Chapter 6
Depicting Political Dynamics of Migrant “Blackness” in the Era of Trumpism: Reframing of “the Other” in the British Press

Danella May Campbell
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9217-0602
Manchester Metropolitan University, UK

ABSTRACT

This chapter investigates representations of blackness in the social and political context of the migrant and refugee “crisis” in America. A content analysis of mainstream online news articles examines British reporting on the separation of migrant children from families in the US. It includes a critical analysis focusing on framing theory to deconstruct political framing of migrants in British news reporting. It considers the implications of “otherization” on political resolutions for race-based demographics, on the basis of social class. This chapter demonstrates the media’s ability to apply a process of otherization to itself to support its institutionalized state and demonstrates otherization is a cyclic process of interchangeable identities, ideologies and intersectional contexts projected through a manufactured mediated prism and lens.

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter investigates representations of blackness in the social and political context of the migrant and refugee ‘crisis’ in America. A content analysis of mainstream online news articles will examine British reporting of two pinnacle aspects in US political affairs; the first, on Trump’s personal and political attack towards migrants and refugees. Secondly, the US enforcement of separational policies, including implementing the detachment of children from parents, and institutionalised detainment executed through detention centres. Critical analysis will focus on Framing Theory to deconstruct methods of political framing of migrants in news reporting. Analysis offers an external perspective on considering the implications of ‘otherisation’ on political resolutions for race based demographics, on the basis of social-class. This deconstruction of news production depicting representations of migrants and refugees, contributes to the debate on the impacts of framing in media and competing concepts of multiculturalism and assimilationism (see Borooah and Mangan, 2009; Triadafilopulous, 2011) within the socially constructed, colour continuum. This chapter considers the extent to which British news coverage contributes to the formation of hierarchies of ‘blackness’ and ‘otherness’ on the basis of social class statuses and frames British news reports on American political affairs, as ones constructed by the other, of the other.

BRIEF HISTORY AND CONTEXT

Interrogating Blackness

It is not this study’s disposition to work to a definition of blackness, but rather to deconstruct the media framing of blackness on which British society’s pre-determined social norms, values, stereotypes and prejudices re/construct notions of race upon. Interrogating the multiple states and experiences of blackness as an epiphenomenon remains one which continues to raise more questions than solidifying theory. Defining blackness, has been one of the most important scholarly questions and has led to the concept being attributed with numerous meanings and associated experiences. Garner (2010) emphasises that the striking element of all scholarly attempts to understand what ‘race’ is, is the impossibility of providing a definition. Edwards (2016) stages “black as a material, a method, a mode, and or/a way of being in the world” and early representations of blackness and historic analogies of Greek mythology (see Greek myth of Orpheus) associate blackness with an underworld, bad, evil and sin (Veneciano, 1998). Bobier (2017, p.26) interprets the analogy as one capable of connecting aesthetic experience of the colour black,
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