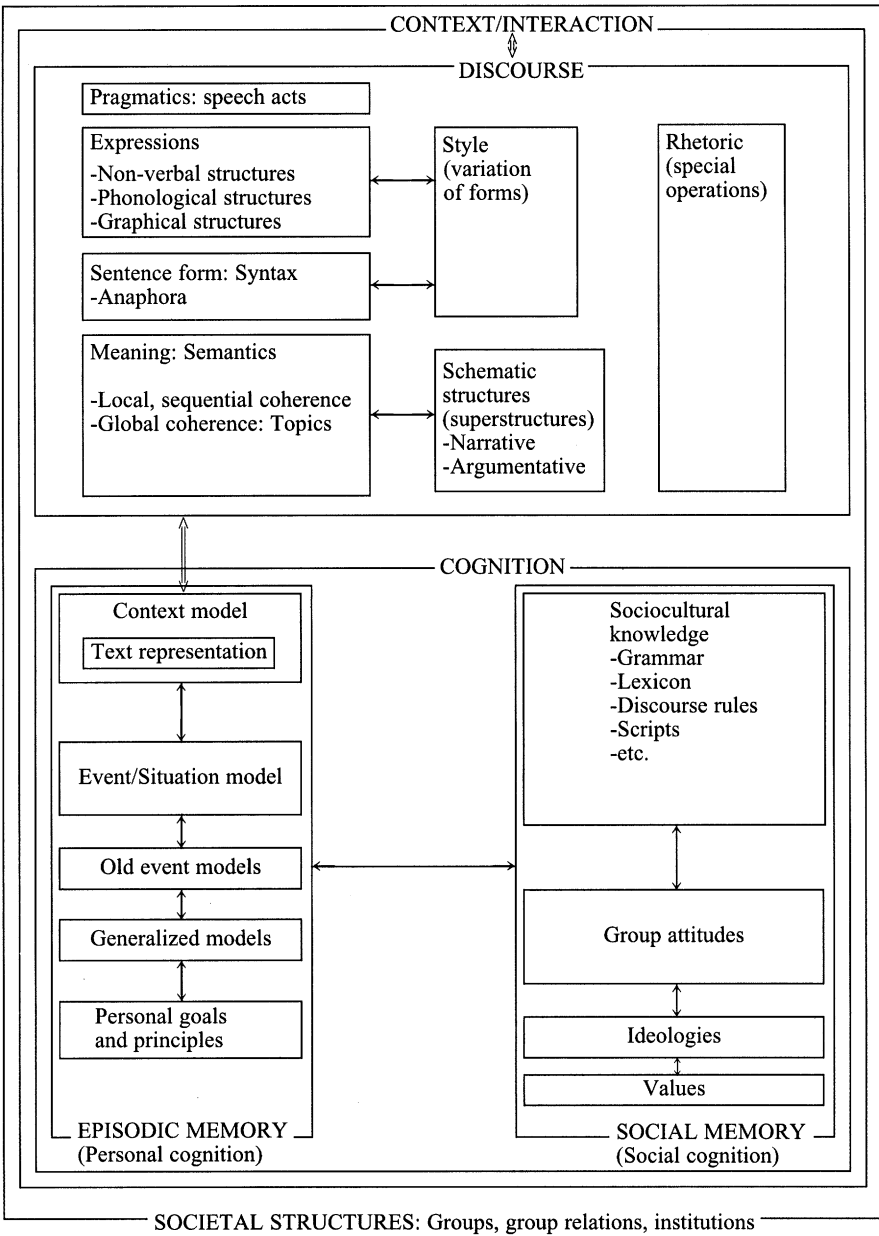SOCIETAL STRUCTURES: Groups, group relations, institutions

FIGURE 1. Schematic representation of the relations between ideologies (and other cognitions) and various discourse structures in their interactional and societal contexts

personal cognitions may also impinge on the structures of specific models. Here, we shall also ignore *affect* or *emotion*, which, depending on context and bodily states ('arousal'), may or may not accompany opinions and hence influence models (Bower, 1989; Tan, 1994; Zajonc, 1980).

'Biased' models

We have seen that because of the instantiation of general group attitudes as specific, personal opinions, ideological attitudes also influence the formation or updating of event and context models. This means that, indirectly, models may themselves be ideological. Thus, if we speak of a 'biased' interpretation of a situation or text, this usually means that language users have applied prejudiced or other ideological attitudes in the construction of their models of such events and the context of communication. And since models are the mental basis of discourse, it is through ideological models that discourses themselves may become 'ideological' or interpreted ideologically. *In sum, a mental model theory provides the (so far missing) link between ideologies and discourse.*

Note though that this link is indirect, because between discourse and ideologies we have postulated the presence of social cognitions such as attitudes and knowledge, as well as personal cognitions such as models. This also explains why discourse does not always show ideological structures explicitly and directly, or may even exhibit contradictory ideological opinions, or no ideological position at all. *In other words, it is methodologically crucial to realize that ideologies cannot always simply be 'read off' discourse structures without taking into account the possibly transforming role of intervening factors of personal events and context models and of conflicting attitudes controlled by the ideologies of the various groups language users identify with.*

Ideological discourse control

With the theoretical framework sketched above, we now have an approximate idea about the relations between ideologies and the structures of text and talk. These relations are summarized in Figure 1.

We are now theoretically prepared to begin a more specific analysis of the ideological control of discourse. There are several ways such an analysis may be made explicit. One way is to start with ideologies and the other social cognitions and models they control, and then examine the possible effects of such control on structures of text and talk. Such an approach could be seen as a simulation of a *production* or *speaker* theory of ideological discourse: it explains how speakers and writers of specific groups with specific ideologies will tend to exhibit these in discourse. Another way is to start with a systematic analysis of discourse structures, and examine their potential in the expression of ideology. Such an approach would theoretically mimic an *interpretation* or *recipient* theory of ideology: it may suggest how recipients go about hearing or reading discourse as ideological.

However, such an analogy has a theoretical complication: recipients not only have discursive structures as 'input' during interpretation, but also activate vast amounts of knowledge and other social cognitions. That is, even in interpretation, recipients continually try to match, in both directions, discursive structures with cognitive representations.

<center>DISCOURSE SEMANTICS</center>

Among the various levels of discourse at which ideologies may be seen to manifest themselves, the level of meaning and reference plays a central role. Cognitive representations of attitudes and models may directly map onto semantic representations, and it is largely through meaning that also the other, surface levels of discourse, such as those of syntax, phonology or graphical structures, are affected by ideology (Kress & Hodge, 1993).

Only the pragmatic (e.g. illocutionary) and interaction structure of text and talk, as well as certain aspects of style and rhetoric, may be directly monitored by ideological structures, viz. through context models, and not via event models and meaning. A well-known example of this last form of non-semantic surface structure control is the selection of personal pronouns and other forms of address as a function of (possibly ideological) politeness constraints represented in context models.

Although most of the semantic notions (such as 'meaning', 'proposition', 'implication' or 'coherence') used below would require extensive discussion and analysis, it is the aim of this article to focus not on the theory of discourse semantics, but on the ways ideologies may affect discourse meaning. However, given the variety of semantic theories, also in discourse analysis, we may briefly summarize our approach to discourse semantics as follows, before we examine the ways ideologies impinge on them (for details, see van Dijk, 1977, 1980):

• Linguistic semantics is an abstraction from a broader cognitive semantics of discourse which accounts not only for abstract meaning structures but also for the actual processes and representations involved in meaning production and comprehension. Many properties of discourse, such as local and global coherence, require such a broader cognitive approach, if only in order to be able to account for the role of knowledge in the description of 'meaningfulness' of discourse (van Dijk and Kintsch, 1983).

• Our semantics is obviously mentalistic: as is the case for most psychologists. In order to explain what human beings do (and how they produce and understand meaningful discourse), we find it theoretically useful to work with concepts such as 'mind' and 'memory' and their 'processes' and 'representations' (but we do not say anything about their possible relations with the neuro-physiological structures of the brain). For us, this does *not* mean, however, that minds and their meanings are (only)

individualistic. On the contrary, as we have stressed above, mental objects, such as meanings, knowledge, attitudes and ideologies may be shared by members of groups, communities or cultures, and are therefore *also* social. Indeed, discourse is one of the major means and conditions of socially shared 'minds' in the first place. Similarly, specific, local meanings of discourse may be constructed in and by interaction of social participants (Coulter, 1989). In other words, a cognitive theory of discourse meaning, as proposed here, requires a sociocultural and interactional theory of meaning, and vice versa. Fundamental theoretical and philosophical problems are involved here, which, however, we must ignore in this article.

● The distinction between social cognition and personal cognition in such a cognitive approach also allows an account of the difference between personal or contextual meanings, on the one hand, and socioculturally shared meanings, on the other hand. Obviously, shared sociocultural meanings, for example as codified in the lexicon, are used in the construction of meanings of specific situated meanings of particular discourses.

● Although semantic structures may have variable complexity, there are no a priori boundaries between the meanings of words, phrases, clauses, sentences, sequences of sentences, paragraphs or whole texts. Often, the 'same' meanings may be expressed in different syntactic categories of variable scope, depending on contextual constraints, for example those defining style or pragmatic conditions. Unlike sentence semantics, discourse semantics accounts for all types of meaning of text and talk.

● Discourse semantics does not only deal with conceptual meanings or intensions, but also with referents or extensions, as is the case for formal and philosophical semantics (Seuren, 1985). Thus, local coherence often involves co-referential expressions, whose interpretation is based on real-world or imaginary 'things'. The same is true for the referentially based conditions of local coherence, for instance in terms of conditional, causal or temporary relations between 'facts' (van Dijk, 1977). Cognitive model theory, as explained above, provides the relevant interpretation basis for such a referential semantics: that is, discourses are interpreted relative to our (subjective) representation of events rather than with respect to (objective) reality. In other words, discourse coherence is relative and (inter)subjective and defined by mental models (Garnham, 1987).

Let us now briefly survey some major dimensions of such a discourse semantics and examine the ways ideologies may be assumed to (partly) control the construction of meaning and reference in discourse.

We suggested that discourse semantics should account not only for the meaning of structures 'beyond' the sentence boundary, but also for the—possibly discourse-dependent—meanings of words, phrases, clauses and sentences and their mutual relations. Space limitations, however, force us to

focus on discourse-specific meanings, but we shall briefly summarize some ideological implications of the other properties of semantics:

Truth and falsity. We have seen that the fundamental (referential) semantic notions of 'truth' and 'falsity' have often been associated with ideologies (Larrain, 1979). More specifically, ideologies have often been identified with 'false' beliefs, or 'false consciousness' as being inculcated by dominant groups in order to legitimate or obscure their dominance. We, however, opt for a more general conception of ideology, in which truth or falsity may, but need not, play a defining role. Obviously, as discussed above, some ideologies (such as racist or sexist, and for atheists also religious, ones) may be based on false beliefs when judged by widely accepted criteria of truth, but this is not the case for all ideologies. Crucial for the definition, however, is that ideologies define how groups and their members perceive, interpret or construct social reality, and such self-serving constructions may well involve false beliefs, that is, if we assume the validity of a group-independent, non-biased epistemology (Kornblith, 1994). Similarly, ideologies of resistance may, on the other hand, precisely require 'true' beliefs in order to effectively function as instrument of change. In sum, what is 'knowledge' for us may be discounted as 'mere beliefs' by others, and vice versa. In what follows, therefore, ideologically controlled truth and falsity of discourse will not play a prominent role.

Propositions. Meanings of sentences and discourse are usually represented in terms of propositions, whose structures (e.g. a Predicate, a number of Arguments in various 'roles' and one or more modalities) we surmised to be controlled by mental model schemata. As is the case for models, propositional structures may also be ideologically controlled, for instance as follows:

- *Modalities* of 'necessity' and 'probability' may depend on the 'definition of the situation' by a specific group.
- *Predicates* selected as meanings to describe (social actors of) outgroups may embody ideologically controlled opinions, as is well-known from the use of such meanings as "terrorists" and "freedom fighter". This may also show in lexicalization, to which we turn below.
- *Semantic roles* of propositional arguments (such as Agent, Patient, Object, etc.) may be assigned depending on the ideologically attributed roles in a model. Thus, in a social conflict different social groups may be attributed different types or degrees of responsibility or involvement in positive or negative actions. As we shall see in more detail below, ingroup actors will typically be selected as responsible Agents of positive acts, and non-responsible Patients of negative acts of Others, and vice versa for outgroup actors.
- These and other 'biased' properties of propositions may be summarized also by the notions of *perspective*, *point of view* or *position*. That is, propositions are being constructed from mental models as a function of the (contextualized) position of the language user, and hence possibly as a function of ideologically controlled beliefs. Such a perspective will also

control the propositional representation of space and movement, direction, prominence, foregrounding and other aspects of meaning.

Lexicalization

Although we focus on specific discursive semantics, it should be emphasized that probably the major dimension of discourse meaning controlled by ideologies is the selection of word meaning through *lexicalization*. Thus, an ecological ideology may be assumed to control a lexical item such as "dangerous" in general sentences as "Nuclear plants produce dangerous waste" as well as in particular sentences such as "The nuclear plant at Harrisburg produces dangerous waste". The first sentence is probably derived from an attitude about nuclear energy, and the second probably from a model that is informed by such an attitude (van der Pligt, 1992). Note that the latter sentence *need* not be ideological. Thus, if it is presented as a description of an exceptional event, and if the author does not believe that all nuclear plants produce dangerous waste, then it is an opinion statement based on a conclusion from local properties of a plant, and not an 'instantiation' of a more general attitude about nuclear plants. In sum, lexical items coding for opinions that are only represented in models, and not in social cognition, are not ideological according to this theory. One may say that one's neighbour is a crook, but such an expression will only be ideological if, for example, this neighbour is black and if one thinks that he is a crook because like other racists one believes that all or most blacks are crooks.

As well-known examples of ideological language use show, and as suggested above, calling a group of people "terrorists" rather than "freedom fighters", or vice versa, is not merely the nominal result of an evaluative categorization and identification, but also an ideological decision, given the political position of the speaker and her or his group, as is clear from the following examples from *New York Times* (NYT) editorials (where necessary, a brief summary is given of the preceding text):

(1) [The expulsion of Hamas members.] Israel's defenders justly argue that the world takes too little note of the terrorist crimes committed by Islamic extremists, and of their fanatic determination to block any compromise settlement between Israelis and Arabs. But the expulsion diverts attention from Israel's complaint. It makes sense for Mr Rabin to limit the damage by amending the expulsion order. (NYT, ed, 29 January 1993)

(2) [The bomb attack on the World Trade Center.] Three days after the deadly explosion that turned the buildings that symbolize New York into national symbols of urban vulnerability, two questions persist: Can authorities do more to prevent terrorists and other sociopaths from getting their hands on explosives? Are there ways to detect such an enormous weapon before it goes off? (NYT, ed, 2 March 1993)

(3) After last year's Cairo earthquake, for example, the Government proved virtually incapable of providing effective relief. Islamic self-help groups quickly stepped in, providing food and shelter. With terrorists now attacking tourists, police and Coptic churches in the

name of an Islamic regime, Cairo is obliged to respond forcefully. But unless it becomes dramatically more responsive, the Government will be carrying out a holding action at best. (NYT, ed, 7 April 1993)

(4) Well, forget assumptions. Constitutional right or no, women can't get abortions if there's nobody to perform them. And increasingly that is the case—thanks to a cadre of domestic terrorists who harass the physicians and a medical establishment that shows little interest in educating would-be doctors about all aspects of a woman's health care. (NYT, ed, 12 May 1993)

In example (1) "terrorists" is, as usual in the West, associated with Arabs or Muslim fundamentalists, as are the words "extremist" and "fanatic", and applied in particular to people who use violence in their resistance against Israel's occupation of Palestine (Chomsky, 1984, 1986, 1989; Herman, 1992; Herman and Chomsky, 1988; Said, 1981). Given the lexicalizations of this opinion about Palestinians or other Arabs, there is hardly any doubt about the ideological position of the speaker. An analysis from a Palestinian point of view would have used other terms. Yet, the editorial is not unconditionally in favour of Israel and condemns the expulsion of Hamas members. However, the way this is done suggests the moderate critique one gives to a friend or ideological ally: at least in this passage, the acts of the Israeli government are *not* described as 'fanatic' or as 'terrorist' acts, nor even as a violation of international law, that is, as a 'crime' perpetrated by a state (for further studies of the representation of Arabs and Palestinians, and the Middle East conflict in the media, see, e.g., Alexander and Picard, 1991; Barranco and Shyles, 1988; Ghareeb, 1983; Harsent, 1993; Kressel, 1987; Lederman, 1992; Schmid, 1982; Shaheen, 1984; Simmons and Lowry, 1990; Wilson, 1991).

Similar ideological positions are expressed in the other examples. Also in (2), "terrorists" and even "sociopaths" are reserved for those (purportedly Muslims) who attacked the World Trade Center in New York, and in (3) Muslim fundamentalists in Egypt are categorized as such. Only in (4) do we find an application of the term that is less stereotypical, viz. to those who violently attack abortion centres.

We see that the meaning of sentences, clauses, nouns, nominalizations and adjectives are all possible targets for the expression of ideological content, usually in the form of evaluative concepts. In all cases, however, such a semantic representation of opinions in attitudes or models needs to be analysed in context: the mere use or application of a word such as "terrorist" does not imply, as such, that the speaker believes that the word should be so applied and that a social group deserves to be called that way. This means that in all indirect, quoted or otherwise 'keyed' forms of language use, the use of evaluative terms as such does not imply ideological position: the writer may even reject the relevance of the application of such words. In examples (1)–(4) no such 'keying' of the use of "terrorist" takes place. All uses are literal, intended, and meant as such, although "domestic terrorist" for anti-abortion activities may be interpreted as a hyperbole: criminals,

murderers or violent political opponents within the United States are seldom called "terrorists".

Example (4) may be interpreted to express an opinion from a Pro-Choice attitude in the abortion controversy, viz. the opinion that women must be able to get an abortion without harassment (Nice, 1988). Besides the word "terrorist", this attitude also controls the lexical item "harassment", where discourse controlled by a Pro-Life attitude would probably avoid such negative qualifications of anti-abortion actions (Colker, 1992; Vanderford, 1989). Finally, this example also expressed a negative opinion about the "medical establishment", viz. its failure to pay attention to this aspect of women's health care. The use of "establishment" expresses an ideological opinion if we assume that the writer identifies with a group (clients, patients, citizens) that opposes the power of doctors or health care officials.

Propositional structures

We have seen that actors as represented in models may be attributed different actor roles in propositions as a function of underlying attitudes and ideologies. Thus, if a social group is consistently described as being the responsible agent of negative action (like crime or violence), or even as 'being involved' in such action, as is often the case for young black males in crime, drugs or 'riot' reporting, then we may assume that such propositional 'framing' itself adds to the negative portrayal of a such a group, and therefore has an ideological basis (Fowler, 1991; Fowler et al. 1979; van Dijk, 1988b, 1991). Conversely, if the same group is consistently portrayed in a non-agentive or non-responsible role as soon as they are agents of positive actions (as is indeed the case in much media coverage of young black males), then the semantic structure becomes significantly ideological (Sykes, 1985). The converse may be true for Us, and other groups we favour, when Our positive actions are usually associated with our being in a responsible, Agent role, and when our negative actions are being de-emphasized by assigning Us to a more passive, less responsible role—as something that *happens* to us, or as something we are forced to do by others or the circumstances.

Thus, in example (3), discussed above, the Egyptian authorities are described as follows:

> With terrorists now attacking tourists, police and Coptic churches in the name of an Islamic regime, Cairo is *obliged* to respond forcefully. (emphasis added)

This formulation suggests that although the Egyptian authorities are described as the agents of "respond[ing] forcefully" (itself a well-known euphemism for state terror), the very choice of "obliged" and "respond" points at a form of agency that is both reactive and unavoidable, and hence less responsible (also for its consequences). It is routine media style to represent the police as "having" to act "toughly" when facing 'riots' or other social disturbances, which suggests that the perspective of the police (and its

excuses for police violence) are adopted by the media (van Dijk, 1988b, 1991).

Both propositional structure and the use of words that say something about the nature of involvement, or about the causes or conditions of action (like "With terrorists now attacking tourists" in the previous example), tell us something about the perspective from which such involvement is being described. Euphemisms that downplay negative action (e.g. violence) by the authorities further complement this partisan meaning construction. This again shows that in order for meanings to be interpreted as embodying ideological positions, we need to analyse the whole sentence, if not the whole text (and context). Semantic agency as such is not ideological, but it is a structural feature that may be used to express ideological positions by attributing specific kinds of involvement in, and responsibility for, good and bad action. Such ideologically based 'attribution errors' are a well-known property of biased social cognition (Pettigrew, 1979; Stephan, 1977).

Whereas this is so in meaning production, the same is true in understanding and influence: consistently biased discourse may in the same way favour the construction of recipient models that match such meaning structures, if no alternative attitudes are present to challenge such structural suggestions for the construction of *preferred models*. This also shows that the distribution or emphasis of agency or other roles in mental models may itself be based on agency roles in shared social attitudes, and hence on ideology. In such examples, we may speak of *structural transparence* of ideological propositions: if a group is represented as a responsible Agent of negative social actions in ideologies and attitudes, it will generally have the same participant role in models as well as in semantic structures constructed from such models. Of course, context and text structures may sometimes intervene in such instantiations of ideological propositions, as is also shown in variably syntactic structures: not all responsible Agents are always in a syntactic Subject role.

Topic, comment, focus, grounding, importance, relevance, etc.

Another approach to propositional meaning is constituted by the set of concepts that account for information distribution and emphasis, and more generally for the *functional* relationships between propositional elements. Though often studied, many of these notions remain theoretically fuzzy, and uncomfortably ambiguous as to their surface structure (e.g. syntactic), semantic or pragmatic status, so we briefly need to define what some of these terms mean. Thus, the distinction between *topic* and *comment* was traditionally associated with 'old' and 'new' information, which would make it a cognitive-semantic rather than a syntactic notion, unless it applied to the parts of the *sentence* which express such old and new information. Obviously, these functional notions require a discursive approach, since 'old' or 'known' information of a proposition is a function of the information expressed or implied by previous sentences in text or talk (Givón, 1979, 1989; Tomlin, 1987).

These notions also show the close relationships, stressed above, between meaning and (cognitive) information or knowledge. Thus, information, propositions or parts of propositions may be in or out of *focus* or attention, or they may be *foregrounded* or *backgrounded*, notions that also have an important cognitive dimension. Typical of all these functional notions is that they are structured in absolute or gradual opposition to their counterparts: the comment part of a sentence or proposition is the part which is not topical, information is foregrounded with respect to background information, or more or less focused upon.

Closely related to several of these theoretical concepts are semantic, pragmatic or cognitive notions such as (degrees of) *prominence*, *importance* and *relevance*. Thus, information may be expressed more or less prominently in a text, for example in a headline, with larger type, in the beginning or at the end, or by repetition, which are various prominence markers that may signal relative importance or relevance of the information according to the judgement of the writer. This is typically the case in the organization of news discourse (van Dijk, 1988a). Thus, prominence is a formal, surface structure notion, viz. defined in terms of the (set of) textual devices that express importance or relevance of information. Although a rather fuzzy concept itself, importance of information (as distinct from, for example, social importance of events or actions) might be defined in terms of the set of its cognitive consequences, for instance the set of inferences that can be made on the basis of such information. By this criterion, information about the sociopolitical system of a country (whether it is a democracy or a dictatorship) would usually be more important than information about the number of its rivers. On the other hand, relevance of information is a more pragmatic, interactional criterion, and may be defined in terms of the usefulness of the information for specific recipients.

Without further analysing these functional notions in detail here, let us briefly examine their ideological dimensions. It goes without saying that information importance and relevance are ideologically sensitive. What is important information for one social group may not be so for another, and the same is true for the ways such information is realized in the semantics of discourse. Both racists and anti-racists will be interested in minorities or immigrants, and information about them is therefore generally important for both groups, given the amount of knowledge- and attitude-based inferences such information will engender (or presuppose). However, for racists it will generally be more important to know about negative properties or actions of minorities than about positive ones, or about their claim on social and economic resources, rather than which contributions to the economy they make, or whether and how minorities are discriminated against. That is, ideological frameworks and the attitudes organized by them also define relative importance of events and of information about such events, and generally set the level of interest of group members in specific topics or types of information. In sum, importance of information is defined relative to the social cognitions (knowledge, attitudes or ideologies) of a social group, including (the representation of) their goals, norms and interests.

Also partly synonymous with importance, especially as far as the practical interests of groups are concerned, *relevance* may be more specifically defined in contextual terms: information is more or less relevant for ongoing text or talk (e.g. as an interpretation condition for later expressions), for the context of interaction (e.g. as a knowledge condition for subsequent actions), or more generally for the current information needs of specific recipients. As soon as we further extend the notion to refer to the 'useful-ness' of information for a group, for example, as a condition for their identity, goals, organization or survival, then the notion virtually collapses with importance. We may, however, restrict the notion of 'importance' as an abstract measure for information in terms of the size of its knowledge implications (e.g. the number of inferences), and 'relevance' as a measure of context-dependent and group-related usefulness of information as a con-dition for ongoing action or everyday life. That the notions are conceptually distinct may be concluded from the well-known fact that for some contexts and recipients relatively unimportant information may well be very rel-evant, and vice versa.

Obviously, both importance and relevance are ideologically controlled. Within a feminist perspective, information about abortion and day-care centres may be found more important (while usually more relevant for women than for men in contemporary society and its domestic role distri-bution) than information about the stock-exchange or horse-breeding. For both Pro-Choicers and Pro-Lifers any information about abortion will be of primary importance, whether or not such information may be (strictly) defined to be relevant in their everyday lives (e.g. when making decisions about having a baby or not, or whether to demonstrate against or in defence of an abortion clinic). According to our tentative definition, ideologically based importance in such cases derives from the fact that some types of information may have more cognitive implications for some groups than for others. When such information also has more social implications for such a group, it is more or less relevant. Since in most cases ideologies also control social action, ideological importance (or interestingness) usually implies ideological relevance (or usefulness), but these notions should still be distinguished: information about day-care or equal pay may be ideologically important for all feminists, since such information allows inferences about the measure of independence, quality and autonomy of women, even when the information is not necessarily relevant for all feminists (e.g. for those who have no children, or for those who already are equally paid).

Important and relevant information may be variously mapped onto the meaning structures of discourse, and so are their ideological implications. Both importance and relevance may be signalled by various prominence devices, such as headlines and leads in news reports, initial ('topical') position in sentences, a Conclusions category in scholarly articles or close-ups in film and photographs. Thus, emphasizing the importance of infor-mation about 'ethnic crime and violence' by prominent headlines or front-page articles about black males in association with mugging, drugs or riots is obviously ideologically based, viz. on stereotypes or ideologies about minor-

ities in general or about blacks or black males in particular (Hall et al., 1978a; van Dijk, 1991).

In-between these structures of expression and the abstract, cognitive or social notions of importance and relevance, we have such semantic notions as topic-comment articulation, grounding and focusing underlying variations of sentence and word ordering. But how could the information distribution within (sequences of) sentences or propositions be ideologically sensitive? One way to approach this question is through the more abstract and higher level notions of perspective and topic (see below). That is, if John is the main protagonist of a story about his actions, then it may be expected that 'John' (or co-referential other expressions or concepts) will also be regularly the topic part of sentences or propositions. Other people will then often be introduced relative to him (e.g. as people he meets, sees, thinks about), that is, be mentioned in the 'comment' part of the sentence or proposition. As is the case for the preferential realization of discourse referents in Agent roles, we may here expect the prominence of specific actors in topic functions and others in comment functions: actors in topic functions are more often initiating Agents, whereas those in other roles will tend to appear in the Comment part; well-known or leading actors thus also 'lead' the text as well as proposition-functional (topic-comment) and sentential (ordering) structures. Note that this is merely an overall tendency: even secondary or less important actors will be represented as engaging in action, and may hence appear as proposition topics.

The point is, however, that ideologically controlled models of situations may allocate differential actor status, importance and initiative to members of different groups. That is, men may be topical more often than women, whites more often than blacks, and so on, given their ideologically defined importance, agency, responsibility and topicality, at least in neutral or positive roles. For members of social or political outgroups, the reverse may be true: they may functionally 'lead' and become 'topicalized' when seen as responsible agents of negative actions, as described above. In that case, ingroup members may represent themselves as social victims and semantic patients, typically mentioned in the Comment part of the proposition.

This ideological setting is even more pronounced of course in the functional relations of grounding and focusing. Which information is foregrounded or backgrounded in text or talk will depend on its importance and contextual relevance, and therefore also on what is important or relevant for the speaker as group member. Thus, in a crime story we may foreground or background the information about the ethnic group membership of suspects; in international politics, an editorial may foreground or background the beneficial or detrimental role of the USA or other countries; and in an account of an oil-spill the actions or responsibility of politicians, shippers or environmentalist activists may be foregrounded or backgrounded, each time as a function of the ideology of the writer. Such foregrounding and backgrounding may be mapped onto the hierarchical structure of meaning (e.g. foregrounded information may become main discourse topic), on conventional schemata (e.g. foregrounded information may be expressed in the

title or the conclusion of a text), or directly in surface structures, such as intra-sentential or inter-sentential sentence ordering and organization (fore-grounded information may be expressed before background information or in main clauses instead of subordinate clauses, or in full clauses instead of in nominalizations).

To illustrate the ideologically controlled role of topic-comment, import-ance and relevance relations in discourse, we may examine some fragments of an op-ed article by Jim Hoagland in the *Washington Post* (WP) (para-graphs have been numbered for easy reference):

(5) GADHAFI: SINISTER POSTURING

[1] A moment comes when a tyrant crosses a line of no return. In the grip of megalomania, he is incapable of making rational calculations of cost and gain. He strikes out in fury and in fear, intent on destroying even if it means destruction will visit him in turn.

[2] Iraq's Saddam Hussein crossed that line in the spring of 1990. But the outside world paid little heed until he invaded Kuwait that summer. Libya's Moammar Gadhafi now has crossed that line. The international community should not repeat the mistake it made with Saddam. On Sunday Gadhafi invited the world's two most notorious Palestinian terrorists, Ahmed Jibril and Abu Nidal, to visit Tripoli, perhaps to set up headquarters there. The Libyan leader told a cheering crowd in the town of Azizia that the invitations were meant to defy the United Nations.

[3] Gadhafi has shown that he no longer values the cloak of silence or acquiescence in his evil that he sought to purchase or extort. He is on the attack, pushing his long confrontation with the West back to the breaking point.

[4] For months Egyptian diplomats, fearful of the damage Gadhafi could do their country, and European oil executives and Washington lawyers, enamored of the lucre Gadhafi could send their way, have spoken of Gadhafi's new 'moderation' and have urged the international community to treat him with reasonableness and patience.

[5] He was, the lawyers submitted, about to change his spots on terrorism. He was, the Egyptians said, misunderstood and in any event a lesser evil than the Islamic fundamentalists who have declared war on the Egyptian regime. He was, the oil men claimed, a leader they could do business with, on favorable terms.

[6] Their pleas for patience lie in ruins now that Gadhafi has renewed his public embrace of terrorism, in word and deed. He has responded with vitriol and menace to the mild economic sanctions placed on his regime by the UN Security Council.

[7] The Security Council has demanded that Gadhafi turn over for trial abroad two of his security aides, who are accused by the United States of carrying out the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 on Dec. 21, 1988. His refusal to do so triggered sanctions that restrict air travel to and from Libya and freeze Libya's oil revenues banked abroad.

[8] Intelligence reports link Jibril and his General Command organ-ization to the planning of the Pan Am massacre, which cost 270 lives. Although Jibril's exact role is not clear, Gadhafi's invitation strips away the pretence that the Libyan is interested in seeing justice done in this case.

[9] As sinister as his invitation to the two managing partners of

Terror Inc. is Gadhafi's suspected involvement in the kidnapping over the weekend in Cairo or Mansour Kikhiya, his former foreign minister, who broke with Gadhafi over terrorism to become a leading dissident—and a resident of the United States, due to become a US citizen next year.

[...]

[10] Gadhafi stands at a crossroad similar to the one that Saddam confronted in the spring and summer of 1990. He responds with a similar lashing out at those who would thwart him, even at the cost of embarrassing an Egyptian government that has defended him.

[11] Libya is not broke or gravely weakened by a long war, as Iraq was. But Gadhafi is boxed in and embarrassed by sanctions. Sanctions show the Libyan population that Gadhafi is not the omnipotent, respected leader he claims to be.

[12] Rather than sink into impotence, Saddam went to war. Gadhafi does not have the ground army to do that. But he does have an army of international terrorists, including those who carried out his orders to bomb Pan Am 103 five years ago this month.

[13] It is impossible to know if Gadhafi was simply reminding the world of his sinister capabilities, or foreshadowing new atrocities with his public welcome of terrorists. But he has warned the world that he must be watched and confronted anew after a season of phony peace. (Jim Hoagland, 15 December 1993)

The first form of topicalization in this text is apparent in the headline, which as such already marks the (macrostructural) importance of discourse topics. We see that instead of the usual short clause or nominalization of titles, we here find first position reference to Gadhafi in a topicalized apposition followed by a colon. The usual headline form would have been *Gadhafi's sinister posturing* or *The sinister posturing of Gadhafi*. Thus, from the event model underlying this text, Gadhafi is selected and attributed a central role, also in the macroproposition expressed in the headline. Then, the syntactic structure of the headline is shaped in such a way that "Gadhafi" not only is put in first, topical, position, but also further emphasized as an isolated nominal phrase. The rest of the headline then summarizes the rest of the macroproposition organizing this article, viz. the very negative opinion about Gadhafi as a person ("sinister") and about his actions ("posturing").

This ideologically based opinion is further expressed by the long list of biased lexical items used to describe Gadhafi and other "tyrants", as discussed above. For our present discussion it is important, first of all, to note that in nearly all sentences and clauses of this text, Gadhafi is referred to in topicalized positions, viz. in main clauses and initial position. He is the one to whom negative actions are attributed, and who is represented as fully responsible and in charge. Nobody is forcing or provoking him, and his actions are never portrayed as a reaction to the way he is being treated in the West. On the contrary, he is seen as provoking the West in the same way as Saddam Hussein did. Despite the attributed responsibility for his actions, however, the first thematic sentence of this text suggests that his actions are nevertheless irrational, and that a tyrant in his megalomania "strikes out in

fear". Also, the tyrant's megalomania is topicalized by a fronted prepositio-
nal phrase. Alliteration (*fury and fear*) and repetition (*destroying*, *destruc-
tion*) further add to the rhetorical expression of foregrounding the negative
aspects and characteristics of Gadhafi in this text, while leaving implicit or
backgrounding the role of the West, or the USA, in the Middle East in
general, and in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict in particular.

Interestingly, even when Gadhafi is the object of comments by others, as
in paragraph [5], he is not referred to in an embedded, following *that*-clause,
for example as "The lawyers submitted that he was . . .", but again topical-
ized and fronted ("He was, the lawyers submitted . . ."), thus emphasizing
and foregrounding him, and backgrounding the identity of the ones whose
opinion was given. In the rest of the text, Gadhafi is similarly mostly Agent,
Subject and in initial position, so that the meaning directly represents his
prominence in the model.

The ideological system on which the evaluations of Gadhafi are based may
be variously described as one of 'anti-terrorism', or (western-style) democ-
racy. However, essential for our analysis is that US international policies
have systematically made Gadhafi their most cherished enemy (Chomsky,
1987; Rosenberg, 1988). It is this special ideology that is brought to bear
here, and which controls the selection of words such as *tyrant*, *fury*, *evil*,
attack, *confrontation*, and so on, and which also monitors the use of quo-
tation marks around the word "moderation" as attributed to Gadhafi by
gullible or self-interested others.

This ideology also categorizes both Gadhafi and Hussein as 'Arabs',
mainly because of their enmity and challenges to the West—and not only
because of their aggression or terrorism, because Gadhafi is not associated
with or compared to Central American politicians who may be responsible
for more deaths and torture than he is. That is, as we have seen above and
shall see below, 'anti-terrorism', as exemplified here, is not simply a specifi-
cation of humanitarian values against violence, but an ideological, politi-
cally controlled form of attack against those who challenge the West in
general, and the USA in particular.

Implication

It is a well-known feature of sentence and discourse semantics that meanings
are not always explicitly expressed, but somehow semantically implied, or
entailed by other, explicit expressions and their meanings. A serious expla-
nation of implicit meanings requires a cognitive basis. If by expressing
meaning A, language users (also) mean B, such an implication can be
reconstructed by recipients only on the basis of inferences from culturally
shared knowledge of language meanings (e.g. as represented in the lexicon
of the language) or more generally on the basis of shared knowledge,
including particular knowledge about the knowledge of the speaker. In this
familiar sense, it is implied that someone is not married when he is described
as a 'bachelor'. That is, we project meaning rules of components of social
cognition (our knowledge about bachelors in our culture) onto those of

specific models: if we know that John is a bachelor, then we may infer—on the basis of more general social knowledge structures—that John is not married, simply by the rule of (mental) *modus ponens* that allows us to derive the specific consequent (q) of a specific implication (p implies q) given the specific antecedent (p) and both the antecedent and the consequent of a general implication (P implies Q).

Note that in natural language and discourse such implications are not limited to logical-semantic implications (entailments) based on conceptual knowledge (knowing the *meaning* of the word 'bachelor' implies that someone described that way is not married). There are also implications or implicatures that may be derived from our knowledge about empirical *facts*. When it is said that John jumped from the Empire State Building, we may infer, as an empirical consequence, that he died as a result, unless something very unexpected happened that prevented such a 'natural' course of affairs (and such unexpected happenings are the bread and butter of 'interesting' storytelling). It is in this way that our world knowledge allows us to make a vast number of inferences, and hence the derivation of sets of implications from each proposition expressed in discourse. Of course, not all of these implications will be relevant in each (con)text, and we may effectively constrain the number of relevant implications to those propositions that are needed for the interpretation of subsequent provisions of a text (e.g. when talking about John's widow or his burial after the sentence in which it is asserted that he jumped from the Empire State Building) (Graesser and Bower, 1990).

Such implications are as 'strict' as the relations of empirical necessity (e.g. causality) between facts on which they are based, at least according to our cultural knowledge—or the knowledge presupposed by the speaker. This means that less strict forms of implication may also exist, such as *allegations*, *suggestions*, *allusions* and similar semantic relationships between propositions, based on more or less necessary fact relations in models. Breaking one's neck as a result of falling from the stairs is possible, but neither likely nor necessary, and in such a case the consequent of the implication usually needs to be made explicit for just that reason, for example in stories or news about accidents. Thus, we may strongly suggest, but do not strictly imply, that a civil servant is corrupt by asserting that she accepted money or a gift from a client, given our knowledge of corruption (and its conditions) and of offering money to civil servants (and its consequences).

Implications may have important ideological functions if the meanings more or less strongly implied by asserted propositions are being derived on the basis of attitudes and ideologies. Thus, it may be *ideologically implied* that women's civil rights are being curtailed if we assert that they are being harassed, or if we assert that the operation of abortion clinics is being hampered, as is indeed the case in the NYT editorial discussed above (for discussion of attitudes and ideologies about abortion, see, e.g., Condit, 1990; Falik, 1983; Fried, 1988; Rosen, 1992). Note that this implication may be true only for those who share this ideology: Pro-Life demonstrators may not recognize this at all (Colker, 1992; Vanderford, 1982). They may assert

that they prevent women or their doctors from 'killing babies' and thus violating the human rights of the unborn (von Paczensky, 1990). Thus, whereas implications generally presuppose culturally or socially shared knowledge, they may also be based on shared attitudes and their underlying ideologies.

Let us briefly examine a few examples involving such gender ideologies from the op-ed pages of the NYT:

> (6) [Discrimination of women in the US Congress.] While working on the bill, which would also cover the Federal judiciary, I heard remarks that still amaze me. My favorite was from a judge. The reason women could not be hired or promoted, he said, was that the courthouse parking lot had bad lights. How could he ask a women to be a law clerk—what if she had to work late? (Martin Lynn, 23 January 1993)

> (7) [Examples of everyday sexual harassment against an Assembly-woman.] These acts are not really sexual harassment. All three were supposedly perpetrated by people with no power over Ms Hill. The men were not in a position to deprive her of anything to which she was entitled, nor did they threaten to do so.
>
> Unless stupid comments become so frequent and widespread that a woman cannot do her job, they are nothing more than insensitive remarks. For the most part, they are bad 'come-on' lines. The normal price for bad come-on lines is failure. If bad enough, the price may be social ostracism by one's higher-minded colleagues. But such behavior is not recognized by the law as a violation of any protected right, nor should it be. (Sheryl E. Reich, 23 January 1993)

> (8) [Nomination of Zoë Baird as US Secretary of Justice.] Look at the Zoë Baird nomination story and imagine that the genders had been reversed: The nominee for Attorney General was a man, Aetna's general counsel, earning $500,000 a year. His wife was a Yale law professor; she made the child care arrangements, hiring illegal aliens after discussing it with immigration lawyers. Would the nominee have been swamped by a storm of public indignation?
>
> I am not sure, but I doubt it. I think many who protested in Ms Baird's case would have said to themselves that child care was the woman's concern. I think a male nominee, with all the other facts the same, might well have been confirmed as Attorney General.
>
> To say that, even to consider the possibility, is to understand that something more was going on here than a healthy upwelling of popular outrage at the idea of appointing an Attorney General who had vio-lated the law. That something was that Zoë Baird was a woman—and a very successful one (Anthony Lewis, 25 January 1993).

These fragments of three of the top 'gender' stories of 1993 can be understood (and approved of or disapproved of) only when many ideologi-cal implications are attended to. Thus, in Example (6) it is implied that the judge is a conservative sexist. How do we know? First, this fragment should be interpreted in relation to the rest of the article, which shows that the author, also as former US Secretary of Labor, (says he) actively worked to denounce discrimination against women in Congress. This implies that those he criticizes are likely to be the ideological opponent, viz. (largely) males

who discriminate against women. The critique in this case is provided by a number of examples, and the euphemism "remarks that still amaze me" suggests that he was actually flabbergasted by these remarks, implying that they were strong examples of everyday sexism. Finally, the example itself, given our knowledge of the world of work, gender and civil rights, ideologically implies that 'protecting' women from possible danger (a dark parking lot) by not hiring them is really a cheap and ridiculous excuse: we all know that (if he was right about illumination problems in the first place) some more lights in the parking lot would have allowed him to hire a qualified woman. Although fully spelling out *all* the relevant implications would require a longer set of inferences, our main point is that Mr Martin Lynn does not actually say that the judge is a conservative, or a sexist, but implies so by describing a clear case of discrimination and obviously ridiculous excuses for not hiring a woman. That is, according to the ideological position of Mr Lynn, the judge is discriminating, viz. a position that shows attitudes about the rights of women to work, and basic ideological axioms about gender equality.

At the same time, he implicitly challenges the alleged women-friendliness of a judge who claims (or rather implies) to protect women from assault. This latter implication is interesting in its own right, because it suggests that taking measures (or using arguments) which may seem in favour of women does not always presuppose a non-sexist, egalitarian ideology. That is, the consequences and the context of such seemingly pro-women decisions also need to be taken into account. If the result is not hiring a woman, and if the argument is implicitly qualified as an "amaz[ing]" excuse, then it follows that the real ideological implication is that the speaker's argument is based on a sexist attitude.

Example (7) derives from a different and more complex ideological base. Here a professional woman, an experienced lawyer, is dismissing the complaints of an Assemblywoman as not being examples of sexual harassment. She then mentions some of the criteria of sexual harassment as she defines it (lack of power differential, not able to deprive the woman of any rights), and goes over to argue that professional women in high places must be able to take, or react appropriately when facing, "stupid" remarks of men. The writer implies that mere and incidental "insensitiv[ity]" cannot be a form of sexual harassment, and indirectly implies that the Assemblywoman is exaggerating, making a false complaint, and maybe even doing women a bad service by being too 'sensitive'.

A context analysis (the writer is a professional woman) suggests—but does not strictly imply—that the writer is not herself a sexist, and may be reasonably expected to defend women's rights. Part of this expectation is borne out by some of her statements in the text (viz. about what *does* constitute sexual harassment). However, her intervention may nevertheless be controversial, and almost certainly there will be women who will dismiss her ideological argument as invalid, given their own ideological attitudes about sexual harassment. They might recall that much of the everyday sexual harassment of women takes place among social 'equals', that is, by

(male) colleagues, family members, strange men in public places, or even by subordinates. They might also claim that in such situations no consequential social rights (like a job) may be infringed upon, but that women also have other rights, if only to be free from everyday harassment by men, and that also occasional remarks or other incidental forms of intentional action (like touching, obstructing the way, etc.) may be forms of everyday harassment (Barr, 1993; Bursik, 1992; Ehrenreich, 1990; Sharpe and Mascia-Lees, 1993).

Constructing such a feminist counter-argument presupposes a different ideological attitude, and also shows that Ms Reich's remarks are equally ideological, while presupposing a specific attitude about sexual harassment and how to deal with it. If we assume that Ms Reich adheres to a feminist ideology of sorts, we may conclude that she defends a rather strict, 'no-nonsense' version of the rights of women, which may be summarized by the slogan, "Don't exaggerate, and do something about it yourself", which advocates the change (back) from the public and the political to the personal and thus the 'privatization' of policies against sexual harassment (Weeks et al., 1986). Obviously, this ideological position is much more congenial to the prevailing ideological attitudes about sexual harassment among men, including liberal men who otherwise oppose (serious, repeated) forms of sexual harassment. This prevailing 'common sense' ideology ("sexual harassment exists, but women should not exaggerate") may also be shared by the editors of the NYT, which would explain why Ms Reich had access to the op-ed page in the first place, whereas 'radical' feminists probably would have less access (Creedon, 1989).

Finally, in example (8) we find a related ideological argument as in example (6), viz. the claim that Zoë Baird was questioned about hiring illegal aliens because she was a woman. It is not said, but implied rather straightforwardly that such a decision is sexist, or at least based on improper grounds, which let legalistic arguments (employing undocumented workers in an earlier position) prevail over the appointment of a woman, and which motivate (male) members of Congress to question a female candidate in a way they would probably never have questioned a male one. The ideological position is thus clearly one that is based on attitudes that favour rights of women to work, or to be hired, and possibly attitudes about the rights of "illegal" aliens to get jobs, over legal attitudes which say that a Secretary of Justice should never have broken the law. Moreover, the special problems of child-care for professional women are also taken into account to argue in favour of Zoë Baird. The overall argument is fairly explicit, but still ideological, while spelling out the relevant general opinions that may be expected in this pro-woman ideology.

One ideological argument, however, is not dealt with in much detail in this article, viz. the one of class. While it is undoubtedly the case that Zoë Baird was questioned primarily as a woman, and while it is likely that the fact that she made half a million dollars yearly in her last job might have been found less palatable by sexist or jealous men, it is not considered here that Ms Baird with such an income might easily have afforded (expensive) 'legal'

child-care. If so, the ideological defence of Ms Baird by this writer may, under another ideological 'reading', be seen not primarily as the defence of working women, but as a defence of elites to hire cheap immigrant labour.

These examples show that many implications of sentences and discourses, usually in combination with context information and general social or cultural knowledge, are ideologically based, and only 'valid' with respect to the ideological position of the writer. On the other hand, readers will be able to 'understand' such bias, as they display when making counter-arguments, by inferring ideological attitudes of the writer from the more explicit statements in the text.

Presupposition

A specific and well-known case of semantic implication is presupposition. In formal terms a proposition q is presupposed by p, if it is implied by p as well as by *non-p*. In somewhat more appropriate but more informal terms, any proposition whose truth is accepted by the speaker in order to be able to make an utterance, but which is not asserted by the utterance, is a presupposition of the utterance. In even looser, but cognitively more relevant terms, presuppositions are simply the set of tacit cultural knowledge that makes discourse meaningful. Linguistically, though, presuppositions are usually restricted to those non-asserted true propositions which are signalled by structure phrases or other units (like definite articles, relative and preposed *that*-clauses) or by the meaning of specific words like *even* (Kempson, 1975; Oh and Dineen, 1979; Petöfi and Franck, 1973).

Presuppositions may have prominent ideological functions in discourse (Mosher, 1991). Precisely because they pertain to knowledge or other beliefs that are not asserted, but simply assumed to be true by the speaker, they are able to 'introduce' ideological propositions whose truth is not uncontroversial at all. As in the case for implications, they allow speakers or writers to make claims without actually asserting them, and, moreover, take specific beliefs for granted although they might not be.

Presuppositions are among the staple of ideological argument. Thus, the sexist judge portrayed in example (6) presupposes that women themselves would not *want* to work for him if the lights in the parking lot were scarce. In (8) the question "Would the nominee have been swamped by a storm of public indignation?" presupposes that Zoë Baird was actually swamped by a storm of public indignation. This presupposition may partly be accepted as true given what NYT readers know (mostly from previous news reports), but the way it is formulated also expresses a (negative) opinion about these reactions ("swamped", "storm of indignation"), as represented in the model of the writer, while at the same time signalling a pro-working-women attitude, or an anti-legalistic attitude about hiring of women. Two sentences later, the example also presupposes that 'many people protested against the nomination'. More weakly implied and presupposed is the proposition in the next paragraph that Zoë Baird had indeed violated the law.

Here is another op-ed fragment about the same case by well-known

columnist Anthony Lewis. Under the title "Abroad at home: It's gender, stupid", he comments as follows:

> (9) And where is the women's movement? Its organizations were silent during the Baird affair. Are they going to wake up and understand that what is happening is a way to disqualify huge numbers of women from high government service?
>
> It is time for all sensible people to wake up and stop this witch hunt. It is time to focus on the real problem: the laws that make it so hard to find good and legal child care. It is time to stop snickering about the politics of all this and understand the real issue, bias against women. (NYT, 8 February 1993)

Presupposed in this fragment are the following propositions, among others:

- The women's movement is asleep.
- What is happening is a way to disqualify huge numbers of women from high government service.
- There was a witch hunt.
- The Baird issue is not the real problem.
- People have been snickering.
- The real issue is bias against women.

As is usual for presuppositions, most of these propositions are introduced in a *that*-clause. However, not all dependent clauses express presuppositions. This depends on the meaning of the main clause or specific expressions in it. Thus, the use of the factive expression 'to understand that' generally presupposes the truth of the dependent clause (also 'to not understand that' has this implication). Similarly 'to stop' (or 'not to stop') presupposes the truth of the embedded clause. Somewhat less clearly, the use of expressions such as 'the real problem is that . . .' (or 'it is not a real problem that . . .') also usually presuppose the truth of the embedded clause, although in such cases this clause is also more or less asserted: Lewis is actually asserting here that bias against women is the real issue, not presupposing it—although he may 'remind' his readers that child-care and bias against women are the real problem. Reminding is an interesting in-between case between asserting and presupposing: it pertains to shared and hence presupposable knowledge, but, in cognitive terms, such knowledge first needs to be 'activated' by the writer (Schank, 1982).

These presuppositions are partly ideological, since they involve ideological attitudes about working women and child-care within the framework of a more general liberal ideology in favour of the rights of women. This becomes clear if we formulate a counter-argument against Lewis based on other ideologies, such as the legalistic one mentioned above, or a straightforward conservative, anti-woman ideology that would dispute women's right to have a job while having children in the first place. Such ideologies would not accept the presupposition that 'huge numbers of women would be disqualified from high government service', for example, with the arguments that Baird's case cannot be generalized, that Baird had broken the law or that Baird could have afforded 'legal' child-care, or—more ideologically

still—that Baird and other women with children should not enter higher government service.

In sum, many implications and presuppositions of editorials and op-ed articles are based on complex attitudes and ideologies about social norms, values, group rights and interests. To understand, approve or resist such ideological arguments, the underlying models and social cognitions of writers and readers need to be made explicit in order to know what implicit information is ideological (Andsager, 1990; Burkhart and Sigelman, 1990).

Level of description and degree of completeness

There is one semantic feature, largely ignored in the literature on discourse semantics, which also may have important ideological functions, viz. the *level of description* and *degree of completeness* of a discourse or discourse fragment (van Dijk, 1977). As these terms suggest, we may describe persons, places and events in more or less complete detail, and at various levels of abstraction. Generally, as soon as people or events become more relevant and important, they tend to be described in more detail and at a more specific (less abstract) level. Note that these notions are not synonymous: at each (more or less specific) level we may have more or less details.

The crucial criterion here is the rather elusive notion of (textual) 'relevance', which, however, might be defined as an interpretation condition: information is less relevant when it is not needed for the interpretation or understanding of the rest of the text. Obviously, such 'irrelevant' descriptions may have an aesthetic function in some genres, for example in literature. In crime stories, for instance, tense moments may be described in great detail, like facial expressions, a gesture or a turning doorknob, which otherwise would be low-level details ignored in more general, higher-level descriptions. That is, relevance and hence levels and specifity of description are genre- and situation-specific.

Opinions and attitudes, and hence ideological implications, may similarly be associated by such more or less complete or specific descriptions. It is well known, for instance, that crime reporting in the press may detail the (otherwise irrelevant) origin or appearance ('face', colour) of criminals (but typically less so when they are white), thus suggesting an explanatory relation between ethnic group membership and crime. Similarly, women may tend to be described in ways that are different from descriptions of males, whose appearance is found much less relevant in, for example, political or economic reporting. In sum, details that are irrelevant for a story may be mentioned and thus express stereotypes or prejudices that are ideologically based (Silver, 1986; Tuchman et al., 1978; van Zoonen, 1994).

As a genre, editorials or op-ed articles are not exactly prone to low-level details. Instead, abstract arguments and summary descriptions of events further detailed in news reports and feature articles are among the typical semantic features of opinion articles. So, when details are given about situations, people, places and events, this may have argumentative, rhetorical and possibly ideological implications. Of course, public elite discourse in

the NYT and WP will generally avoid blatant stereotyping, but it is interest-
ing to look for the more subtle cases of description.

Here are a few fragments of the way candidate governor of California,
Kathleen Brown, is casually portrayed in an otherwise rather positive article
on prominent women politicians:

> (10) As recently as last August, when the National Women's Political
> Caucus came here for its convention, Brown was the toast of the
> party, the warm and witty superstar who would put the government of
> the Golden State into a woman's hands for the first time and, quite
> plausibly, her fans said, become the first woman on a winning presi-
> dential ticket.
>
> But the Kathleen Brown who showed up the other Saturday morn-
> ing, casually dressed in jogging clothes, for an interview in a Holly-
> wood restaurant, was a sobersided politician of 48 who understands
> nothing will be handed to her. [. . .] Feminine charm and lawyerly
> caution may not be enough for people who are scared and angry, (WP,
> op-ed, David Broder, 31 October 1993)

Such a passage is of course not comparable to the traditional chauvinist ways
women and especially women in politics and high places are described. Most
men now writing in the quality press in the USA usually speak favourably of
women's rights and show respect for women in high places. Yet, more
subtly, as in this example, there are some details, such as "warm and witty",
"casually dressed in jogging clothes" and "feminine charm", that might be
less relevant, and probably be found irrelevant when male politicians are
described. Indeed, none of the male contenders in this piece on guberna-
torial candidates is being described with such personal characteristics.
Obviously, this is an empirical hypothesis, for which statistical evidence
would need to be provided (Bybee, 1990; Leder, 1986).

Much more evident is the ideologically based discourse about Our
Enemies. After the crumbling of the Soviet 'Evil Empire', other demons
have appeared in western discourse, not least on the opinion pages of the
press, so much so that some critical writers warn against using such stereo-
types, as in the following example, which we quote at length since it directly
deals with the issues of this paper:

> (11) There is no question that in the time since the bombing of the World
> Trade Center here and subsequent arrests of the alleged terrorists, a
> lot of sloppy language has been loosed in the direction of Arabs,
> Muslims and Islamic fundamentalists—sometimes treating them as if
> they were all one and the same [. . .]
>
> The New Republic, for instance, has discerned an 'Arab culture in
> Brooklyn and Jersey City and Detroit off which the criminals feed and
> which gets a grim thrill from them.' [. . .]
>
> Writing elsewhere, Steven Emerson, a specialist in Middle East
> terrorism, has written that the bombing of the World Trade Center
> has 'betrayed a ruthless fanaticism, the likes of which the West has
> never seen.'
>
> Still others have weighed in. One writer warns us that 'Islam . . . is in
> a state of active rage against the West,' and another says that 'Islamic

> fundamentalism is a plague infecting the entire Islamic world from
> Morocco to India.' [. . .]
>   A fear of Islam is deeply embedded in Western culture. It manifests
> itself today in the paranoia and prejudice of the Bosnian Serbs who
> claim to be battling Islam on behalf of the Christian West. All the
> more reason, then, to stop fixing labels to a vast religion (Islam) or a
> whole people (Arabs) whose diversity is stunning. They have their
> fanatics, of course, but before we throw stones of gross generaliz-
> ations, we ought to check our own glass house. (WP, op-ed, Richard
> Cohen, 27 July 1993)

The amalgamation of Muslims, fundamentalists, terrorists, with the new evil
empire (prime example: Iran) can be found in many op-ed articles, as we
have argued above. Here is a fragment of a bellicose piece by well-known
columnist Charles Krauthammer on New Year's Day 1993:

> (12) Iran is the center of the world's new Comintern. It is similarly messia-
> nic and ideological, ruthless and disciplined, implacably hostile to
> Western liberalism (though for different reasons) and thus exempt
> from its conventional morality. Hence, for example, that common
> thread: terrorism. The ultimate aim is a united Islamic front to
> confront Western 'arrogance.' The immediate aim is to destroy pro-
> Western regimes, to seize the gulf and its weak oil-rich sheikdoms and
> to eradicate that singular affront to Islam: Israel. (WP, op-ed, 1
> January 1993).

The point of our analysis here is that the specifics of description are not so
much in the details of actions, but in specifying overall, ideological judge-
ments: Iran, and the other terrorists it leads, are described as "messianic",
"ruthless", "implacably hostile to Western liberalism" (read: Anti-
American, the worst sin of all), and "exempt from [. . .] conventional
morality", among many other things. And Krauthammer is not alone: in the
49 op-ed articles in which Arabs are discussed, the word "terrorist" features
45 times. Bombings, such as that of the World Trade Center, unexpectedly
brought terrorism to the US mainland. The following discourses soon take
on an apocalyptic style, as Jim Hoagland writes:

> (13) The World Trade Center bombing may yet turn out to be the work of a
> deranged individual with what the newspapers will call a 'personal'
> grudge, or of a criminal gang. Nonetheless, this bombing was a
> calculated act of terrorism: a blow against the human spirit and a
> violation of the mind. It does not need a complicated political motive
> to wear this label. (WP, op-ed, 3 March 1993)

Violent political crime, thus, when directed against Us for a change, is no
longer described in the abstract terms of international politics, but detailed
(at the same abstract level, but this time in moral terms) as a "blow against
the human spirit and a violation of the mind". Such descriptions imply
obviously that We are identified with humanity and that in the terrorist mind
there is no such thing as an innocent bystander. Action descriptions in such

cases will invariably feature the prototypes of innocence, such as "small children or kindly grandmothers who wander into harm's way".

The NYT and WP published 176 articles in 1993 in which the word "terrorist" appeared 355 times. With a few exceptions, the word is exclusively used for Arabs, although also some other official enemies (like the Colombian "narco-terrorists" and the Khmer Rouge) are sometimes described in this way. Some Arabs, like PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, are described as "ex-terrorists". Political or other violence, for example by US-sponsored states and "friendly" or "moderate" regimes, is seldom called "terrorist", so the label is not descriptive for any kind of political violence, but an ideological descriptor, as we have seen in our remarks about ideological lexicalization above.

Local coherence

At the local level of subsequent sentences, discourse is coherent if its propositions are intensionally or extensionally related. Extensional or referential coherence is based on conditional, causal, spatial or temporal relations between 'facts' in some possible world (van Dijk, 1977). In a more cognitive framework we would say that such propositions must be related with respect to the representations of such facts in a (subjective) mental model of language users (van Dijk and Kintsch, 1983). Such facts in a model will often also feature the individual objects or persons referred to by various discourse expressions, such as nouns and anaphora. Besides this form of referential coherence based on mental models of real or fictitious world situations, propositions in discourse may also be intensionally related, that is, through functional relationships of meaning. Thus, a proposition may be coherently related to a previous proposition, if it functions as Generalization, a Specification, a Contrast or an Example of that previous proposition.

Coherence presupposes knowledge of the world in general, and specific knowledge about concrete situations, events and individuals in particular. We may speak about the Middle East, and then introduce 'the Palestinians' (with a definite pronoun) as a known people on the basis of our general political and geographical knowledge about the peoples of the Middle East. This dependence of coherence on shared social cognitions allows 'biased' forms of discourse coherence and hence ideological monitoring. Using the same example, or instance, we may presuppose the existence of Palestine, or the Occupied West Bank, where others would speak of Judea and Samaria.

Similarly, explanations are typically based on relations of condition and causality. If employers in the Netherlands see high unemployment among ethnic minorities as mainly caused by lacking education, insufficient motivation or failing language proficiency of minorities, instead of as being mainly caused by discrimination, this will also show in the coherence relations between the propositions of their text and talk, for instance as expressed by causal connectives (*because*, *therefore*, etc.) or by the functional relationship of an Explanation. Thus, the following (constructed) alternative accounts of

labour immigration to Europe express different explanations and different ideological positions:

> (14) (a) The economy prospered. Guest workers immigrated to Europe.
>   (b) Guest workers immigrated to Europe. The economy prospered.

That the economic prosperity of Europe after the war is partly also due to the work of immigrants is a fact that is not exactly emphasized in the mass media in general, and in conservative media or everyday conversation in particular (van Dijk, 1993). It is much more in line with prevailing prejudices that immigrants are attracted by our riches, and 'only come here to live off our pockets'.

Similarly, ideologically monitored representations of gender relations or class structure may affect local coherence relations in discourse about such issues. Thus, when Charles Krauthammer, writing about Iran (example 12), claims that

> It is [. . .] implacably hostile to Western liberalism [. . .] and *thus* exempt from its conventional morality. *Hence*, for example, that common thread: terrorism. (emphasis added)

the use of the coherence markers *thus* and *hence* presupposes that being hostile to western liberalism is inconsistent with (its) morality, and that "terrorism" follows from that. Obviously such coherence is ideologically based and wholly depends on Krauthammer's conception of western liberalism, and of those who are allegedly hostile to it.

Local semantic moves

Relations between propositions in a discourse may also have a more strategic nature. They may be functional steps, or *moves*, within overall discourse strategies such as positive self-presentation, face-keeping, persuasion or defending oneself. A well-known example in much racist discourse is the very denial of racism in disclaimers such as "I have nothing against blacks, but . . ." (van Dijk, 1984, 1987). Usually such a denial is merely apparent, since the stretch of text following *but* may be expected to say negative things about blacks, thereby contradicting the denial. Such a move is a typical element of a more general strategy of positive self-presentation or impression management, in which speakers or writers try to avoid a bad impression with the recipient. In the same way, such overall strategies may feature Apparent Concessions ("Of course there are hard-working blacks, but . . ."), Contrasts ("*We* always had to work hard for our money, but *they* . . ."), and so on.

These well-known examples from the analysis of racist text and talk also have an important ideological dimension, especially as soon as impression management is no longer personal, but social, as is the case for racism: the speaker wants to be seen as a decent citizen, who knows the prevailing norms and values of society, and who does not want to be seen as a racist.

Indeed, often such examples do not refer to individuals, but to the own group ("Some of us may say racist things, but . . ."). The point is that social impression management and the construction of a positive self-image are characteristic for ideological identification. This also means that attitudes about the ingroup will generally have a positive nature, whereas those about outgroups of various kinds may be negative.

Group position and conflict, as typically represented in ideological structures, thus also control attitudes that involve propositions that favourably compare Us to Them, or that unfavourably compare Them to Us. The US press examples, discussed above, about terrorism, Arabs and Islam, on the one hand, and 'Us', 'Americans' or the 'West', on the other hand, are a prominent contemporary illustration of this ideological orientation of attitudes and the concrete event models (e.g. about the bomb attack on the World Trade Center) built on them. It is this ideologically based group conflict which also shows up in the various semantic moves discussed above. Thus, when one reader in the NYT advocates energetic measures against terrorists and other "sociopaths", he adds the following disclaimer:

> (15) Of course, many state responses to terrorism do constitute state terrorism, and it is right that we should criticize violations of human rights committed in the name of fighting terrorism. (NYT, op-ed, Mark D. W. Edington, 2 March 1993)

That is, such an argumentative move is likely to be initiated by *of course* (as in this example) or (more typically) followed by a *but* and propositions that affirm tough measures, as is indeed the case here. After all, "we" must be "realistic" in the face of threatening terrorists, as this author also affirms. Such concession parts of two-part disclaimers also have an ideological basis. Whereas the larger part of the article is inspired by an ideology of national security, the smaller, disclaiming part is based on a humanitarian ideology and a liberal view about state terrorism. However, these concessions in the overall argument may be called 'apparent' if we examine the overall balance of the argumentative strategy: whereas the main point (US counter-terrorism) is argued for extensively and specified in detail, no further specification or support is given for the humanitarian and state-terror dimensions of the disclaimer. As is well known and as we have seen above, vigorous US measures against state terrorism in Central America have seldom been advocated by those who focus on Arab or Muslim-fundamentalist terrorism. Indeed, we found that the very word "terrorism" is seldom applied in this case. At most, the "human rights record" of the "fledgling democracies" in Central America may be prudently criticized (Chomsky, 1985).

In one of his many articles on the world terrorist conspiracy, NYT columnist A.M. Rosenthal introduces his diatribe against Muslim fundamentalism by the following disclaimer:

> (16) Most Muslims are not involved in fundamentalism or terrorism. That makes religious hatred essential to discuss without counter-hatred.
>   But in the interest of Muslim and non-Muslim, it has to be said

> without evasiveness: around the world millions of Muslims, fearful of
> the contagiousness of Western political, religious and sexual free-
> doms, support fundamentalist extremism. (op-ed, 29 June 1993).

This is the classical disclaimer. It will be asserted, though very briefly and
often in a subordinate clause, that 'of course' most Arabs, Muslims, blacks,
etc. are not terrorists, fundamentalists or criminals, but the larger, and more
insistent, part of such articles precisely asserts or implies an explanatory
connection between group membership and deviance. Such arguments do
not just speak of 'political violence' and do not condemn *all* sorts of political
violence (including the occupation of Palestine or West Beirut by the Israeli
army, or US-trained Central American death-squads), but rather associate
it with one specific outgroup in particular. We have seen that after the end of
the Cold War and the demise of Communism, the logic of outgroup ideol-
ogies needed other major enemies (within or outside), and it is in this
framework that Arabs, Muslims and fundamentalists have become the main
targets of outgroup bashing. Since the generalization infringes upon prin-
ciples of tolerance, disclaimers are necessary to keep the argument valid and
to save face.

For our analysis, apparent denials and concessions functioning as dis-
claimers, among other local semantic moves of overall strategies of im-
pression formation and argumentation, are interesting, because they are the
typical site of conflicting ideologies, a more humane and tolerant one and
the more authoritarian or intolerant one, of which the first receives short
shrift in the preposed clause of the paragraph, and the second the major part
of the text following the *but*.

Notice in the same example the use of "in the interest of Muslim and non-
Muslim", which has a similarly disclaiming function. Rosenthal, though
generally speaking in favour of the West, Us or Americans, will look better
if he also is seen to speak for Muslims, and as being concerned about their
interests as well. Ideologies are basically concerned about 'our' interests,
and concern for other's interest will look definitely liberal. Yet, Rosenthal's
main concern in the Middle East is Israel, and not the fate of ordinary
Palestinian or Arab citizens, and so his focus on fundamentalist terrorism
will also englobe the "millions of Muslims [who] support fundamentalist
extremism". Expressions such as 'in their own interest', therefore, also
function as an argumentative and interactional move of positive self-presen-
tation, viz. one which may be called Apparent Altruism. It is well known in
racist discourse which argues that immigrants should stay in their own
country 'for their own good', for example to help build up their own country,
or because otherwise they will only fall victim to 'popular resentment' in
'our' country (van Dijk, 1993).

In sum, in the semantic realization of underlying attitudes and ideologies,
it is imperative that the harsher implications of such ideologies be mitigated,
hidden or denied. Semantic moves such as disclaimers are prominent stra-
tegic steps in presenting oneself as flexible, humane or altruistic, and as a
person who is not prone to rigid generalizations. Although such moves are
common in everyday conversation, especially with strangers, they are man-

datory in public discourse in the media and politics, where positive self-presentation and persuasion of an audience of many ideological allegiances is crucial.

Topics

Discourses are not merely locally coherent, but also have overall or global coherence, which may be defined in terms of themes or topics and theoretically accounted for by semantic macrostructures derived from propositions expressed in the text (van Dijk, 1980). Thus, a summary or headline typically expresses some or all of the macropropositions that form such a macrostructure. As is the case for local coherence, the derivation of these topics from the local propositions of a text requires sociocultural world knowledge, as well as knowledge represented in mental models of specific events.

Intuitively, topics express what is found to be the most 'important' information of a discourse. This makes the assignment of topics by speakers or recipients not only more or less subjective, but also liable to ideological control. A newspaper story about rape may be globally defined by many conservative males as an example of increasing crime, and by most women (and some men) as an example of male power abuse and dominance. Similarly, a demonstration against the war in Vietnam, against nuclear weapons, or against the lack of western action in Bosnia or Rwanda may be interpreted as 'disruptive' or 'un-American' action, if not as a crime, and by the participants mainly as a moral imperative.

In the examples of the bomb attack on the World Trade Center in New York, we saw that this attack was defined as "a calculated act of terrorism: a blow against the human spirit and a violation of the mind". Other crimes in the United States, especially also those that result from virtually free access to arms, are seldom defined as such, and certainly not by right-wing columnists. Terrorism, as we have seen, is ideologically linked to specific enemies, such as Iran or Lybia or Arabs in general. This also means that the evaluative concept of 'terrorism' may appear in topics or their expression in headlines, and thus express an ideological perspective through semantic macrostructures in textual surface structures such as lexical items, as discussed above.

In other words, 'defining the situation', as is well known, depends not only on knowledge of the world, but also on more general attitudes and ideologies. This is also true for the attribution of 'importance' which is implied by the assignment of topics or themes to a discourse.

While this is true in the derivation of topics from propositions, for example during the 'bottom-up' construction of topics from local propositions, this ideological control also takes place in the other direction: when ideologically based macropropositions are expressed in 'biased' headlines, these may monitor 'top-down' the interpretation of local meanings of sentences. Once a story is globally defined as an example of terrorism, local meanings are supposed to contribute to or exemplify this overall topic. Because of the important top-down influence of topics in text comprehen-

sion, this may mean that alternative interpretations of the facts, for example in terms of 'resistance by freedom fighters', are excluded or inhibited.

One of the many examples of biasing titles and summaries may be found in the following example. One of Karl E. Meyer's editorials in the NYT is headlined "Maligning True Believers", and summarized as followed:

> (17) Karl E. Meyer argues that religious zealotry could supplant Commu-
> nism as a global threat to world peace, concluding that the terrorism
> that has grown out of religious fundamentalism is surely unforgivable
> and brings fundamentalism into disrepute. (14 March 1993)

Although this may be a partially correct summary of the article, it is biased in the sense that it does not include the rather crucial fact that "religious zealotry" and "fundamentalism" refer *only* to Muslim fundamentalism throughout, with the exception of one brief reference to Hindus. No mention is made of Christian fundamentalism in the article. That is, either the headline and the summary simply over-generalize the meaning of the text, or more likely and more ideologically, "fundamentalism" and "zealotry" are being defined as exclusive to Islam (Abaza and Stauth, 1988; Harding, 1991). This ideological reading is further supported by the parallelism being drawn between the threat of (Muslim) fundamentalists and communists as the new enemy of the USA (or "world peace" as is claimed in this article). A week later, an op-ed article by Bradford McGuinn in the NYT was similarly headlined as "Why the Fundamentalists are Winning", and also only speaks of Muslims.

CONCLUDING REMARK

The theoretical assumptions and analyses in the last section of this paper suggest that discourse meaning, as constructed during production or comprehension, is liable to embody opinions that derive from underlying ideologies. From the rather straightforward level of lexicalization, to the more complex structures of propositions, implication or coherence relations between propositions as well as overall meanings or topics, representations of persons and events in underlying mental models may transmit group-based evaluations to the semantic structures of discourse.

In discourse grammars and the psychology of text processing, discourse meaning is usually accounted for only in terms of abstract concepts, lexical structures or meaning rules, or by mental models as based on sociocultural knowledge. We now see that much of the meaning of discourse should *also* be explained in terms of ideological control, as exercised via attitudes, defined as social representations and their instantiation of episodic mental models of events and contexts. That is, we now are a step closer to a theory that explains relevant dimensions of discourses and their meanings, including their ideological 'positioning', ignored in much previous formal discourse analysis. We have achieved this by going beyond the intuitive accounts of ideology in the social sciences and critical discourse studies. What we need is an explicit framework that details how properties of

discourse meaning are derived from underlying social and personal cogni-
tions, for example by specifying how mental models control the construction
of meaning, both in production and in comprehension. Further research also
needs to attend to the ideological basis of phonological and graphical
expressions, syntax, style, rhetoric, pragmatic properties and interactional
dimensions of discourse.

At the same time, such a new framework for 'ideological discourse
processing' presupposes that we also know exactly what ideologies are in the
first place. We have argued that they form the socially shared, value-based
framework of fundamental evaluative propositions developed and used by
social groups within societal structures. We also made some tentative pro-
posals about the overall schematic organization of such ideologies in terms
of a canonical self-group-schema defining the self-serving identity and
interest of each social group. However, we are still far from an explicit
theory of the internal organization of ideologies.

Both for societal positioning and reproduction, at the macro-level, as well
as in the daily discourses and other interactions of group members, ideol-
ogies play a crucial role. Whereas this article has begun to explore some
dimensions of the ideology–discourse link, future work on our project also
needs to examine these relationships in the broader framework of the
societal, political and cultural functions of ideologies and their cognitive and
discursive organization and expression.

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