# The Construction of a Class with a Sense of Entitlement: A Case Study on Political Rhetoric as Symbolic Violence in Denmark

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*Taking a Bourdieusian perspective, this paper illustrates how one politically-staged TV broadcast on a receiver of benefit payment has triggered political scapegoating in Denmark. The case has challenged the prevailing welfare state discourse and fostered the construction of a low class with a "sense of entitlement" by the media. We show that the media adopted the notion of a "sense of entitlement" originally used by politicians. Welfare state critical phrases and proverbs experienced a revival. We claim that this one-sided rhetoric abstracts from political responsibility and that power, agenda-building, and rhetoric act as symbolic violence.*

Key words: *blame avoidance, Bourdieu, scapegoating, symbolic power, welfare*

Political rhetoric, and political scapegoating in particular, has been argued to be socially powerful and to influence media and public opinion (Bos, Van Der Brug, & De Vreese, 2013; Cochrane & Nevitte, 2014; Fasenfest, 2011; O'Flynn, Monaghan, & Power, 2014). Additionally, the concept of agenda-building has demonstrated the influence of political agents on media news selection and coverage (Lang & Lang, 1981; Scheufele, 2000; Weaver, McCombs, & Shaw, 2004; Wirth et al., 2010). Via the second level of agenda-building, framing, political agents

can create meaning by contextualizing and connoting certain topics (Goffman, 1973; Hallahan, 1999). These empirical and conceptual observations seem to find an appropriate overarching framework within the theory of constructivist structuralism by Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1989), which bridges the dichotomy of agency and structure.

Bourdieu's considerations of language, symbolic violence, and the media, when combined, have the potential to explain the power and consequences of political utterances. Following Bourdieu's and Wacquant's logic, language and media representatives can perpetrate violence by excluding and marginalizing social groups. The most crucial angle—going beyond the explanatory power of scapegoating and agenda-building concepts—of a Bourdieusian approach is that the oppressed unknowingly consent to this violence (for more on the concept of symbolic violence, see Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). This perspective will serve as a theoretical framework for this case study on political language as symbolic violence.

This case study is situated in Denmark and is associated with an ongoing debate regarding the efficiency of the country's extensive welfare state (Kildal & Kuhnle, 2005). We analyze the political and media deployment of the notion of "sense of entitlement" ("krævementalitet") that refers to welfare receivers. The notion—arguably new in Danish media and political rhetoric—is the outcome of a TV broadcast on a Danish recipient of welfare benefits that found its way into Danish language use as the "Carina case," the "Carina effect," or "Poor Carina" (Goul Andersen, 2012; Kingsley, 2014; Lund, 2012). Carina, a single mother on social welfare, was selected by a politician to demonstrate that poverty in Denmark exists. The broadcast triggered a heated debate on cash benefit recipients, mainly centering on the incriminating notion of a "sense of entitlement."

This analysis takes the form of a case study of the media coverage of this initial broadcast. We argue that both politicians and the media constructed a previously unknown low stratum of social welfare recipients with the image of greedy welfare freeloaders. The debate was kept alive, despite declining public interest, and was harnessed to legitimize tax reforms (Goul Andersen, 2012). We demonstrate how political rhetoric functions as symbolic violence and how the media

condone this type of violence by adopting and spreading po-
litical phrases. Our results should make politicians and the
media aware of the hidden symbolic power of language and
the character of stereotyping.

## The "Carina Case"

In October 2011, the Socialist People's Party (SF,
"Socialistisk Folkeparti") suggested that economically-dis-
advantaged Danish citizens who cannot afford Christmas
gifts for their children should receive financial aid from the
state. This suggestion was part of the Danish government's
attempt to advance awareness of poverty. A representative of
the opposition Liberal Alliance (LA) party, Joachim B. Olsen,
immediately reacted by posting a statement on Facebook,
stating that this suggestion made him throw up ("Jeg brækker
mig") (Hvass, 2011). In response, Özlem Cekic (a member of
Parliament for SF) invited Olsen to participate in a debate with
her at the home of a poor Danish female citizen to prove that
there are poor people in Denmark. The meeting took place on
November 28, 2011, and was broadcast on Denmark's "The
Evening Show" ("Aftenshowet") the same day. According to
OECD standards (Goul Andersen, 2012; *Jyllands-Posten* [JP],
2011a), however, "Carina," the poor Danish woman, was not
poor. As Goul Andersen stated, the case could have ended
after the initial broadcast as an example of a poorly prepared
political stunt. Andersen assumed that the case would not
have a lasting effect on Danish attitudes. However, political
comments proceeded to pour in and find media coverage.

The day following the TV broadcast, the Minister for
Social Affairs, Karen Hækkerup of the Social Democrats
("Socialdemokraterne"), stated in *JP* that it was difficult for her
to see how a recipient of welfare benefits such as Carina could
be poor. Karen Hækkerup felt that it was time for a political
discussion of the "sense of entitlement" of the Danes (Cordsen,
2011a). The phrases "Carina case" and "Carina effect" have
become established phrases as a result of this discussion. Even
the common Danish name "Carina" has been used synony-
mously with "welfare freeloaders" by politicians: "For a very
long time it has been taboo to talk about the Carinas" (Joachim
B. Olsen, cited in Daley, 2013). Carina-sag and similar notions,

such as "poor Carina" ("fattig-Carina") have entered the Danish language since 2011 as established phrases with derogatory connotations.

## Theoretical Background: Bourdieusian Theory

In this article, we aim to observe and interpret the notion of "sense of entitlement" from a Bourdieusian perspective. Overall, we take Bourdieu's constructivist structuralism as a point of departure (Bourdieu, 1989). The shaping of reality is described as a process integrating agency and structure and, thus, individuals, society, and culture.

To approach the main aspects of language, the role of the media, and symbolic violence, we must first turn to the concept of capital. As outlined in earlier works (Lueg, 2014; Lueg & Lueg, 2015), Bourdieu (1997) distinguishes three types of capital: physical assets that can be converted to cash (economic capital), the possession of a durable network or membership in a social group (social capital), and cultural capital. Cultural capital can be classified into three further types. It exists in the embodied form. As such, it covers class-specific competencies and knowledge. Furthermore, cultural capital exists in an objectified form (in books or instruments), and in an institutionalized form (as credentials from authorized institutions) (Bourdieu, 1997).

Bourdieu depicts society as a class society, in which the "class situation" is "the point from which all possible views unfold" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 89). Thus, an agent's capital is more legitimate the higher he or she ranks in society's class system: "The kinds of capital, like trumps in a game of cards, are powers which define the chances of profit in a given field" (Bourdieu, 1991e, p. 230).

Language, in Bourdieu's view, is an example of a "structuring structure" (Bourdieu, 1991a, p. 164) in the sense that it is constructed and has the power to construct and create. Language, to Bourdieu, is not only a means of communication, but also a means of social interaction, power, and dominance. His notion of "linguistic legitimacy" (Bourdieu, 1991c, p. 69) can be applied to the social right to speak in general; to Bourdieu, linguistic interaction is a "linguistic market" in

which "certain agents are incapable of applying [to] the linguistic products offered" (Bourdieu, 1991b, p. 69). Linguistic exchanges and utterances are "also signs of wealth, intended to be evaluated and appreciated, and signs of authority, intended to be believed and obeyed" (Bourdieu, 1991b, p. 66).

Adapting this notion and the overarching idea of a class-determined society to the media's political debates, it is elucidated that public debates conducted via the media are not open for participation by everybody; rather, participation is reserved for politicians, journalists and, sometimes, scholars. The power of language lies in the fact that only certain agents have the opportunity to use—and create—legitimate language as "speech that is accredited, worthy of being believed" (Bourdieu, 1991b, p. 70). Authorities, such as the aforementioned politicians, journalists or scholars, are given a platform on "formal occasions," such as in a TV show or a newspaper interview, and thereby rewarded with "legitimate competence." Again, mainly referring to pronunciation and vocabulary, Bourdieu indicates that the more formal a situation is, the more likely listeners are to "recognize the legitimacy of this mode of expression, even outside the constraints of the formal situation" (Bourdieu, 1991b, p. 70).

We argue that this phenomenon applies to our case as well, in which the notion of "sense of entitlement" spiraled out of the political rhetoric into media and the rhetoric of everyday life. Thus, agents such as those previously described have the "power to name and to create the world through naming" (Bourdieu, 1991d, p. 105). This power can transform into dominance or more drastic, symbolic violence; indeed, symbolic violence challenges the "usual dichotomy of freedom and constraint" (Bourdieu, 1991c, p. 51). Symbolic violence is "exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 272). Even those agents who do not explicitly comply with this power relationship are subject to its structure: they are forced to express themselves within the framework of the power structure. This relationship to symbolic violence is misrecognized by the agents involved.

The most important means of symbolic violence is language, because it creates meaning and classifies, recognizes and devaluates (e.g., insults) (Bourdieu, 1991d), thus allowing

one class to dominate the other (Bourdieu, 1991a). Symbolic violence, unfolded via ideology, can be an essential part of political domination (Bourdieu, 1991a).

The ideal means for such domination is television, according to Bourdieu. Apart from his criticism of television, Bourdieu is further critical of journalism in general. In his media-related, non-systematic essays published as *On Television*, Bourdieu declares television as a specifically destructive form of symbolic violence. In his view, journalists are both manipulated and manipulating. Journalists, according to Bourdieu, wear glasses that determine what and how they see and evaluate social phenomena. Thus, the thematic selection of journalists constructs social reality. Journalists' power to broach certain issues can constitute perceptions, thought, and entire social groups (Bourdieu, 1996). In this study, we demonstrate how politicians and the media have perpetrated symbolic violence by using ideological rhetoric.

*Connection to Other Theories*

For reasons of theoretical consistency, the outlined Bourdieusian perspective will briefly be aligned with other concepts referred to in this paper. Because Bourdieu's exploration of the media has been merely conceptual, taking the forms of essays and speeches, adopting compatible concepts from the field of media and communication studies is necessary. Conversely, the media theories outlined here lack emphasis on the subtle character of symbolic violence, as well as the important perspective of oppressed and disadvantaged agents consenting to the violence executed.

First, the concepts of agenda-building and framing can be linked to Bourdieu's perspective on the homogeneity of thematic media selection and journalists' perception and construction of social phenomena. Agenda-building refers to the influence of sources—here, politicians—on the media (Bennett, 1990; Berkowitz, 1992). The visible source impact, such as the number of quotations of a certain political statement, refers to the first level of agenda-building.

The concept of framing occupies the second level of agenda-building. Framing focuses on the qualitative "how" of media coverage, on the way meaning is created by

contextualizing and connoting certain topics (Hallahan, 1999) by sources and journalists. This idea departs from the socio-logical frame-building concept (Goffman, 1973) and therefore follows a social constructivist perspective of the media (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Tuchman, 1978). These perspectives con-sider agency (journalists) and structure (organizations and perception patterns) sufficiently such that they align with Bourdieu's constructivist structuralism.

Second, we can directly connect the concepts of scapegoat-ing and blame avoidance to Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence. Weaver (1986) views political blame avoidance as a response to voters' negativity bias, a "tendency to be more sen-sitive to real or potential losses than they are to gains" (Weaver, 1986, p. 371). In other words, voters care more about "what has been done to them than to what has been done for them" (Weaver, 1986, p. 373). This situation creates an incentive for politicians to avoid blame.

As observed during the Carina case, avoiding blame for a public mishap can be strategically more important than an-nouncing positive achievements. Weaver defines eight blame avoidance strategies; among them are "redefine the issue," meaning "developing new policy options which diffuse or ob-fuscate losses," and "find a scapegoat," which simply means to "deflect blame by blaming others" (Weaver, 1986, p. 385). Although these strategies are adopted to the detriment of the voters' autonomy and information, the negativity bias pre-vails. This is where the Bourdieusian perspective adds to the traditional approaches: the (likely unconscious) complicity behavior is an example of symbolic violence par excellence (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

## The Case Study Design

This paper employs an exploratory case study approach —a method deemed appropriate when research focuses on contemporary situations and does not require control over events (Yin, 2008). Case studies are well suited to investigat-ing media coverage (Gramling, 2011; McGregor, 2013; Perez de Fransius, 2014). Within the framework of the case study, we employ mixed methods. In addition to hybrid textual analysis,

further contextual observations (e.g., on the publishing strategies of the media involved) will help explore and explain the case. Our purpose is not to obtain statistical generalizations but to qualitatively explore how one social phenomenon (political rhetoric) may affect others (media coverage and rhetoric) through the lens of a contemporary theory within a specific context (Harland, 2014). Single case studies such as ours may contribute to generalized findings when applying a "cumulative" approach that uses comparative, multiple case studies (Harland, 2014; Yin, 2003).

*Qualitative and Quantitative Textual Analysis*

Textual analysis is understood as "a way for researchers to gather information about how other human beings make sense of the world" (McKee, 2003, p. 1). When conducting textual analysis, researchers "make an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text" (McKee, 2003, p. 1). To make interpretations, we consider text as data that contain "both qualitative and quantitative aspects" and thus have a "hybrid" character (Raich, Müller, & Abfalter, 2014 (p. 740). We align our analysis with this perspective on text by offering an "intertwined" approach of selected methods, meaning that we attempt—within the modest framework of this case study—to use the results obtained from one method as inspiration or a starting point for the next method.

First, we conducted a quantitative keyword frequency study that focused on the numerical distribution of the notion of a "sense of entitlement." Second, we applied explorative qualitative textual analysis by exploring the keyword context and language of the articles that refer to a "sense of entitlement." We aimed to identify other phrases with a similar character, followed again by frequency count. Third, we conducted an analysis of textual language functions in two selected lead articles in which some of these phrases were initially used.

According to Bühler, a text performs three functions that can be more or less dominant, but nonetheless are always present. These functions are the conative, the representative, and the expressive functions (Bühler, 1992). By applying these functions to texts, it is possible to make general descriptions of the overall purposes that senders attempt to pursue with the

production of the texts, tying in with our notion of framing and language as symbolic violence. The function and purpose of texts are strongly interrelated. Function relates to the manner in which a text is used in a communicative situation, whereas purpose refers to the desired goals a sender wishes to accomplish by using a text in a communicative situation.

*Sample Selection*

Our sources are articles in six Danish newspapers (*Berlingske, BT, Ekstra Bladet, Information, Jyllands-Posten, Politiken*). These newspapers were selected because they cover a wide range of editorial policy and formats, despite being mainly owned by two publishing houses. This range encompasses the tabloid and immigration-skeptical *Ekstra Bladet* and the liberal and independent *Information*. *BT* and *Ekstra Bladet* are tabloid newspapers with short and provocative news stories. *Information* and *Politiken* are viewed as politically liberal newspapers, whereas *Berlingske* is considered more conservative (for an in-depth analysis of the political Danish press see Hjarvard, 2007). *Jyllands-Posten* has been criticized for its anti-immigrant news coverage (Ouraishy, 2011) and has triggered global discussions on "the right to offend" and "freedom of speech" by publishing cartoons of the prophet Muhammad (Tomlins, 2015). All newspapers provide country-wide media coverage.

*Data Collection*

We collected data using infomedia.dk, a database of Danish news coverage, in June 2012. To investigate potential changes in journalistic rhetoric, it is appropriate to consider media coverage of the notion of a "sense of entitlement" six months before and six months after the TV broadcast that triggered the debate (for a similar approach, see Guojun, Go, & Kolmer, 2011). The TV show was broadcast on November 27, 2011, thus the two comparative periods included are May 27, 2011, to November 27, 2011, and November 28, 2011, to May 27, 2012.

In a second step, we browsed case-related articles in a qualitative search for expressions that related to the scapegoating rhetoric of a "sense of entitlement" and those

that took the form of set phrases to identify the persistence of the attitude. In a third step, we focused on two politically dissimilar newspapers, *Information* and *JP*. We chose the two lead articles responding to the broadcast in order to have comparable formats. *Information* published its lead story on the incident on November 30, immediately after the interview. *JP* followed suit one day later and published its leading article on December 1.

## Results

### The Context of a "Sense of Entitlement" During the Six Months Preceding the Broadcast

In all six newspapers, the notion of "krævementalitet" only appears eight times. In four of those cases, the notion is used without referring to a concrete relationship to Danish society, leaving four references to be considered for a contextual understanding of the notion's use (see Table 1). It appears to be a notion that was used by politicians and non-journalistic agents. The first time the notion was used in this period (June 15, 2011), it was employed by the former Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation, Charlotte Sahl-Madsen. In an article on the financial situation of Danish students (monthly student support is relatively generous by European standards), Sahl-Madsen is quoted as saying that, "It is extremely important to finance education. But now we have to get over the sense of entitlement and reflect if our resources can be put to better use"(Saietz, 2011, p. 5).

The second article refers to a dated New Year's speech by former Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen. In Rasmussen's speech, a "sense of entitlement" is purposefully dismissed in favor of the politicians' "big spender mentality" ("gavementalitet"). However, it is noteworthy that the author interprets this and related statements as "classically right wing oriented" ("klassisk højreorienterede") (Kastrup, 2011). People are criticized for using the notion of a "sense of entitlement" to justify social budget cuts, such as cuts to disabled populations, as a representative of a handicapped association notes (Article no. 3). The notion is used as a criticism of Danish society and the political system in the fourth article, but it is noteworthy

as a sociological criticism that does not marginalize one social group.

Table 1. The Employment of the Notion of a "Sense of Entitlement" Preceding the Initial Broadcast

| No. | Date<br>*Newspaper* | Topic of article | Quote<br>*Source* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | June 15, 2011<br>*Politiken* | Financial situation of students | It is vital to finance education. But now we have to put a stop to the sense of entitlement and to consider if the resources could be used better. ("Det er enormt vigtigt at finansiere uddannelse. Men nu må krævementaliteten aflives, og vi må overveje, om ressourcerne kan bruges bedre") *Politician* |
| 2 | August 28, 2011<br>*Berlingske* | Article on current politics and elections | Is this an attack on the so called sense of entitlement? No, I am after the politicians' sense of giving. ("Er det et opgør med den såkaldte krævementalitet? Nej, det, jeg er ude efter, er vores - politikernes - gavementalitet," sagde Løkke.) *Politician* |
| 3 | September 15, 2011<br>*Politiken* | Critical article on the political rhetoric against disabled populations to justify budget cuts | A couple of politicians have exposed both "expensive" individuals and entire social groups to the media. Without much opposition these politicians were allowed to provoke with paroles such as […] the sense of entitlement has to be stopped. ("En række kommunalfolk har hængt både 'dyre' enkeltpersoner og hele grupper ud i medierne, og de har stort set uimodsagt fået lov til provokere under paroler som 'udgifterne til det specialiserede socialområde er eksploderet', ' […] og ' krævementaliteten må stoppes'.) *Other* |
| 4 | October 4, 2011<br>*Information* | Critical commentary on the perceived Danish sense of entitlement | The Danes' sense of entitlement has to be exchanged for a spirit of citizenship, in order for achievements to the benefit of the society to become a matter of course. ("Danskernes krævementalitet skal skiftes ud med en borgeridentitet, så det bliver en selvfølge at yde noget til fællesskabet Danmark") *Other* |

*The Context of a "Sense of Entitlement" During the Six Months Following the Broadcast*

It is evident that the broadcast sparked a heated debate and had a significant impact on the use of the newly revived notion of a "sense of entitlement" (krævementalitet). We identified 145 texts in the six sampled newspapers in which this notion is employed (see Table 3). These texts were mainly written by the respective newspapers' journalists (86), followed by other agents (such as officials, students, and public figures) commenting on

contemporary issues (50). Politicians have written texts employing the notion nine times. Among those texts, there are three identical texts by Karen Haekkerup, the social minister who coined the notion. *Politiken* and *JP* published the most articles containing the notion, which is not surprising given that both publications featured series on the subject.

It is relevant to distinguish the way the notion was employed. We can identify the notion 272 times in the given 145 articles. Out of these 272 times, the phrase "sense of entitlement" is used as a quote or in single quotation marks 53 times. In cases in which the phrase is used as a quote, the authors almost exclusively refer to Karen Hækkerup. When used in single quotation marks, the notion is largely used without a concrete source, but the articles often allude to Karen Hækkerup.

Table 2. Appearance of "Sense of Entitlement" ("Krævementalitet") Six Months after the Broadcast

| Newspaper | Text written by: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Journalist | Politician | Others* | Total |
| *Berlingske* | 12 | 0 | 7 | 19 |
| *BT* | 9 | 0 | 3 | 12 |
| *Ekstra Bladet* | 2 | 1 | 6 | 9 |
| *Information* | 10 | 1 | 3 | 14 |
| *Jyllands-Posten* | 24 | 1 | 15 | 40 |
| *Politiken* | 29 | 6 | 16 | 51 |
| Total | 86 | 9 | 50 | 145 |

*Mainly commentaries by students, officials, public figures, and selected user comments and letters to the editor.

The two newspapers with the most "sense of entitlement"-centered articles, the conservative *JP* and the more liberal *Information*, published special thematic sections relating to the topic. *Information* reacted immediately after the broadcast (November 29, 2011) and named its special thematic sequel "Need help? Ask the state" ("Behov for hjælp? Spørg staten"). One day later (November 30, 2011), *JP* published its thematic issue on "Poverty" ("Fattigdom," *Jyllands-Posten*, 2011b). In *Information's* sequel, various authors published articles referring to the Carina case and other cases perceived to be similar. Most of the articles featured interviews with politicians or

scholars. The articles contained expressions such as "social fraud" ("socialt bedrageri"), "entitled society" ("krævesamfund"), "obligations" ("pligter"), and "personal responsibility" ("personlige ansvar"). Politicians pointed to the need for more control over the benefits-receiving individuals (*Information*, 2011). However, as textual analysis will show, the overall political tone was skeptical toward the scapegoating wave.

A similar pattern of notions can be observed in *JP*. Responsibility ("ansvar") is contextualized with receivers of social welfare ("kontanthjaelpsmodtager"). Social Democratic Minister for Social Affairs Karen Hækkerup hypothesized in *JP* fatal consequences for the welfare state "if people only demand their rights, but don't fulfill their obligations" ("hvis folk kun kræver deres ret, men ikke gør deres pligt") (Cordsen, 2011a), thereby manifesting the notion "sense of entitlement."

Qualitative content analysis shows that three notions were employed particularly often in the aftermath of the broadcast on the evening show. We observed the rhetoric in the first days following the interview because the discussions provided an indication of the immediate reaction to the case. Most importantly, the dated Danish proverb "Do your duty, demand your right" ("Gør din pligt, krav din ret") stood out. Another similar notion that has been used by various politicians and media in relation to the case is "You have to give before you get" ("Man skal yde, før man kan nyde"). Both proverbs were used by Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt in a statement referring to the case (Cordsen, 2011b). A third unit is "self-service society" ("Samfundet som et tag-selv-bord"), which was initially coined by Hækkerup (Cordsen, 2011a). To tie in with the quantitative analysis again, we found 144 mentions of these three notions during the first few days following the broadcast (November 28 - December 3, 2011). We identified "Gør din pligt, kræv din ret" 56 times, "Man skal yde, før man kan nyde" 59 times, and "Samfundet som et tag-selv-bord" 29 times, mainly containing the quote from Hækkerup.

The textual analysis of two newspaper articles from two politically different newspapers provides insights into the textual functions. On November 30, the day following the Carina interview, *Information* published a leading article regarding its evaluation of the possible consequences of the interview (Thorup, 2011). The tone evoked by the headline

"Welfare Junkies" (Velfærdsjunkier) is provocative. However, the article clarifies that this expression is not aimed at welfare receivers but instead at the Danish middle class. Following the headline's pattern, the first three sentences of the article are filled with expressive language. Sentences such as "Let's not hope that SF's spokesperson for social affairs, Özlem Cekiz, has managed to completely mess up the debate on poverty in Denmark with her hopelessly poorly prepared media stunt involving social welfare receiver Carina" reveal the sender's advocacy.

Table 3. Use of Related Expressions in Selected Newspapers Following the Initial Broadcast (Nov. 28 - Dec. 3, 2011)

| Newspaper | Do your duty, demand your right ("Gør din pligt, kræv din ret") | You have to give before you get ("Man skal yde, før man kan nyde") | Self-service society ("Samfundet som et tag-selv-bord") | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Berlingske* | 11 | 2 | 2 | 15 |
| *BT* | 1 | 2 | 2 | 5 |
| *Ekstra Bladet* | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| *Information* | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| *Jyllands-Posten* | 12 | 2 | 1 | 15 |
| *Politiken* | 8 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| Other newspapers | 22 | 52 | 24 | 98 |
| Total | 56 | 59 | 29 | 144 |

The next sentences are devoted to informative language by briefly introducing facts about poverty in Denmark (representative function). However, the focus quickly changes to the conative language function when the reader is urged to "take a look" ("tag blot et kig") at some of the concrete examples of poverty in Denmark. Unlike the expressive language function, the conative language function focuses on the readers of the article. The core of the article proposes a change in perspective. Instead of accusing the lower stratum of freeloading, the focus should be on the "welfare junkies" of the middle class. The specific case of Carina may be a misinterpretation of poverty, but it should not obfuscate the real issue.

It is from this perspective that the following series by *Information*, "Need help? Ask the state" (Behov for hjælp? Spørg staten), can be explained. The series can be interpreted as a play with the conative text function, because *Information* ironically prompts its middle class readers to freeload off the welfare state. The article's function can be categorized as destabilizing (Rolf, 1993). Destabilizing texts are intended to cause emotional irritation and attempt to change a certain matter of debate. In this case, *Information's* attempt to protest the hitherto dominant interpretation of the case and to focus on the middle class can be interpreted as a declaration of protest (Rolf, 1993) or even as a reprimand of the agents involved, including the readers. In this case, the one-sided interpretation of the TV debacle suggests that society, including the readers, is held responsible by the sender.

The second article analyzed was published in the more conservative *JP*. It was *JP's* first lead article reacting to the Carina broadcast, titled "The Poor" ("De fattige", *Jyllands-Posten*, 2011c). The language of the introduction is informative (representative function) because it provides the reader with an idea of some of the main features of the case and the politicians involved. The introduction also makes use of ironic expressive language, e.g., when addressing the "extreme penury" ("den yderste nød") in the "real world" ("den virkelige verden"). Expressive language provides a window of opportunity through which the sender can add a subjective attitude about a certain issue.

In this context, the language is used to clarify that the author does not condone the failed media initiative of introducing an allegedly poor single mother. The sender believes that "among certain people on welfare exists a sense of entitlement" (para. 6). The author appears to intend to remind people on welfare that they cannot demand their rights without performing their duties. The language function is conative, though non-binding, for the reader (Rolf, 1993); the reader engages voluntarily in the discussion out of curiosity. Overall, the article performs a stabilizing influence function (Rolf, 1993).

Stabilizing texts react to social irritation that causes distress among readers. The senders' intention is to compose unsettled readers. We argue that *JP's* lead article is stabilizing because it prompts the reader to accept that an

inefficient welfare state is prone to provide advantages to welfare receivers. The subtle appeal is for politicians to change this situation and to bring justice back to the upright, tax-paying man on the street. This approach, at least in the short term, may have a calming effect on readers and does not challenge the previous focus of the debate. Thus, the article cannot be viewed as a behavior-related text, because this type of text challenges its readers to abandon their "smugness" ("Selbstgefälligkeit", Rolf, 1993, p. 286). Despite the critical approach adopted by the article, it might have a soothing, affirmative effect on a merely conservative worldview. Overall, the article is framed differently from the one published in *Information*.

## Discussion and Conclusion

We investigated whether the political and media linguistic interaction concerning the so-called "Carina case" can be interpreted as symbolic violence. Within the frame of this Bourdieusian concept, we argue for this perspective on the following grounds. Before the incident, in all six newspapers, the notion of "sense of entitlement" only appears four times in a Danish context. Furthermore, our frequency count identified the use of the notion of "sense of entitlement" in 272 cases in 145 published texts. We interpret this result as a sign that both media and political rhetoric has focused on citizens, more precisely, on a group of welfare-receivers perceived to be free-loading. This groups' representative, as chosen by politicians, was Carina. However, the notion of "sense of entitlement" implies that Carina and the group of people she represents sought the spotlight and attention for themselves, whereas in reality she became "a symbol for sense of entitlement without ever having asked for something in the press on her own initiative" (Lahme, 2012, para. 7).

We conclude that the notion has received public approval via its adoption by the media. Furthermore, we observe that *JP* and *Information* published special thematic sections relating to the topic. We conclude that newspapers from both sides of the political spectrum followed the political agenda to focus on welfare and a discussion—however critical that discussion may have been—of citizens' "sense of entitlement."

Qualitative content analysis shows that notions pointing to citizens' obligations toward the welfare state were used often in the aftermath of the evening show broadcast. The phrases "Do your duty, demand your right," "You have to give before you get," and "self-service society" all have a clearly accusatory tone; they imply that somebody does not do his duty, does not "give" but instead abuses the welfare state in a "self-service" manner. Because these notions are employed in discussions referring to the evening show broadcast, it becomes clear that they contribute to constructing a lower class with an attitude of entitlement. We further demonstrate how "Carina" and the "Carina case" have found their way into commonly used language as signifiers for welfare criticism. This example of political phrase-making is outstanding: "For a very long time it has been taboo to talk about the Carinas" (Joachim B. Olsen, cited in Daley, 2013). In this case, a citizen's first name is reinterpreted as a synonym for welfare beneficiaries, even welfare cadgers. It is noteworthy that a slightly alternative rhetoric is possible: *Politiken* refers to the incident as "Carinagate" (Rothenborg, 2011), thereby shifting the focus to the poorly prepared politicians.

Except for this attempt, by creating a "devil figure" the wording referring to the media incident and the following debate on welfare is classic scapegoating and blame avoidance rhetoric (Weaver, 1986, p. 374). The invoked problem is constructed as a problem of the people, more precisely, a greedy low stratum, rather than as a political problem. It could be argued that scapegoating was particularly easy in the given case because the representative agent (Carina) stood not only for a class with low capital but for gendered attitudes toward single mothers (for the concept of negative female capital, see Djerf-Pierre, 2005).

In their lead stories, *Information* and *JP* take opposing framing approaches to the case. *Information* reframes the discussion into a discussion of the middle classes as beneficiaries of the welfare state. This attempt to resist the dominant interpretation strengthens our stance on the discourse as symbolic violence. Symbolic violence is "exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 272). Even those agents (in this case, selected media, selected

scholars) critically opposing the mainstream interpretation of the events had to navigate within the given rhetoric (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) and hence, the conservative stance that directed blame at the welfare receivers remains more powerful.

Language, in this case, is not only a means of communication but also an instrument of power and dominance; the creation of the notion of a "sense of entitlement" and the accompanying derogative "Carina"-related rhetoric used by politicians can be viewed as "signs of authority, intended to be believed and obeyed" (Bourdieu, 1991bc, p. 66). The types of people who participate in this public linguistic exchange should also be noted: politicians, journalists, and some (also critical) scholars, who negotiate the Carina-related lingo among themselves. The group in question, welfare receivers, is denied a platform for articulation. Indeed, it is a discussion about them, instead of with them.

We argue that this construction of freeloader lingo and the acceptance of such notions and expressions in journalistic and everyday language is symbolic violence. The reminder of the discussion is not its nuances and political facets but a collective memory of how a class of (legal but shamed) welfare receivers was exposed. Carina elaborates: "I would not have thought it would be like that, that people would write really mean things about a person they don't know. […] I think this is crossing a line" (Bonde, 2011, p. 15). Because the spotlight on Carina's situation was used by politicians to discuss budget cuts, we can speak of successful agenda-building leading to class domination by politicians (Bourdieu, 1991a).

*Limitations and Avenues for Future Research*

The purpose of this article was to demonstrate the mechanism of symbolic violence in a research case at the interface of political rhetoric, agenda-building and framing. Selective evidence, as presented herein, was sufficient for this purpose. For an in-depth analysis of political source impact and the political within-field-differentiation between newspapers, a thorough, structured qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2000) would be an appropriate tool. Future research may focus on how and by what medium scapegoating processes are perpetuated, supported, or encountered. Another important issue for future

research could be the potentially gendered dimension of this case. The fact that a single mother was targeted and that, consequently, the female name "Carina" has been ascribed a derogatory meaning may provide reason for closer inspection. Prior studies (originating outside of Denmark) have noted critical attitudes toward single mothers (DeJean, McGeorge, & Stone Carlson, 2012), and single-parent interest groups have criticized media for stigmatizing single parents (Gingerbread, 2014). The strong reaction toward the media incident described herein may be related to the involuntary protagonist's gender and gendered attitudes toward her social status.

*Theoretical and Practical Implications*

Our analysis provides implications on a theoretical level and on a practical level. We demonstrated that the Bourdieusian perspective is appropriate for exploring rhetorical political agenda-building and scapegoating. Specifically, the combination of the concept of symbolic violence and Bourdieu's elaborations on the media and language were adequate for exploring our case. Although these parts of Bourdieu's work have not been explicitly connected, we demonstrate that they can be aligned. To paraphrase an expression by Bourdieu on language, we find that the politicians involved in this case assumed the roles of "judges" who "need say no more than 'I find you guilty,'" and we find the media to be the "agents and institutions which guarantee that the sentence will be executed" (Bourdieu, 1991b, p. 75).

On a practical level, we highlight the relevance of media ethics. Based on the insights of agenda-setting approaches (McCombs, 2014), we can assume that this coverage affects the audience perception of the national image of welfare receivers and the status of the welfare state in general (for similar assumptions, see Guojun et al., 2011). Refraining from adopting citizen-debasing notions such "Carina case" or "Carinas" to refer to welfare freeloading is recommended. Once such expressions are connoted, it will be challenging even for critical media to question or even reinterpret them. Thus, every use will contribute to the spread of the expression and the further manifestation of its derogatory meaning. Similarly, expressions such as "sense of entitlement" and the associated

proverbs should be critically examined for their accusatory and blame-avoiding meaning before they are echoed.

In sum, we present a case of symbolic violence perpetrated by media and politicians. This paper contributes to the theoretical expansion of Bourdieusian theory and to the further discussion of the power of political language, as well as brings attention to the importance of media and communication ethics.

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