



Journal of European Periodical Studies

an online journal by ESPRit, European Society for Periodical Research

Review of Giuliana Elena Garzone, Mara Logaldo,
and Francesca Santulli, eds, *Investigating Conflict
Discourses in the Periodical Press*

Thomas Jacobs

Journal of European Periodical Studies, 7.1 (Summer 2022)

ISSN 2506-6587

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The *Journal of European Periodical Studies* is hosted by Ghent University

Website: ojs.ugent.be/jeps

To cite this article: Thomas Jacobs, 'Review of Giuliana Elena Garzone, Mara Logaldo,
and Francesca Santulli, eds, *Investigating Conflict Discourses in the Periodical Press*', *Journal
of European Periodical Studies*, 7.1 (Summer 2022), 69–70

Reviews

Giuliana Elena Garzone, Mara Logaldo, and Francesca Santulli, eds, *Investigating Conflict Discourses in the Periodical Press* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2020). 244 pp. ISBN 9783034336680

Investigating Conflict Discourses in the Periodical Press is a noteworthy edited volume. It makes several important empirical contributions to the field of periodical studies, ranging geographically from the British tabloids via Estonian and Belgian legal journals all the way to the Italian periodical press, and thematically from hooliganism and the acquisition of football teams to the coverage of debates about migration and palm oil. The unity of this rich volume comes from how the various contributions approach their topic: for one of the first times, periodical studies tackles the coverage of conflicts in the periodical press via discourse analysis. This is one of the volume's most remarkable features.

Discourse studies, the general field that uses discourse analysis as its method, is undoubtedly one of the most interdisciplinary traditions within the social sciences. It conventionally draws on linguistics, political science, communication science, and philosophy, while occasionally veering into ethnography, anthropology, information science, sociology, and gender studies. *Investigating Conflict Discourses in the Periodical Press* sees discourse analysis venture into the realm of periodical studies — a domain predominantly informed by literary and historical approaches. As a scholar of discourse studies, I have a particular interest in fields and research traditions that show a novel interest in discourse analysis, for it fascinates me to see how diverse social-scientific traditions take up the discourse-analytic acumen in uniquely different fashions. Even if they are fundamentally based on the same vestiges, a Critical Discourse Analysis conducted by a researcher with a background in

journalism and literary studies is likely to diverge very strongly from a Critical Discourse Analysis conducted by a researcher with a background in political science and linguistics.

The volume under consideration here is no exception. It effortlessly conquers methodological and theoretical obstacles that discourse analysts stemming from a different research domain would have struggled with tremendously, and at the same time it makes choices that would maybe be deemed peculiar by those same scholars. This way, the volume at hand demonstrates the richness, the flexibility, and the polyvalence of discourse studies. A first interesting aspect of the manner in which *Investigating Conflict Discourses in the Periodical Press* deploys discourse analysis is its strong emphasis on the linguistic component of discourse analysis as a method. This is understandable, given that most contributors have a background in linguistics and English for Specific Purposes, but it nevertheless remains striking. In her overview chapter at the start of the volume, Giuliana Elena Garzone places a semantic emphasis on the definition of 'conflict' and various related terms before turning to argumentation theory. Chiara Degano, in her study of conflict management in the engagement of editorialists with populist views, focuses on the difference between the genres of epideictic discourses and deliberative discourses, and Mara Logaldo, in her analysis of the representation of diplomatic discourses in the periodical press, uses the genre of diplomatic rhetoric as an explanatory prism. Helene Schmolz, in turn, examines the representation of migration in English-language newspapers by zooming in on lexical choices, and Zahra

Mustafa Awad and colleagues pursue a similar analytical strategy in classifying word choices in the representation of Arab women in Western news discourse over different topical categories.

Their focus on lexical choices, genres, and semantics allows the contributors to leverage discourse analysis very effectively on a methodological level. They identify straightforwardly how the study of discourse will help them answer their research questions, and proceed to deploy discourse analysis in a purposeful, hands-on manner. This strong emphasis on the 'applied' side of discourse analysis also clearly transpires from the use of corpus linguistics in many contributions to *Investigating Conflict Discourses in the Periodical Press*, including several of the ones discussed above. Furthermore, Emanuele Brambilla's study of the mediatization of the debate over palm oil in the UK leans heavily on the frequency with which various signifiers are used in three different newspapers, before venturing into a more qualitative analysis. Emma Lupano uses keywords to demarcate different semantic fields in her study of the reporting of Inter Milan by a Chinese corporation. The effortlessness with which the contributors operationalize discourse analysis quantitatively and computationally is truly impressive. In other research traditions, this combination often needs to be argued and legitimated extensively (see [Jacobs and Tschötschel 2019](#)).

At the same time, researchers from a background in the social sciences instead

of periodical studies might be surprised at how little attention is paid, at times, to the power dimension and the political nature of the analysed conflicts. The same attention paid to the semantics of conflict is not always consistently devoted to the politics of conflict. Theories of discourse and language that focus on conflict, politics, populism, and antagonism, such as Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory, remain largely absent. More openness towards these traditions would certainly have enriched the conceptual groundworks of *Investigating Conflict Discourses in the Periodical Press*. However, the political dimension is not completely absent from the volume. Francesca Santulli stresses the ideological faultlines that underlie newspaper debates about dyslexia, and so does Michela Canepari in her inquiry into the metaphors used to conceptualize football-related (political) violence. The contribution of Ristikivi and Vandenberg, the only legal scholars contributing to the volume, is the one that is most in tune with how discourse analysis is conventionally deployed in political science and its neighbouring disciplines. Their chapter focuses strongly on how the political arena in which legal debates take place conditions and affects those conflicts.

Overall, *Investigating Conflict Discourses in the Periodical Press* is an engaging volume that is worth the read for both scholars of periodical studies and discourse analysts alike.

Thomas Jacobs
Université Saint-Louis