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*Rioters vs. The Interior Minister*

Evaluation of News Sources in the *Guardian*'s Coverage of  
the 2005 Unrest in France

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**SAMMANFATTNING:**

Min avhandling handlar om nyhetskällor och hur journalister evaluerar dessa när de konstruerar nyhetsrapporter. Materialet för studien bestod av 24 nyhetsartiklar från den brittiska broadsheeten *Guardian* som handlade om upploppen i de Franska förorterna i 2005. En del av artiklarna var publicerade endast på nätet, medan en del var publicerade också i tidningens pappersversion. Syftet med undersökningen var att studera valet av nyhetskällor och deras beskrivning, och på det sättet utreda vems versioner konkurrerade i tidningens konstruktion av händelserna i Frankrike.

Alla nyhetskällor var först klassificerade enligt den roll som dem ansågs ha haft i nyhetshändelsen, för vilket jag använde mig av Deacon och Golding's koncepter. Enligt dessa kan nyhetskällor delas in i sådana som är partiska i nyhetshändelsen, som kallas för *advocates* (fritt översatt "förespråkare"), och sådana som är opartiska, som kallas för *arbiters* ("medlare"). Vidare använde jag mig av Appraisal teorin och dess modell för källspecifikation för att studera hur de olika nyhetskällorna var beskrivna. Appraisal är teorin om förhållningssätt, det vill säga hur man uttrycker åsikter, attityder och värderingar.

Hypotesen som visade sig riktig var att journalisterna använde sig oftare av kommentarer från 'förespråkare' (t.ex. polisen, politiker) och 'medlare' (t.ex. experter) av hög status, som förekom som fullt identifierade och titulerade källor – vilket höjde deras kredibilitet. Tidningen var dock inte helt okritisk mot dessa källor, eftersom den också citerade källor som kritiserade t.ex. politikerna. 'Förespråkare' av lägre status (t.ex. demonstranter, förortsborna) däremot tenderade identifieras endast enligt förnamn och ålder, och utan några titlar som skulle ha ökat deras kredibilitet. Analysen visade också att det förekom flera negativa beskrivningar av demonstranterna i tidningens nätversion än i dess pappersversion. Nyhetsbilder som också analyserades kort visade scener från gatorna där upploppen hade skett, medan bilder av dåliga förhållanden i förorter, som ansågs ha varit en delorsak till protesterna, förekom inte.

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**NYCKELORD:** news sources, Appraisal, advocates and arbiters, broadsheet, riots



## 1 INTRODUCTION

News media is a significant institution in society that has a number of functions to perform; most importantly it provides its audience information about the world around it, which helps people to function as citizens (Burns 2002: 50). News does not, however, provide random information about society, and that which is considered news has to first undergo a selection process. In this process news values are called upon to determine which events are newsworthy, and which will consequently be presented to a larger audience. These values are not neutral or arbitrary, but culturally determined and constructed. For instance, the news value deriving from the actions of the elite is entirely dependent on who a community considers as part of elite, and is thus not a natural feature of that phenomenon.

Despite the selection process where newsworthy events are chosen, news media still claim that news at least aims at being an ‘objective’ or ‘impartial’ reporter of events, and there are different ways of guaranteeing this objectivity or impartiality. These include using evidence and quotes from eyewitnesses and other sources, and using numbers to indicate precision and exactness (van Dijk 1988: 84, 85). News media thus assume, to some extent, that there is an ‘objective’ way of interpreting events and that this can be separated from the subjective way, and, moreover, that the ‘objective’ interpretation results in a more indisputable and true account of the events. However, what happens is made meaningful only through language and we construct it by speaking about it (Barker 1999: 23). In consequence, there is no ‘objective’ way of talking about ‘reality’ as each interpretation relies on subjective judgements of what constitutes it. News media, as a part of society, similarly constructs reality of which it speaks; and the ‘objectivity’ that it refers to is in fact ‘common sense’ – that is, a set of dominant ideologies about how the world is to be understood. This ideology of ‘common sense’ operates to donate “a sense of coherence, consistency and ‘naturalness’ to our lived existence” (Briggs & Copley 2002: 308). As representations in the news media can reach a large audience, it is a significant institution that contributes to reproducing as well as producing what is known as ‘common sense’. It is for this reason

“media texts are thought to affect [...] the way in which we understand ourselves/others and the way we lead our lives” (ibid. 307).

In October-November of 2005 the international news media was faced with yet another case of interpreting reality to its audience. At the end of October, two French youths of Malian and Tunisian descent, thinking they were being chased by the police, climbed into an electric power station in a Parisian suburb and got electrocuted. This event was then interpreted by other youths in the suburbs as the French police harassment of the youths with immigrant backgrounds and, shortly, a nationwide civil unrest had started. The reason for the unrest was therefore said to have been to protest against racial discrimination that people of foreign origin had to face in the French society (Sahlins 2006.)

News media set out to describe the events in France by gathering comments and interpretations from various sources. The most important potential sources were the two parties that were directly involved in the events, that is, the youths who were seen to have caused the disturbances and the police whose task it was to stop them. These two parties were, however, not seen as sufficient to explain and give meaning to the events, which is why the news media turned to other individuals, organisations and institutions that could interpret the events from their point of view. Other potential sources to comment on the events were thus politicians and government officials, mayors of the towns where the disturbances had taken place, as well as suburban residents. Anti-racism groups and religious organisations could also make the events meaningful with their comments.

How sources are described in news reports and how this is part of the meaning making has not received much attention within the field of media studies. One of the few relevant studies is *The Representation of Social Actors* (1996) by Theo van Leeuwen which owes examples from many different text types, but focuses specifically on racist discourse in an Australian newspaper article that discussed immigration. He found that immigrants were often referred to generically [*Third World immigrants*] which had the effect of distancing them from the readers, but named if members of the elite [*Alberto*

*Fujimori*; the Peruvian presidential candidate] were concerned. They were also aggregated, that is, presented as statistics [*annual net migration of about 150,000, including 60,000 migrants from Asia*], which represented them as a large ‘horde’ about to invade Australia. They were, furthermore, classified by their ethnic origin, race [*dark-skinned; black*], class [*downtown and uptown immigrants*], wealth [*poor*], religion [*Muslim*] and level of education [*educated elite*]. Such classification was not applied to the other participants in the news article. Those van Leeuwen labelled as ‘racists’ were also referred to generically when the discussion was about ‘racists’ in other countries than Australia [*80 young white thugs*], but individualised and named when members of the elite [*Bruce Ruxton*; a notorious Australian known for his racist opinions] were concerned. Members of the Australian government were often individualised and named [*Prime Minister Bob Hawke*]. Various experts were treated like elites, that is, individualised which allowed their titles, credentials and institutional affiliations to be showcased, or collectivised [*Fitzgerald Committee*] which helped to signal their agreement. The author of the text, who quoted all these sources and was ultimately responsible for the text, was very much in the background.

Van Leeuwen’s study was closely followed in the model for source specification as outlined in the Appraisal framework, which is applied in the present study and will be discussed in more detail below. Other studies related to news sources have examined the labels attached to the individuals and groups that appear in news stories. For instance, Teun A. van Dijk (1991: 211) has studied how participants in events that involve minorities have been identified.

The disturbances in France in 2005 attracted the interest of the international news media since similar crowd actions had taken place elsewhere in the world as well. For instance, in Britain a few days prior to the start of the events in France, there had been unrest between two ethnic groups in Birmingham, which had also lead to property damage and two deaths (*guardian.co.uk* 24/10/05<sup>1</sup>). Also in 2001, there had been violent disturbances in Brixton, in south London, in connection with the fatal shooting of an

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<sup>1</sup> Dates in this thesis are marked as dd/mm/yy (day, month, year).

unarmed man by a police (*Guardian* 21/7/01). It is therefore likely that as race and poverty related crowd actions where youths have clashed with riot police had occurred a number of times in Britain (Editorial *Guardian* 28/5/01), the disturbances in France were also deemed newsworthy events in the British press.

Although the unrest started after an incident between the suburban youths and the police, as it continued, more and more parties got involved in the public debate surrounding the unrest. The access to the debate was controlled by the news media that had the power to select the participants. The aim of this research is to study whose versions of the event competed in the construction of the events in France. The focus will be on the choice of sources of information and their evaluation. The hypothesis of the study is that while the British newspaper *Guardian*<sup>2</sup> gave floor to a number of sources, it gave more credibility to some sources rather than others. The hypothesis was based on previous studies which have found that that news tend to prefer authoritative or elite sources (cf. Allan 1999: 71; Bell 1991: 192; van Dijk 1988: 87 and Hall 1978: 58), and it was assumed that the *Guardian* also favoured authoritative or expert sources, and prioritised these over 'ordinary' people. This it did by, for instance, describing *elite* sources in a way that would give prominence to their high status, such as identification by first and last name, and use of titles. News sources in this thesis, then, are taken to be all those parties who appear in news stories as providers of information. *Elite* sources, in turn, were defined as the privileged and the powerful individuals in society (Parenti 1993: 9), such as politicians, representatives of large companies, as well as various experts.

In order to study the evaluation of sources in the material, the sources are first identified as either *advocates* or *arbiters*. *Advocates* are sources who are directly involved in the event and who, accordingly, have invested interest in the matter. *Arbiters*, on the other hand, who are not directly involved in the event, are seen to have enough expert knowledge to be able to comment on it. The sources will then be analysed for their descriptions. The descriptions will be studied with the help of a model for source

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<sup>2</sup> The *Guardian* in this study includes articles from both the newspaper's print and online edition; see section 1.1 for further information on the material of the study.

specification outlined in the Appraisal framework. Appraisal theory has been developed by a group of researchers led by Professor James Martin. In *The Language of Evaluation* (2005) Martin and Peter R. R. White give a comprehensive account of the framework and its use. Appraisal theory is concerned with evaluative language, that is, how opinions, attitudes and values are expressed in speech and writing. Describing the sources in a text is one form of evaluation. For instance, the description can include a *status-enhancing* feature such as a professional title [*The Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy*], it can refer to a completely *unidentified* source [*commentators*], or the description may refer to a *plural grouping* in the form of an *aggregation* [*73% of the population*]<sup>3</sup>. How a source has been specified has an effect on how credible the source will seem to the readers. The description will show how the author of the text has evaluated the source, and thus invite the readers to evaluate the source in a similar way. News photos that accompanied some of the articles are also of interest in this study, and will be discussed as background to the analysis of the sources<sup>4</sup>.

The thesis will now proceed with a presentation of the Material and Method of the study. There will also be a section of the event leading to the news reports in the Introduction. Chapter two discusses some characteristics of print and online editions of newspapers, and also those of broadsheet newspapers. The theoretical framework of the study will be introduced in Chapter three, which will include discussion on aspects of news media and journalism, such as, the concepts of *newsworthiness*, evaluative language as outlined in the Appraisal framework, and the power relations of news sources. Chapter four is devoted to the presentation and discussion of the findings of the study, where both the descriptions of sources as well as news photos are discussed. Lastly, the findings will be summarized and conclusions drawn from them.

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<sup>3</sup> These and other types of descriptions will be discussed in more detail in sections 1.2 and 3.2.

<sup>4</sup> Aspects of news photography are discussed in more detail in section 3.1.

## 1.1 Material

The material for this study has been collected from the online archives of the British broadsheet newspaper the *Guardian*. The material consists of a total of 24 news articles on the disturbances that took place in France in October-November of 2005. As the archives of the print edition of the *Guardian* were not available for me, the material for the study includes only those articles that could be found from the paper's online archives<sup>5</sup>. In this thesis, the articles that appeared only on the newspaper's website are referred to as articles from *guardian.co.uk*, whereas articles that also appeared on the paper's website but were originally written for the print edition, are referred to as articles from the *Guardian*<sup>6</sup>. This study includes 15 articles from the *Guardian*, and 9 from *guardian.co.uk*. The original publication site for each article was clearly marked in the form of an 'Article history', shown on picture 1, that accompanied each article on the newspaper's website.

### De Villepin orders security crackdown

- PM brings in curfews and deploys 1,500 more police
- Suburbs promised funds and housing improvement

Jon Henley in Paris

The Guardian, Tuesday November 8 2005

Article history

#### About this article

Close

This article appeared in the Guardian on Tuesday November 08 2005 on p19 of the International news section. It was last updated at 00:42 on November 08 2005.

### Clashes continue in Paris suburbs

Staff and agencies

guardian.co.uk, Wednesday November 2 2005

Article history

#### About this article

Close

This article was first published on guardian.co.uk on Wednesday November 02 2005. It was last updated at 15:07 on November 02 2005.

**Picture 1.** Publication information for the *Guardian* and *guardian.co.uk*'s articles

The articles were gathered from the newspaper's website by feeding keywords to *guardian.co.uk*'s search engine that were assumed to appear in the newspaper's reporting about the disturbances. These included words such as 'riots', 'riots in France', and 'suburb'. After this, the search results were filtered so as to only include articles

<sup>5</sup> See the works cited list for the headlines of these articles together with hyperlinks that lead to the articles.

<sup>6</sup> *Guardian*-articles accordingly appeared on the website as digital copies of the printed articles.

from October and November of 2005 and leave out other articles that contained the keywords but were published outside the chosen date range. From the articles that fitted the time frame, all articles concerning the disturbances then were picked out. The articles included in this study are from a time period of approximately three weeks, the first article being dated 1<sup>st</sup> November and the last 21<sup>st</sup> November. It should be noted, however, that the number of articles included in this study may not represent all articles that were published by the *Guardian* on this topic. This is because not every article that appears in print is put on the paper's website, as the newspaper may not possess the copyright to republish it (*guardian.co.uk* FAQs 2008).

All the articles included in the material are news reports; other article types, such as editorials and comment articles, have been excluded from the study. The reason for this is that news texts are generally thought of as more 'objective', whereas, for example, editorials express explicitly the opinion of the newspaper on the matter. Also, in commentaries opinions and evaluation is expected. The majority of the news articles were written by the newspaper's own journalists. The ones that were not, were composed either by the newspaper's staff together with news agencies or by a single news agency. The only named news agency that the newspaper used was the world's largest international news agency Reuters. In the articles composed by the newspaper's staff together with news agencies, it was not specified what agency had been used and the authors of the text were only described as *Staff and agencies* (see picture 1). The articles were of varying length, ranging from very short articles (the shortest being three sentences long) to some very long ones (the longest being 31 sentences long). The length of the majority of the articles was between these two.

The material consisted of individuals, organisations and groupings that appeared in the *Guardian*'s news reports as providers of information, in other words, as *news sources*. To provide a more diverse picture of the news participants, however, I also analysed descriptions of some of the news sources when they appeared as *news actors*. News actors, differently from news sources, do not give comments in reports, but appear as participants whose actions are referred to in the report.

## 1.2 Method

The analysis of evaluation of news sources in the material was conducted in two steps. In order to clarify the evaluation of each news source in the news event, the sources were first identified as *advocates* and *arbiters*. This study follows Deacon and Golding's (1994: 15) definitions of advocates and arbiters who identify news sources who are directly involved in the news event as *advocates*, whereas those who are not involved and merely comment on the event as *arbiters*. In the case of the events in France, the main advocates were judged to be the two parties between whom the disturbances started, that is, the suburban youths and the police. Example 1 illustrates a youth who had clearly participated in the unrest:

- (1) In Strasbourg, youths stole a car and rammed it into a housing project, setting the vehicle and the building on fire. "We'll stop when Sarkozy steps down," said *the 17-year-old driver of the car*, who gave his name only as *Murat*<sup>7</sup>. (*guardian.co.uk* 7/11/05)

The arbiters were then the sources who were not seen as having any invested interest in the conflict and who only commented on the events. Example 2 illustrates a source, the director of a research centre, who is giving an impartial comment by stating that:

- (2) Never had rioting struck so many different French cities simultaneously, said *Sebastian Roche*, a director of research at the state-funded National Centre for Scientific Research. (*guardian.co.uk* 8/11/05)

As all sources that appeared in the articles about the French unrest did not fit into one of the two categories, a third category was set up for them. Example 3 illustrates a *dual source* who had apparently not participated in the crowd action, but who was clearly affected by the events that had occurred in his neighbourhood and who was therefore not commenting from an impartial position:

- (3) "People here don't want to live in violence, and we're not yobs," said *Amadou*, 19 [...] "But nobody in Paris knows what it's really like on that estate. There's so much frustration. (*Guardian* 3/11/05)

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<sup>7</sup> All emphases in the examples are mine.

The next step in the analysis was to study how journalists had described the sources. The model for the source specification was derived from the Appraisal framework, which is an extension of M.A.K Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics. Appraisal is concerned with how evaluation is expressed in language, that is, what linguistic resources the writer of a text or a speaker may use to express opinions, attitudes and values. For example, the writer can evaluate sources in a text by describing these in a certain way. The descriptions can be identified according to the five categories introduced in the Appraisal framework: *personalisation*, *identification*, *specification*, *grouping* and *status* (White 2005).

For instance, in the case of the director of research discussed above, his description *Sebastian Roche, director of research*, entails *personalisation*, as the source is a person, *identification*, as he is identified with his full name, *specification*, as he is identified as a specific person, and *status*, which his professional title gives him. In terms of credibility as a source, the detail adding most to this is his professional title which illustrates professional expertise on a high level. In the case of *Amadou, 19*, the source is also *personalised*, *identified* and *specified*, but lacks *status*. In addition to lacking a title, identification by first name and age has to some extent also reduced the *status* or authority of this source.

It is thus the credibility of the sources as assessed by the journalist that is at stake in their descriptions. In the present study, identification by the full name and the inclusion of titles [*Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy; Dominique Sopo president of the anti-racism group SOS*] were considered to give credibility to individual sources. In the case of group sources, the credibility of the source was also considered to lie in the possible status given to it in the description. In example 4, the suburban youths are described as a particular type of grouping:

- (4) Many *rioters* say they are determined to make Mr Sarkozy pay for his "insults".  
(*Guardian* 7/11/05)

The description *rioters* creates associations to criminality, which, in turn, suggests a very low social position. The credibility of sources described in this way is likely to suffer in the eyes of the readers who may not take the source seriously.

In addition to source descriptions, in some cases I also looked at descriptions of news actors in order to see what evaluative attitudes could be detected from these. In analysing these, I studied what types of associations the descriptions created of the news participants. For instance, the description *immigrants youths* (*Guardian* 1/11/05) foregrounds associations to the assumed immigrant background of the youths, whereas the description *French youths* (*guardian.co.uk* 3/11/05) creates opposite associations.

As the background to the linguistic findings, news photos, that accompanied seven of the articles, were also analysed. These were studied as news photography has an important role in how an article will be understood by the readers. News photos can both support as well as contradict what the news article is saying. Aspects such as which news sources, *advocates* or *arbiters*, are depicted on the pictures doing what, and who is left out of the frame, and from which (or whose) angle the photo is taken from, were analysed in the photos.

In theory, there should be a balance between the parties involved in the disturbances if the news media is aiming at giving an impartial and balanced account of the events. Both the *advocate* and *arbiter* division as well as source specification will show how this is realised in practice. In other words, do journalists use the comments by the different parties in an equal way, and do the descriptions of the sources contribute to constructing balance between the sources and, thereby, in the coverage in general? The photos will similarly reveal what angle has governed the reporting of the events and whether the linguistic means have supported it.

### 1.3 Disturbances in French Suburbs in 2005

The disturbances in France in 2005 started when two French youths of Malian and Tunisian descent got electrocuted after having climbed into an electric power station in

the Parisian suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois. It is assumed that this happened because they were trying to avoid being stopped by the police who, they noticed, was stopping other youths nearby (Sahlins 2006.)<sup>8</sup> Since the youths who started the disturbances interpreted the above incident as the French police discriminating youths with immigrant background, the more profound reasons behind the widespread unrest were in what was seen as France's discriminatory treatment of its minority population.

Disturbances caused by youths are nothing new in the French suburbs where they have been occurring repeatedly since the 1980s (Kastoryano 2006; Roy 2005). There are a number of reasons for these disturbances, one of them being the problems that exist between the immigrant youths and the French police. The police is said to harass the youths, and there have also been cases where Muslim youths have died at police hands (Roskin 1995: 144). This was also noted in the news, and in an interview in one of the articles in the *Guardian* (9/11/05), an immigrant youth pointed to this continuing problem, saying that the police harass and insult immigrants. It is therefore not unusual that disturbances such as those in 2005 are triggered off by incidents between the youths and the police. In a typical incident, a youngster is killed while being chased by the police – afterwards, the police is accused by youths of harassment and racism, and unfortunately often, for causing the death of a local youth (Roy 2005).

Although the religious background of the youths was brought up in the public debate surrounding the French unrest, it has been claimed that the youths' Muslim background was not necessarily one of the reasons for the disturbances (Roy 2005). The discussion about Islam has seen to have helped to shift the focus away from the socio-economic problems that were the real reason for the disturbances (Roy 2005). During the 2005 unrest, for instance, it was reported in news media that the Union of French Islamic Organizations took distance from the unrest by issuing a *fatwa* where it condemned the actions by the youths (*Guardian* 8/11/05). Accordingly, while the crowd action in 2005 started with an incident between the youths and the police, there were indeed larger social issues involved that contributed to the conflict. It has also been argued that these

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<sup>8</sup> How and why the unrest started has also been fictionally depicted in a TV film about the 2005 French disturbances called *L'Embrasement* [The Blaze] (aired in 2007) (Leffler 2007).

issues made the youths in this case “both the perpetrators and the victims” (Suleiman 2005). In the news the French immigration policy was said to have created “sink ghettos” where the residents were mainly African minorities who faced discrimination when looking for housing, applying for jobs and in education (*Guardian* 3/11/05). Being excluded from the rest of the French society had thus created dissatisfaction among, especially, the younger, suburban residents, and this rage became expressed through violence. This type of violence then gave “the neighborhood a territorial and ethnic collective expression, a means of ruling by provocation” (Kastoryano 2006). Accordingly, causing disturbances provides an opportunity to not only collectively express dissatisfaction, but also, at least momentarily, to demonstrate power.

The French government’s way of dealing with this complex issue was that the Interior Minister at the time, Nicolas Sarkozy, “declared a “zero tolerance” policy towards urban violence” (Sahlins 2006). This meant that the government concentrated on assigning more police forces to the streets and imposed curfews to fight the youths. The news media, nevertheless, reported that the French government eventually also “released details for a package of measures to improve conditions in the suburbs” (*Guardian* 10/11/05). However, this was only a plan for the measures, and the French government did not take significant action or propose policies to tackle the social problems in the suburbs after the disturbances (Sahlins 2006).

The complex reasons thought to have been behind the disturbances also had an effect on which sources the journalists would come to interview. It gave reason to ask for comments, for instance, from social workers in the suburbs who could give firsthand information about the situation in the suburbs. That discrimination was said to have been involved in the events gave reason to interview anti-racism organizations as well as human rights groups. The poor conditions in the suburbs called for political responsibility, and gave reason to question the members of the political establishment, such as the Interior Minister and the Social Minister.

## 2 THE *GUARDIAN* – ON PAPER AND ONLINE

From the point of view of journalists, ‘hard’ news is seen to be factual, ‘objective’ and impersonal, while comment articles are subjective, evaluative and personalised. Also the *Guardian*’s editorial code expects its news reporters “to bring qualities of objectivity into their work”, whereas columnists are allowed to have their “views openly on display” (*Guardian*’s Editorial Code 2007). However, there is no single fixed reality that can be observed and understood in one ‘objective’ way. Social reality is always interpreted from an ideological perspective and so “[e]ven the most ostensibly ‘factual’ report will be the product of numerous value judgements” (Iedema *et al.* 1994: 200; 202). Journalists, in other words, constantly make value judgements when writing articles. The difference between a news report and a comment article essentially lies in the visibility of the author in the text. While the author of a comment article has their opinions “openly on display”, the author of a news report constructs their text

in such a way that there is no explicit linguistic evidence of the author’s value judgements. All value judgements are backgrounded or "naturalised" in the sense that the way the event is constructed is presented as the only way of talking about it. [...] "Objectivity", therefore, is an effect created through language (a "rhetorical" effect) rather than a question of being "true to nature" (White 2005a: 4).

‘Objectivity’ can be considered only a professional myth within journalism (Höglund forthcoming 2008: 342), in that, rather than being value-free, news reports naturalise the underlying value judgements and present them as ‘facts’. Which value judgements are naturalised by journalists, in turn, depends, among others, on the type of newspaper in question and what type of audience it is directed to – which will be discussed as follows.

The British newspaper the *Guardian*, which was founded as *The Manchester Guardian* in 1821 (“History of the Guardian” 2002), occupies a prestigious position in the British society, and is considered a broadsheet newspaper. The term ‘broadsheet’ originally referred to the size of the newspaper. The *Guardian*, however, switched in 2005 from the broadsheet or full-format newspaper to the Berliner format, that is, the mid-size

paper (“History of the Guardian” 2002). Contentswise, nevertheless, it is still considered a broadsheet. Until the recent past, broadsheets would only focus on ‘hard’ news in their main news, that is, events that are considered important as well as interesting, whereas tabloids would also have events considered ‘soft’ news, that is, events that are only interesting, as their main news (cf. Palmer 2002: 432). ‘Soft’ news includes, for instance, the reporting of the everyday activities of the celebrities. As a result, tabloids are often “accused of sensationalism and triviality, implicitly suggesting that broadsheet journalism is characterised by the opposite of these qualities (Palmer 2002: 433). However, the difference between the tabloids and broadsheets shows not only in the choice of the topics but also in their language. For instance, the British tabloid *Daily Mirror* used the descriptions ‘mob violence’, ‘furious ghetto mobs’, ‘terror’ and ‘race riots’ (*mirror.co.uk* 7/11/05) in its reporting of the 2005 French disturbances. These descriptions indicate that the paper was very explicit in its negative evaluation of the unrest and used terms that can be considered sensational.

The type of reporting that is being produced by newspapers is also influenced by its readership. The audience of broadsheets typically consists of “predominantly educated, professional, economically and politically powerful individuals” (Richardson 2004: 36). This, in turn, implies that “the content and agenda of broadsheet newspapers reflects the preferences and politics of this predominantly middle and upper class audience” (Richardson 2004: 36). This is also the case at least with the *Guardian*’s domestic, that is, British audience. People who read the *Guardian* are typically “young, affluent urban consumers” who have many and varied hobbies and who can afford to spend (Adinfo 2008). The users of the website of *guardian.co.uk* are similarly “young, upmarket professionals”, the majority of whom are aged between 16-44, with household incomes slightly above the UK average (Adinfo 2008). What is interesting in these reader/user profiles is that both the *Guardian* readers and *guardian.co.uk* users do not appear to be using much of other mass media. For instance, reportedly more than seven in ten *Guardian* readers do not read any other quality daily newspaper, and the users of *guardian.co.uk* “watch less TV, and read fewer newspapers and magazines than the average web user” (Adinfo 2008). This would suggest that the *Guardian* is a major information provider to its readership. It should be noted, however, that when the

newspaper's international audience online<sup>9</sup> is taken into account, a more varied picture may emerge of what makes the paper's typical audience.

As the 2005 disturbances took place in France the *Guardian*, as a British paper, also had to rely on information retrieved from international news agencies. This is where another difference between broadsheets and tabloids lies, as tabloids tend to include fewer foreign news than broadsheets (Palmer 2002: 435). They, thus, use less services by international news agencies. These agencies that deal with the gathering and dissemination of news, also have to rely on criteria of newsworthiness<sup>10</sup> when selecting events for inclusion. The values they usually reflect are 'Western'; such as, priority to elite nations, elite sources, recency and negativity (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen 2002: 65). An example of preference of elite sources in the *guardian.co.uk* was one of its articles on the French disturbances (9/11/05) that was sourced to the Reuters news agency, and that dealt exclusively with the comments of a top French footballer. News agencies thus focus on what may interest international audiences, such as major national economic, political and military affairs, sport, international relations and conflict (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen 2002: 65).

The distinction between the two newspaper formats, tabloids and broadsheets, is today becoming increasingly blurred (Allan 1999: 186). Broadsheets have started to resemble tabloids in that the threshold to include 'soft' news is now lower than before. One reason for why broadsheets are moving towards tabloid-type of journalism is to catch a wider readership or not loose it to the tabloids, as readers today require more entertainment from the media. The circulation figures of newspapers already show that tabloids have a much larger readership than broadsheets (see ABC 2008). The print edition of the *Guardian* has an average circulation of 332,587 (ABC 2008<sup>11</sup>); which places it roughly between the national broadsheet newspapers in the UK with the smallest and the biggest circulations. The *Guardian*'s figures can, for instance, be

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<sup>9</sup> The *Guardian*, however, also has an international print edition of its newspaper, which is not included in this study (the differences between the domestic and international print editions of the *Guardian* have been discussed by Pat Devereaux in her blog (2007)).

<sup>10</sup> See section 3.1 for a detailed discussion of criteria of newsworthiness.

<sup>11</sup> All figures from ABC show the data for July-August of 2008.

compared to the British quality newspaper with the highest circulation figure, *The Daily Telegraph*, which has a readership of 860,298 (ABC 2008). Also *The Times*, with its 612,779 readers, has a larger readership than the *Guardian*; whereas, for instance, the readership of *The Independent*, with 230,033 readers (ABC 2008), is smaller than the *Guardian*'s. However, as was already noted, British quality newspapers cannot compete in circulation figures with British popular newspapers. For instance, the two tabloids with the highest circulation figures, *The Sun* and *The Daily Mirror*, have readerships over three and one million respectively (ABC 2008).

The *Guardian*'s website *guardian.co.uk*, on the other hand, has a larger readership than its paper edition, as it has 18,323,824 unique users monthly (AdInfo 2008; the figures are for May 2008). This makes *guardian.co.uk* the most popular newspaper website in the UK (AdInfo 2008). Most newspapers today have an online edition of their paper on the Internet. The Guardian Unlimited, which changed its name into *guardian.co.uk* in 2008, a network of websites for the *Guardian*, was launched in 1999 (AdInfo 2008). Constantly evolving computer technology together with the Internet provides new and different possibilities for presenting information. For instance, as space is less restricted online, the amount of information online exceeds the amount that can be fitted into the print edition of a newspaper. The 'World news' section on the website of *guardian.co.uk*, for instance, includes a 'Race issues' subsection where race related topics are discussed in the news and comment articles as well as videos. Electronic media thus allows newspapers to communicate information in a form that has traditionally not been typical of the press; most notably this includes the multimedia of audio and video files. Also podcasts, that is, radio programmes that can be downloaded to ones computer or other portable listening device (Allan 2006: 171) about daily news, can be found on the website of *guardian.co.uk*.

As the circulation and online user figures cited above show, online editions of newspapers can reach a much broader audience than their print editions. In the case of *guardian.co.uk* this inevitably also means that non-English readers will be among its readership. This became especially evident during the aftermath of the September 11 crisis in the United States in 2001, when the *Guardian* received a large amount of letters

to the editor. The majority of these letters arrived by e-mail and came from people outside Britain who had been reading the *Guardian's* online edition. Many of these contained positive comments about the newspaper's reporting, and readers expressed their appreciation of the wide coverage on the newspaper's website. However, there were also a number of critical comments where people objected strong language used in some of the articles which some thought was insensitive or anti-American. One consequence of the broadening of the newspapers' audience therefore seems to be that the wider audience "is less likely to share the newspaper's centre-left political orientation than its regular British readership" (Allan 2004 182; 183.) This, in turn, may in the long run have its impact on what type of content is produced by the newspaper.

The role of online newspapers as information providers to a large audience has become significant also in modern warfare. An example of this was the unrest in Estonia in the spring of 2007, where the relocation of a Soviet second world war memorial in the capital city Tallinn led to violent protests by the country's Russian minority population. While property was being destroyed on the streets, cyber-warfare was taking place on the Internet and, among others, on the websites of some Estonian newspapers. Eventually the cyber attacks resulted in that websites became jammed and either could not be accessed at all, or could only be accessed from computers within Estonia. This resulted in that some of the country's information channels were paralysed and consequently prevented from distributing information about the events to the national as well as the international audience (Berendson 2007; Traynor 2007.) The Internet has, in other words, introduced many new ways for occupiers to take hold of a country's vital information channels.

A difference between a newspaper's print and online editions is related to the storage of published information. Although electronic texts are widely thought of as being ephemeral, in that texts can be deleted and disappear as easily as they can be written and published online, storage in electronic form is not necessarily inherently less stable than storage in paper form (Lewis 2003: 99). Provided that Internet access is available, "[y]esterday's electronic news text is potentially far more accessible to many more people than yesterday's print articles or broadcast bulletins" (Lewis 2003: 99). This is

because online archives of newspaper can generally be accessed through a computer regardless of the newspaper's country of origin or the user's location, whereas print archives are confined to a physical location. The question of changing already published online texts without informing the reader about the changes is also debated, as this is something that can only be done to texts published online. The *Guardian* is evidently aiming at transparency in this respect, since each one of its articles that is published on its website is accompanied by a short 'Article history', which gives information about the publication site and when the last changes were made to the article<sup>12</sup>. The *Guardian*'s present reader's editor Siobhain Butterworth has in her column also discussed the paper's policy regarding the changes that are made to online copies of articles. According to her, apart from spelling mistakes, "[a]s a general rule the Guardian doesn't invisibly mend articles on the web because it has a policy of not hiding its mistakes - its archive is supposed to be, as far as possible, an accurate record of what it published" (Butterworth 2008).

The question of ownership is also something that shapes the newspaper and its contents. In order to be able to continue publishing their paper, newspapers are profit-making companies like other businesses that sell goods or services. Consequently, as the press and media are owned and run like any other businesses the need secure financial survival applies to them to the same degree. Trends in business development, such as *concentration*, where the few(er) own more, *diversification*, where media corporations invest into other lines of businesses, and *multi-nationalism*, where conglomerates "operate on a world basis", have all contributed to making the news media even more, not less, dependent on finances (cf. Hartley 1993: 48; 49; 50). The *Guardian* is part of the Guardian Media Group (GMG), which is a multimedia business that also owns a number of national, regional and local newspapers, a TV station, 13 radio stations across the UK, magazines, as well as websites – among others *guardian.co.uk* (GMG 2007). According to GMG, the group has shares in, or jointly, owns other businesses, including, for instance, an online classified business, a publishing company, and a news services provider (GMG 2007). The Guardian Media Group is wholly owned by the

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<sup>12</sup> 'Article history' was discussed in more detail in section 1.1.

Scott Trust, the core purpose of which is “to secure the financial and editorial independence of the Guardian in perpetuity: as a quality national newspaper without party affiliation; remaining faithful to its liberal tradition” (GMG 2007). The *Guardian*’s political leaning is considered to be left-of-centre of the British papers, unlike, for instance, the quality paper *The Daily Telegraph* that is considered strongly conservative (British Papers 2008).

All these different aspects of the *Guardian* have an impact on how the disturbances in France are reported by the paper. For instance, being a British broadsheet, as opposed to a tabloid, newspaper that has a very heterogeneous audience, places expectations on what type of language can be used by the newspaper in its coverage of the events – does it speak of *furious ghetto mobs* or *rioting youths* or simply *youths*? The paper’s reporting must also be in accordance with its political orientation, as the readership of a left-of-centre newspaper would expect a more liberal, rather than conservative, coverage of events. At the same time, the newspaper’s finances place additional demands on the contents of the newspaper, which has to be tempting to the readers who will otherwise vote with their feet.

### 3 CONSTRUCTING THE NEWS

The aim of this study is to examine whose versions competed in the *Guardian's* coverage of the 2005 French disturbances. The focus is on news sources and the credibility they are given in their descriptions. In the following I will discuss how the news media actively constructs the events in news reports. The discussion starts in Section 3.1 with an exploration into what made the unrest in France into a newsworthy event and how this could be seen in the *Guardian's* reporting. Section 3.2 explores how journalists can express evaluation in news reports through evaluative language. The discussion derives from the Appraisal framework. As the main focus in this study is on the news sources, Section 3.3 explores how different individuals and groups in society are allowed access into news and how they are treated as sources of information. How news sources can be seen as advocates and arbiters in news events is explored in Section 3.4.

#### 3.1 Newsworthiness

As the disturbances in France were events that really took place, the news media's account of these events was also non-fictional. However, reality is not something that is "out there", easily accessible and understandable. Rather, it is socially constructed with language playing a central role in this construction "so that the patterning of vocabulary and sentence structure shows us reality in a particular light and guides our apprehension of it" (Montgomery 1995: 250.) Accordingly, language is not an 'objective' tool that is used to only describe reality that exists independent of language, but a highly subjective tool that constructs and gives meaning to reality. It is for this reason there are no "innocent texts" as all "[c]ultural texts are saturated with social meanings" (Durham & Kellner 2001: 5, 6).

One of the very basic assumptions in the news media is the notion of a *consensual* society, according to which there is unity among the citizens in a society (cf. Hartley 1993: 82). The consensual model of society assumes that there are no dissidents in its

system, that is, groups who do not agree with the consensus; and so dissidents are placed outside the consensus (cf. Hartley 1993: 83). In order for the news media and their audience to recognize a conflict, then, there must be a prior assumption of the consensus in society to which the dissidents are a threat. This also enables the construction of the imaginary ‘them’ and ‘us’ in society, where ‘we’ belong to the consensus, whereas ‘they’ do not (cf. Fowler 1991: 52, 53). Various strikes, demonstrations, and disturbances such as those in France, are not considered to be part of the consensus; instead, they are seen as a threat to it. The people participating in such anti-consensus actions are “subjected to marginalization and repression” (Fowler 1991: 53), and, consequently, become ‘they’ in society. This explains why news describes various disturbances and cases of civil unrest in terms of irresponsibility, irrationality, or mindlessness (Hartley 1993: 84); implying that the consensual society stands for responsibility, rationality, and meaningfulness.

When describing or constructing the ‘consensual’ society in the news, journalists rely on *news values* that include a set of criteria that decide which events, of the multitude available every day, are newsworthy (cf. Hartley: 1993: 76). News values function to give the event in question a meaning; a point of view from which it can be interpreted. Many events are newsworthy because they are seen to pose a threat to the assumed consensus of society, or because they deviate from the norms set by the ‘consensual’ society. News values are thus “not neutral, but reflect ideologies and priorities held in society” (Bell: 1991: 156). News values were originally formulated by Johann Galtung and Mari Ruge (Fowler 1991: 13), but today’s media researchers differ in their listings of news values and so there exists a variety of criteria that are considered to increase the newsworthiness of an event (for alternative listings see, for example, Bell 1991: 155; van Dijk 1988: 115 and Fowler 1991: 12). This study has chosen to follow Palmer’s classification whose eleven news values cover the most important feature of events that “singly or in combination, increase the chance of an event being considered newsworthy” (Palmer 2002: 428).

The first feature on Palmer’s (2002: 428) list is *frequency* or the time-frame of an event, which means that the event “must be complete within the publication cycle of the news

organization reporting it". The disturbances in France had multiple time-frames. As they continued for three weeks and were consequently not complete within a single publication cycle, different phenomena indirectly related to the unrest were brought up; including, for instance, the poor conditions in the suburbs, integration policy in France, and the Interior Minister's presidential aspirations.

The second feature on Palmer's (2002: 428) list, *threshold*, was also satisfied by the unrest. The French disturbances were large enough in size to exceed the threshold for newsworthy events. The unrest lasted for about three weeks, and spread to 274 towns throughout Paris and the rest of France during which approximately 3000 people were arrested and 10,000 cars set on fire (Sahlins 2006; *Guardian* 21/11/05). It was therefore not without reason that the size of these events was emphasized in the news, as it was, for instance, stated that in terms of material destruction, the unrest was France's worst since the Second World War (cf. *guardian.co.uk* 8/11/05). The size of the unrest was also compared to other events in history, such as the student protests of 1968 in France (cf. *guardian.co.uk* 14/11/05). However, disturbances of this size in a small and relatively unknown country to the British public, would have needed to be more violent and also required more than one fatality, before being noted in the British media (cf. Palmer 2002: 429).

The third of Palmer's (2002: 428) criterion for newsworthiness, *clarity*, was also satisfied by the unrest, although by simplification. While the French disturbances, and especially the reasons behind them, were far from unambiguous, these complexities could be ignored in news reports, or simplified, by focusing on the clashes and the amount and type of property damage done by the youths. In other words, rather than interpreting the disturbances in terms of complex socio-economic issues and discrimination in the French society, they were interpreted within the framework of criminal activity, where cause and effect were clear; that is to say, that a group of perpetrators caused major disorder and damage.

The fourth feature on Palmer's (2002: 428) list that might contribute to newsworthiness is that of *cultural proximity* or *consonance*. Because of the cultural closeness between

Britain and France, the events in France were meaningful to the British audience. Violence and property damage are interpreted in the same negative way in the British society as they are in the French society. As immigration and discrimination related matters are relevant also in Britain, and similar race and poverty related disturbances had taken place there as well, the unrest in France could be reported also in the British press where the events could be trusted to be understandable for its readership too.

Although disturbances such as these had taken place in France before (and occurred repeatedly thereafter), these occurred in such a larger scale, that it made them rare. In other words, disturbances of this size, although not type, in France were the reason for why they also satisfied the feature of *unexpectedness* on Palmer's (2002: 428) list. As the disturbances continued to spread to other areas in the capital city and elsewhere in France, they gave more material to the news reports, and therefore also satisfied the seventh criterion of *continuity*.

The eighth feature of *composition* on Palmer's (2002: 428) list refers to how a potentially newsworthy event will fit in with all the other news events that are taking place at the same time. The nature and importance of other news events has an effect on how much space and prominence will be given to an event in the news. In other words, an event may receive less prominence in the media if another event that is considered to have major importance, such as a large catastrophe, is taking place at the same time. Two major news events; a political scandal in the United States where a White House official had to resign (*Guardian* 29/10/05), and an earthquake in South Asia (*Guardian* 10/10/05), had taken place just before the unrest started in France. Had the unrest taken place simultaneously with these events, they would have had to compete harder for space in the news. However, as this was not the case, they also satisfied the feature of *composition*.

The ninth feature on Palmer's (2002: 428) list, *actions of the elite*, was also satisfied by the French disturbances. Although members of the elite, such as politicians, heads of large companies or celebrities, did not start or participate in the disturbances, especially the politicians were active participants in the debate around the unrest. Comments by

important political figures, such as the president and the ministers, are likely to attract more readers, which makes the criteria of *actions of the elite* particularly significant.

*Personification*, the tenth feature on Palmer's (2002: 428) list, is used to give a face to the news event, which could also be done in the case of the disturbances in France. This was because the events started with the death of two suburban youths and continued with an unrest started by other suburban youths, which provided sources and commentators to the journalists. Without personification the debate would have been a highly abstract discussion about violence, law and order, politics, poverty, and integration. Personification thus enables complex and abstract phenomena to be made more understandable to the news audience. However, personification, or media's use of people as symbols, becomes problematic when "discussion and explanation of underlying social and economic factors" is avoided as the focus is laid on persons (Fowler 1991: 16). In the coverage of civil unrest this could mean that the media focuses on the people who damage public property on the streets, leaving problems with unemployment and social services undocumented (Fowler 1991: 16).

The last feature on Palmer's (2002: 428) list, *negativity*, was one of the main reasons as to why the disturbances in France became news. Negativity can be explored from the point of view of consensus, in that the assumed consensus of society was disrupted by the actions of the 'dissidents'. The disturbances also had a negative impact on the French economy as the property damage caused by the youths amounted to over €200 millions (Sahlins 2006). In addition to these, there also occurred attacks against other people, in the most serious of them, a person died of his injuries. The youths did, however, not stand for all the negative events during the unrest. There was also a case of police using excessive violence towards some of the youths in the disturbances (cf. *guardian.co.uk* 10/11/05). These negative incidents were, nevertheless, relatively minor and even common in everyday life as assaults of various kinds occur also outside the context of disturbances. Therefore, these events may otherwise not have been considered newsworthy in the British press, but as they formed a part of the ongoing unrest, they were noted by the international news media as well.

What, then, did not figure prominently in the headlines and was rarely the main topic in the *Guardian's* news reports of the French unrest, were the underlying reasons for the disturbances, that is, socio-economic exclusion and racial discrimination. It could be argued that these issues were abstract rather than concrete, and that they were therefore not suitable as topics for news reports – although being well motivated for commentaries. The crowd action, on the other hand, was seen as concrete and, more importantly, was easily available for journalists wanting to cover the events. However, socio-economic issues and racial discrimination, rather than being abstract, would have required investigative journalism on the part of the news organisations. After some research, these topics could also have been personified, their size and threshold could have been assessed and they would have qualified as unexpected and negative events.

Events thus have to be of a certain size and type to be considered newsworthy. It is not without reason that certain events are prioritised, and for an event to be deemed newsworthy, it typically has to be

assessed as actually or potentially damaging, aberrant or transformative of social roles and power relations (and hence often involves conflict) in ways that are significant to society as a whole – hence the primary focus of news on politics (power-relational transformation) crime (aberration and/or damage) and misadventure (damage, aberration in cases of human negligence) (White 1998: 266).

In other words, the news media is strengthening the notion of a consensual society by drawing attention to 'deviating' events. News media is thus constructing a particular social and moral order in society by marking the points where the order is at risk (White 1998: 267). However, the news media is also careful in noting how and when the status quo will be restored. In times of crisis, the news media, for instance, contacts different authorities in society, such as the police and the government, to show how efficiently or inefficiently they have dealt with the situation (Iedema *et al.* 1994: 107). Some authorities may be very explicit in wishing that the social order be restored; as is evident in the following quote by a French mayor of one of the affected suburbs:

- (5) "In a few days' time they'll return to normal life ... everyone has now had enough; parents have realised this has to stop. They are starting to keep kids at home."  
(*Guardian* 5/11/05)

Crime is thus consistently newsworthy as criminal events by definition deviate from and threaten the consensus in society (Hall *et al.* 1978: 66). Crime news, which the crowd action in France also qualified as, not only tell the public what actions are considered illegal and lead to punishment, but also function to communicate "the values of the society and [...] its limits of tolerance" (ibid. 66). In other words, crime news communicate something very profound about a society and its values. It is also for this reason that the liberal voice in liberal newspapers, such as the *Guardian*, "in relation to crime more than in any other single area [...] is most constrained; that conventional definitions are hardest to resist; that alternative definitions are hardest to come by" (ibid. 90). This would in other words suggest that even newspapers with liberal ideologies cannot escape the dominant definitions when it comes to crime.

In addition to news values, the category of news also dictates to journalists what events are newsworthy and what type of information is of primary importance, as well as from which sources this information can be obtained. News can be divided into six categories; *hard* news, *soft* news, *diary* news, *spot* news, *breaking* news and *investigative* journalism (Palmer 2002: 432). Hard news includes events that are considered both interesting as well as important, whereas soft news are considered only interesting (ibid. 432). The disturbances in France were considered interesting, for the civil unrest aspect, as well as important, for the integration policy questions, and therefore qualified as hard news. The French unrest did, however, not qualify as diary news, as these are events that the news media is informed about in beforehand by various institutions, such a police stations, law courts and Parliament where interesting and important events are likely to take place (cf. Palmer 2002: 436), while this crowd action was not pre-planned and the media consequently not informed in beforehand. As the disturbances were unpredictable but took place at a predictable site; that is, property damage in smaller scale in the French suburbs was predictable, the events qualified as spot news. Because of unpredictability, the unrest was also breaking news during its first day(s), but gradually lost its news value when the unrest continued in the same

pace and style for about three weeks. The unrest was clearly also not the result of investigative journalism practiced by journalists (cf. Palmer 2002: 436). There was nevertheless, a possibility for journalists to practice this type of journalism later in connection with the socio-economic issues in the suburbs. As the French disturbances thus qualified as many types of news and continued for weeks, journalists had an opportunity to discuss the events from many viewpoints and use a variety of sources.

How a particular news event is described also depends on the visuals that accompany the news report. In the case of news articles, photos are used to ‘illustrate’ the story. The use of photos to accompany news is also related to the quest of ‘objectivity’, in that a photo is used as a proof for what happened (Iedema *et al.* 1994: 13). Similarly to news reports, then, news photos claim ‘objectivity’ and impartiality; so that the photojournalist “promises the viewer authenticity and veracity, playing the part of a dispassionate observer who is uninvolved with events as they unfold in front of the camera” (Holland 2002: 464). However, news photography, as news in general, cannot be ‘objective’ or neutrally depict reality. This is because each photograph is the result of a set of decisions taken by the photographer concerning, for instance, the choice of lens, angle and light (Holland 2002: 471) – choices that all shape and frame reality. Photography’s that appear in connection with news are not ‘innocent’ illustrations to the topic that is being discussed in the news article, but have their own authority and can lead the reader to unconsciously accept a particular interpretation as natural (cf. Iedema *et al.* 1994: 268). Requirements of newsworthiness apply also on news photography, in that only the newsworthy aspects are photographed. In the case of the French unrest, photojournalists could thus choose where they placed themselves with their camera; on the streets of the suburbs in the nighttime in the midst of the crowd action or in the same suburbs during daytime in the resident’s every-day life.

### 3.2 Evaluation Through Source Specification

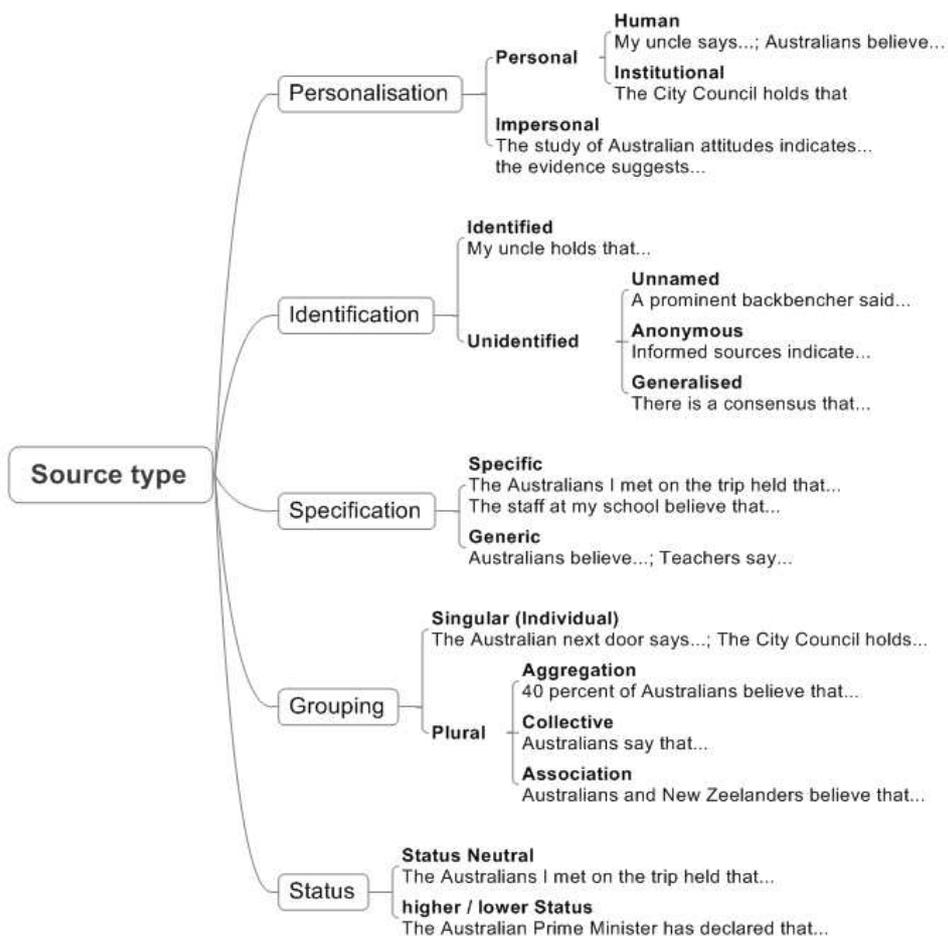
Since journalists rely on evaluative opinions when selecting and constructing news, the language of evaluation occupies a central position in news texts. In this thesis, the

Appraisal framework has been used to study the language of evaluation in news reports. The framework is an extension of M.A.K. Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, from which the central concept in Appraisal, that of interpersonal meaning in language, has been derived (Martin 2005: 1). Appraisal is concerned with appraising or evaluating, that is, expressing opinions, attitudes and values. In the Appraisal framework, resources for expressing evaluation have been categorised into three large groups: *attitude*, *engagement* and *graduation*. *Attitude* is concerned with feelings, judgements of behaviour as well as the evaluation of things. *Engagement* deals with sourcing attitudes and the interplay of voices in discourse. *Graduation* is concerned with how the feelings of attitude and interpersonal opinions of engagement are graded, that is, amplified or downplayed (Martin 2005: 35.) The subtype of engagement is of particular interest in this study that aims at examining how journalists evaluate their news sources.

Most studies that use the Appraisal framework focus on studying how authors of a text evaluate the opinions or behaviour of those they refer to in their text. One of the most prominent studies using the Appraisal framework is the Ph.D Dissertation by P.P.R. White (1998), where White studied inter-subjective positioning in news reports, that is, how journalists construct a 'reporter voice'. He also analysed the textual structure of news reports, that is, in what order and how information was presented. The model for *source specification* outlined in Appraisal follows closely Theo van Leeuwen's (1996) work *The representation of social actors*. The difference between van Leeuwen's approach and that of Appraisal lies in that, while Appraisal focuses only on the nature and status of social actors whose statements are quoted in texts (White 2005), van Leeuwen examines how social actors are generally represented in discourse.

The descriptions of news sources affect their credibility as sources of information, and rather than being arbitrarily chosen "[t]he social hierarchy seems to be reproduced in the rhetorical hierarchy of credibility and reliability" (van Dijk 1988: 87). The journalist can indicate through description whether the source is of high or low credibility, which, in turn, will have an effect on how the readers position themselves towards the source and his/her statements. The readers do not necessarily align themselves with the

author's views but can take distance from their stance and even oppose it. They can, for instance, choose not to read the articles by a particular author, send letters to the editor, or express their disagreement by posting a comment on the newspaper's website. Sources can be described in a number of ways which White (2005) has classified into five categories: *personalisation*, *identification*, *specification*, *grouping* and *status*. An overview of these and their subtypes together with examples can be seen in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Source types in source specification (White 2005)<sup>13</sup>

Sources can be described in a variety of ways, as is evident in the multitude of subcategories in Figure 1. The journalist can, for instance, choose a *personal* or

<sup>13</sup> Figure 1 contains my addition of the subtypes of *unidentified* sources, as these were not shown in the original diagram but were discussed in the theoretical framework.

*impersonal* source of information. A personal source can be a human being, as in “*The interior minister, Nicolas Sarkozy, told Europe-1 radio that...*” (*guardian.co.uk* 2/11/05), or an institution, as in “*Foreign governments warned their citizens to be careful in France*” (*guardian.co.uk* 8/11/05). The journalist may use the credibility of these sources by, for instance, foregrounding the high status of the source and use it to gain support for a certain view and suppress potential disagreement from the readers (White 2005). *Impersonal* sources, in which case the source is a study, a report or an experiment (White 2005), can be used for the same effect. For instance, in “*a poll for Le Parisien newspaper showed that a large majority of French people back the government's stance*” (*Guardian* 10/11/05), the poll is a credible source because polls are seen to rely on disinterested measurement and statistical data.

The journalist can also choose to *identify* their sources or leave them *unidentified*. In the case of *identified* sources, the journalist reveals the identity of the source to the readers, as in “*The equal opportunities minister, Azouz Begag, said...*” (*guardian.co.uk* 2/11/05). The journalist can conceal the identity of their source through three types of descriptions; *unnamed* source, *anonymous* source and *generalised* source. An *unnamed* source lacks a name by which it could be identified, as in “*some members of his own centre-right UPM party have accused Mr Sarkozy of...*” (*Guardian* 1/11/05) where the identities of the *members* remain unknown. However, in the former case, the readers will at least know that the sources come from the French UPM party, whereas in the case of an *anonymous* source any information regarding the identity of the source is absent. For instance, in “*Commentators have expressed fears that...*” (*guardian.co.uk* 10/11/05), there is no information about who the commentators could be; their possible political views or their background that could affect their opinions. Remaining unidentified may increase the credibility of the source as the source may be endowed with a type of “*impersonal authority*” (van Leeuwen 1996: 52). A source can be left unidentified also by *generalising* the source of information, and suggesting that ‘the general public’ is behind the statement. Such a source is referred to in the following extract; “*There were also fears that unrest could spread to other countries after cars were torched outside Brussels's main train station*” (*guardian.co.uk* 7/11/05), where the sources are not identified, but only implied.

The journalist can furthermore choose a *specific* or a *generic* source of information. For instance, in “*Government officials cited a falling number of direct clashes...*” (guardian.co.uk 4/11/05), the journalist has chosen not to identify any particular government officials, and refers to *government officials* in general. In “...said *Jean-Francois Cordet, the senior government official*” (guardian.co.uk 3/11/05), on the other hand, the source is a specific government official, and therefore a *specific* source. Regarding the use of such specific/generic descriptions, it has been noted by van Leeuwen (1996: 47) that in middle-class oriented newspapers government agents and experts are frequently referred to specifically, and ‘ordinary people’ generically; in working-class oriented newspapers, on the other hand, ‘ordinary people’ are frequently referred to specifically. This suggests that, rather than being coherent, different newspapers want to emphasize and give credibility to different sources.

The journalist can also choose a *singular or plural grouping* as their source. In the case of a singular grouping, the source is simply an individual (such as, the above discussed government official). Plural groupings, on the other hand, are group sources appearing either as an *aggregation*, a *collective* or an *association*. An *aggregate* source consists of a group of participants treated as a statistic, as in “73% said they supported the decision to give selected local officials the power to impose night-time curfews” (*Guardian* 10/11/05). In contemporary society, aggregation is often used “to manufacture consensus opinion, even though it presents itself as merely recording facts” (van Leeuwen 1996: 49). In the case of a *collective* source, people are gathered together based on a shared quality or feature, as in “Many *rioters* say they are determined to make Mr Sarkozy pay for his “insults”” (*Guardian* 7/11/05), where the quality shared by the sources is their participation in the disturbances. A group source in the form of an *association*, on the other hand, consists of people who have in common a view which is being discussed in the text. For instance, in “*Opposition politicians, human rights groups and even some members of [Sarkozy’s] own centre-right UPM party have accused Sarkozy of...*” (*Guardian* 1/11/05), the common denominator for the mentioned sources is that they have all accused Sarkozy of something. This association is likely to appear as a credible source as it consists of individuals and organisations

with very different backgrounds and interests, which shows that the statement by the association is supported by groups of people with seemingly different interests.

Lastly, the *status* of a source can also be indicated in their description, in which case the source will be associated with *neutral*, *higher* or *lower* level of authority or power in society (White 2005). The description and use of high-status sources is illustrated in the following extract:

- (6) Asked by a newspaper whether France was swinging to the right, *a political analyst, Dominique Reynié*, said: "Yes. There is a strong tendency to shift rightwards, partly for demographic reasons - the French are getting older, and an ageing nation is a frightened nation. This has been accentuated by the crisis in the suburbs. The shock of November 2005 will stay with us." (*Guardian* 21/11/05)

In the above extract, the source's high status is made explicit by adding his professional title to the description. The title shows that the source has expert knowledge in the matter that is being discussed and that serves to give him credibility as a source. The above extract also shows that this high-status source has not been asked to freely comment on the unrest, but rather to express his support to the newspaper's suggestion that France was moving politically towards the right.

Lower status of a source, on the other hand, is indicated in the following description of a suburban youth; "...said *Karim, 17*" (*Guardian* 9/11/05). The description includes personal information about the source as the age of the person is mentioned. Also, reference by first name suggests informality, and a title similar to that of the above discussed minister cannot be attached to this source. All this combined associates the source with lower, rather than higher or neutral, status.

The central role of source description in offering support for one party in a news event over another is illustrated in the following extract, where the issue is the incident that started the widespread unrest in France, and the question is whether the police were pursuing the two youths on the night they got electrocuted:

- (7) *There have been **claims**, denied by *officials*, that they were were hiding to escape from police. (guardian.co.uk 2/11/05)*

White (2005) has noted that when the author of a text employs personalised, named and individualised news actors as sources, s/he appears to be in a more concrete or direct contact with these. With unnamed, generic and collectivised sources, on the other hand, the author is in a position to distance him/herself from the news actors, and to generalise, abstract and universalise. In the above extract, the reason for the death of the two youths is presented as one between an unidentified and generalised source, “*there have been claims*”, and an identified and personalised source, “*denied by officials*”. It is not specified who exactly claimed that the youths were escaping from police, and the claim is thus generalised as if it would apply to a large group of people; those who denied the claim, however, are identified. Although the exact identity of the officials also remains unknown, their denial of the allegations uttered by the unidentified sources will in this case seem more reliable, as it has been attributed to a known source of some status. Accordingly, the ‘claim’ that the police were pursuing the youths is presented here as highly questionable, not the least for being labelled *claim*, as a specific source responsible for it is missing. The denial, on the other hand, is made to seem more credible as a source is attached to it. Being given this information, the readers will have difficulties forming their own, possibly different, opinion of the matter.

Journalists construct news stories by collecting different information from different types of sources, which they then describe in different ways. The descriptions that add to or reduce the credibility of a source can reveal the chosen angle of the story. The journalist may, for instance, have used a high-status collective source to illustrate support for one view, and a lower status individual source to illustrate support for an opposing view. This may, but does not have to, invite the readers to evaluate the news source, and, consequently, interpret the whole news event, in a similar way.

### 3.3 The Powerful and the Powerless News Sources

In order to be able to appear as a source in a news story, the individual or group must first gain access to the news. Some are ensured access more easily than others, and, according to some scholars (Fairclough 1995: 62-63; Parenti 1993: 9), the socially dominant sectors tend to get access to the media, which leads the press to prefer the privileged and the powerful to the unprivileged and powerless. The privileged and the powerful are those with the political and the economic power in society. The reason as to why sources of this type are granted more access to the news media is that these tend to have “organized relationships with the press, such as spokespersons, press releases or press conferences” (van Dijk 1988: 120). This facilitates the work of news organisations who are thus provided material about an event or issue. In addition to this, because of their status, the privileged in the society “are not only considered more newsworthy (as news actors) but also as more reliable as observers and opinion formulators” (ibid. 87). If the news media only provides access to these, however, it contributes to inequality in society (cf. Ericson *et al.* 1989: 16), and reproduces and reinforces social hierarchies.

The news is then presenting very specific representations of society where it appears natural that authoritative sources receive a privileged treatment. The approach taken in news therefore results in representing “*who* are the authorized knowers and *what* are their authoritative versions of reality” (Ericson *et al.* 1989: 3; original italics). The role of “authorized knowers” is usually given to the powerful individuals and institutions in society; the authorities, or other elite individuals. In terms of source specification, “authorized knowers” are likely to appear as fully identified individuals whose professional title shows their high status – all of which adds to their credibility and confirms their role as an “authorized knower”. Those who are not considered to be “authorized knowers” in news are entirely excluded from the debate or relegated to a minor role (Ericson *et al.* 1989: 4). Their specification as sources would then include descriptions indicating lower status, or identification in collective rather than individual terms to distance their person from the readers. When certain types of sources are constantly relegated to minor roles, whereas other sources are presented as “authorized knowers”, the role division of these sources will start to seem natural.

There are certain sources who tend to be constantly marginalized or represented in a negative way, for example, in many mainstream newspapers. Voices such as those in

trade unions, feminists, anti-racists, environmentalists, anti-poverty activists and other groups committed to progressive social change – are routinely characterized as representing a threat to the interests of ‘market sensitive’ news organizations (Allan 2004: 52).

This means that if they get access to the media, their statements will not be framed on the same terms as those of the authorities or who support the consensus.<sup>14</sup> This suggests that the further away a source is from “the political consensus”, the harder it will be for the source to gain access to the media (Allan 1999: 70). For instance, a mainstream newspaper may lose some of its readers if it chose to represent these marginal groups in an overly favourable way, as its reporting may come into conflict with the opinions and attitudes of the intended audience. This is why news media tends to give more prominence to the powerful sources that support the status quo, while the powerless sources that oppose it do not receive similar prominence.

There are also other groups in society that are marginalized in the news media, and consequently marginalized as news sources. The most relevant of these for the present study are the various ethnic minorities. The press can marginalize minorities or immigrants by suggesting in news stories that the latter “cause social, cultural, and economic “problems” for the dominant (White) in-group” (van Dijk 1989: 361). This is done by writing about ethnic minority groups mainly “in association with crime, violence, conflict, unacceptable cultural differences, or other forms of deviance” (van Dijk 1991: 21). These forms of ‘deviance’ can also be reflected in their descriptions such as ‘rioters’ or ‘vandals’. While this type of coverage could be explained by claiming that the minorities are indeed often involved in criminal activities, or that similar terms would be used of the majority population, the coverage becomes biased when the minorities only appear in the news in connection with negative events. The

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<sup>14</sup> See example 32 for a discussion on human rights and anti-racism groups as news sources in an instance of the *Guardian*’s reporting.

consequence of this is that the news audience, the majority of which does not have any personal knowledge or experience of either with the minorities or any serious crime, obtains most of their information from the press (ibid. 1989: 155).

According to van Dijk (1991: 154), minorities rarely appear in the news media commenting on the actions or policies of the majority, especially in matters concerning discrimination. When their opinions are heard, they are marked with quotation marks or distancing words such as “accuse” or “allege”. In the case of the unrest in France, such distancing words were also used, but not in connection with quotes by minorities. They were, instead, used in reference to the language that the Interior Minister had used about the youths, which was said to have been “*allegedly* inflammatory” (cf. *Guardian* 17/11/05). The journalist, thus, clearly expresses stance in reference to the minister’s use of language. Furthermore, although it was stated that the disturbances started in response to ‘discriminatory treatment’ (cf. *Guardian* 5/11/05), it was the more neutral topic of ‘integration policy’ that received attention in the news reports. Regarding the use of minorities as sources, the interviewed minority population was never quoted as directly talking about discrimination; rather, the focus was on socio-economic issues in general. The only instance when racial discrimination was explicitly mentioned was in reference to the president’s speech, where the latter was said to have “launched an appeal to combat the “poison” of racial discrimination” (*Guardian* 15/11/05).

Although ‘ordinary’ people, who do not necessarily enjoy the same prestige as the powerful in the society, are to a high degree subject to the journalists’ will when they appear in news, powerful individuals and organisations can control how they are represented in the media. The key for this lies in public relations or PR. PR implies a conscious handling of the relations with the public so as to maintain a respectable and credible image. Governments, businesses and even small pressure groups are now paying attention to how to promote themselves (Miller 2002: 70). However, resources are needed for PR, and those with the most resources, such as governments, can promote themselves more effectively than those with less resources, as, for instance, anti-racism groups (cf. Miller 2002: 74). However, even resources cannot guarantee that journalists will not be critical of the established sources as well, and when resource-rich

face internal problems or cannot defend themselves, resource-poor groups get an opportunity to express their views (Miller 2002: 78). This, nevertheless, implies that the attention is usually on the powerful sources, and the less powerful only occasionally get the media's attention.

It is not irrelevant or meaningless which news sources the *Guardian* uses in its reporting, because as a broadsheet newspaper it represents the elite opinion. Although both the quality as well as the popular press contribute to the formation of public opinion in society, the quality press is “the dominant communication medium among the elites” (van Dijk 1991: 251). This makes the information provided in the ‘quality’ press especially relevant, as it represents the opinions and definitions of the dominant social classes.

### 3.4 Advocates and Arbiters

Sources, once they are allowed access to the news media to interpret events from their viewpoint, are not treated entirely on equal terms. The treatment of sources is, however, not always governed by the individual qualities of a source – for instance, its membership in a pressure group or a political elite. The treatment can also be governed by the news event itself, and so sources can be assigned unequal positions depending on the level of their involvement in the event.

To study the sources' level of involvement in a news event, they can be classified into *advocates* and *arbiters*; two concepts introduced by David Deacon and Peter Golding in their study *Taxation and Representation* (1994). According to them, sources can be classified into *advocates* and *arbiters* depending on the vested interest that the source has in the news event. *Advocates* are then the sources “that journalists recognize as having explicit, vested political or professional interests which frame and inform their contributions” (Deacon & Golding 1994: 15). *Arbiters*, on the other hand, are not considered to have such interest in the matter, and their role is to “evaluate assertions and interpretations made by advocates in a political debate” (Deacon & Golding 1994:

15). Consequently, the position of the source depends on the role that it is seen to have in the construction of the news event.

Deacon and Golding's concepts of advocates and arbiters cannot, however, be directly applied in this study. As the present study, and the news event it aims to analyse, is different from that in Deacon and Golding's study, their concepts must also be modified for compatibility with the present study. In studying the introduction (and the later abolition) of the Community Charge or 'poll tax' in the UK, Deacon and Golding only concentrated on official sources and did not take ordinary citizens or unofficial sources into account. This is also why their definitions for advocates and arbiters are largely based on political alignment or non-alignment. This study, on the other hand, includes individuals and institutions as sources<sup>15</sup>, and these can thus not be classified into advocates and arbiters merely on political grounds. Also, as the unofficial sources were in a key role in the news event, they could not be ignored. The present study thus loosely follows Deacon and Golding's definitions, and sets up a third category, *dual sources*, for those that did not fit into either of the two proposed categories.

News sources that journalists used to describe the events in France in 2005 had all some invested interest in the events, and there were some that had more than others. These sources were the advocates. Following Deacon and Golding (1994: 17), advocates "provide the raw material of media coverage: the conflict upon which news depends". As this definition is not entirely unambiguous, the starting point for the classification of advocates in the French unrest, where the conflicts were numerous, was the initial event or conflict that started the coverage of the disturbances and the participants in this event. The conflict started after the assumed police pursuit of suburban youths where two youths got killed after having hid themselves in an electric power station. The disturbances, and what they were caused by, were only later connected to the poor

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<sup>15</sup> In the present study, however, leaves unclassified sources that were not seen as having a central role in the debate in the coverage of the French unrest, which included fire fighters, media sources, foreign governments, the French public (excluding suburban residents), and fatalities and injured (including hospital officials).

conditions in the suburbs and a failed integration policy - which is when all the other sources were included in the news to interpret the events.

The sources that in Deacon and Golding's study were perceived to be impartial in the conflict were named arbiters. The idea of an arbiter as a completely impartial source is, however, problematic. Deacon and Golding (1994: 174) have also acknowledged that all sources that were treated as arbiters in their study were not entirely impartial. In the present study, analysts and researchers (referred to as 'experts') and opinion polls were considered to be the arbiters. Experts were asked to evaluate the reasons, impacts and consequences of the French disturbances, and so they were not a party in the conflict that they were evaluating. The perceived expertise or professional status of arbiters is "seen to remove them from the vested partiality of party political debate, and allow them to comment dispassionately, intelligently and 'objectively'" (ibid. 16). Analysts were indeed as professionals removed from the "partiality of party political debate", but they still represented an institution, and their judgement was affected by their personal experiences (cf. ibid. 17). As opinion polls did not measure the opinions of the entire French public, they needed to be selective in their measuring of opinions, these arbiters were also subjective commentators.

In Deacon and Golding's study, arbiters were 'outsiders' to the conflict that made the news and mainly functioned to explain the conflict. Comments by them would, nevertheless, come to play a significant role in the coverage. As outside spectators with expert status, the views and opinions of arbiters were treated with more respect than those by "even the most senior 'advocates'" (Deacon & Golding 202-203). This is because once certain arbiters have been used as sources, their statements can set the frames within which advocates can be heard (Allan 1999: 80). This means that if an arbiter presents an interpretation of a conflict, the journalists may construct their coverage of the event to fit that frame. As a result, arbiters "play a very important part in shaping media evaluations of the issues upon which they are invited to comment" (Deacon & Golding 1994: 202).

As arbiters are, unlike advocates, always chosen by journalists, this enables journalists “to construct their own ‘objectivity’” (Deacon & Golding 1994: 13). By choosing a particular arbiter that the journalist knows has the kind of knowledge required to evaluate the issue, the journalist trusts his/her “own political and professional judgement” (ibid. 16). For instance, in an article that discussed the effect that the French disturbances had had on the Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy’s popularity, a poll, an *impersonal* source representing the opinion of many, was cited that indicated that his approval had risen since the start of the disturbances:

- (8) But Mr Sarkozy, buoyed by an *opinion poll* saying his approval rating had soared by 11 points since the rioting started on October 27, told the senate that "some positive discrimination is needed to provide opportunities to France's young" (*Guardian* 17/11/05)

The opinion poll result demonstrating a rise in the minister’s approval rating suggests that the minister’s actions during the unrest have gained support, rather than condemnation, from the public. The same article also cited a fully identified and titled analyst who gave an explanation for why the French public backed the Interior Minister although the latter’s way of dealing with the disturbances and the youths was considered hard-lined:

- (9) "It seems clear that while intellectuals, social workers, journalists and the left were offended, the man and woman in the street was not," said one *analyst, Pascal Perrineau*. "They seem to appreciate Sarkozy talking to them in everyday language, which most French politicians never do." (*Guardian* 17/11/05)

This arbiter evidently gives a positive explanation to why the public backed the minister. The minister himself is also cited in the same article, but the comments by the two arbiters, the poll and the analyst, have a greater impact on what the audience will make of the minister and his popularity. In other words, the arbiters here not only serve as neutral evaluators, but actively contribute to constructing a positive interpretation of the minister’s actions; and, conversely, a negative interpretation of the disturbances that the minister condemned. These arbiters are also sources with high credibility which is reflected in their descriptions. The opinion poll gains credibility because of the presumed ‘objectivity’ of polls and because as an impersonal source it appears as a

disinterested commentator, whereas the analyst's credibility is enhanced by the professional title indicating expertise.

In addition to such advocates and arbiters, also other news sources appeared in the reports about the French unrest. These could not be fitted into either of the two categories, and a third category, *dual sources*, was formed of them. The sources that were included in *dual sources* were: political sources, such as ministers and officials, suburban residents, as well as organisations and groups. While all these sources commented on the events, some also contributed to the conflict with their comments. For instance, the French Interior Minister came into conflict with the youths after calling them 'yobs' and 'scum'. As a result, although the disturbances had started with an incident between the youths and the police, soon some youths (*Guardian* 7/11/05) reportedly announced that the minister and his comments were also a reason for the unrest. Similarly, the minister's decision to deport those who participated in the disturbances was a reason for the human rights groups' (*Guardian* 11/11/05) involvement in the events. Religious organisations also ceased to be impartial arbiters when the French Muslim Organisation (*Guardian* 8/11/05) issued a fatwa where it condemned the disturbances. The suburban residents (*Guardian* 7/11/05) that were interviewed were also not commenting on the events as impartial arbiters as the disturbances in the suburbs to a high degree affected their lives. Since these sources' personal interests or organisational affiliations were explicit and likely to have affected their comments, they lost their arbiter status.

The purpose of the classification of sources into advocates and arbiters is to show how seemingly equal sources have unequal positions in news stories, in that certain sources are in a better position to construct a meaning to the news event since their comments are seen to be more valuable. When a source is seen as particularly valuable contributor in the debate, it is also likely to be reflected in their description, which may contain status-enhancing features, such as titles.

#### 4 EVALUATION OF NEWS SOURCES OF THE FRENCH UNREST

The aim of this research has been to study whose versions of the 2005 unrest in France competed in the *Guardian*'s 24 news articles that served as material for the study. The focus has been on the choice of sources for information and their evaluation. The analysis was done by categorising the sources into advocates and arbiters based on the level of their involvement in the disturbances, and then examining these with the help of source specification as outlined in the Appraisal framework. The hypothesis of the thesis has been that although the *Guardian* gave floor to a number of sources, it gave more credibility to some sources rather than others. It was argued that advocates and arbiters of higher status, such as authorities and experts, were prioritised over advocates and arbiters of lower status, such as 'ordinary' people.

The analysis showed that advocates and arbiters, as well as *dual* sources, of higher status did receive more credibility in the coverage, in that, for instance, politicians and experts always appeared as fully identified and titled individuals in the reports. This meant that the hypothesis of the study proved to be correct as far as the descriptions of the sources were concerned. What source specification could not detect, however, was the critique that was targeted towards even the authoritative sources, as that did not show in their descriptions. Critique towards the elite sources was namely expressed also through comments from other sources, including those from advocates [the youths] and *dual* sources [some politicians, suburban residents as well as organisations] but excluding arbiters [experts], or it was otherwise indicated in the reports that the authorities' actions were not always approved of.

Regarding the descriptions of the other sources in the reports, the analysis showed that one of the main advocates, the suburban youths, similarly to one of the *dual* sources, the suburban residents, were rarely or never fully identified with their first and last names, and lacked any titles in their descriptions that would have enhanced their credibility. The other main advocates, the police, on the other hand, appeared as institutional rather than personal sources. Appearing in the form of an institution that occupies an

authoritative position in the society, had the effect of enhancing the credibility of police sources.

In the following I will discuss the descriptions and evaluations of sources in more detail. The discussion will proceed in the order of the sources' involvement in the events, from the main parties in the conflict towards those that were not involved and were only called in to comment on the events. The discussion thus starts with the main advocates in Section 4.1, then continues to dual sources in Section 4.2, and ends with arbiter sources in Section 4.3. After the examination of the texts, I will conclude the analysis with a discussion of the news photos in Section 4.4. It should lastly be noted that my study, similarly to van Leeuwen's study, has restricted itself to the descriptions of news sources, which means that "many other salient and critically relevant features" in the texts are not discussed (van Leeuwen 1996: 67).

#### 4.1 Advocates

Suburban youths and the police were the two parties that were involved the initial conflict that became news. For this reason they were seen to function as the main advocates in the coverage of the disturbances. In the following I will discuss the descriptions of these sources, particularly focusing on individualisation and titulation which were considered to have been status-increasing features.

##### 4.1.1 Suburban Youths

In the analysis of the material 10 suburban youths were identified, out of whom seven gave statements. The analysis of the specification of these news sources showed that the descriptions of youths were of various type but also contained some common denominators. The following shows in which categories of source specification these descriptions of the youths fell:

- personalised human source
- identified
- specific
- singular grouping
- lower Status

That the youths were specified as *personalised human sources* was evident in that they appeared in their own person, as opposed to through a an institution, as sources. They were furthermore *identified* as *specific* human beings, and singled out from their peers by their name. Their *status* was considered to be lower, rather than neutral, because of their very low social position and a lack of any authority in society. This was evident in their descriptions that lacked any titles that would indicate status, and also in that most of the youths were identified only by their first rather than their full names. Descriptions of the youths containing these features are illustrated in the following extract:

- (10) There are many reasons for the violence. "Because we hate, because we're mad, because we've had it up to here," said *Rachid*, *parka hood up against the cold*. [...] "They harass you, they hassle you, they insult you the whole time, ID checks now, scooter checks next. They call you nigger names," said *Karim*, *17*. [...] "It's so easy," said *Ali*, *16*. "You need a beer bottle, a bit of petrol or white spirit, a strip of rag and a lighter. [...]"  
*Ali's friend* was an Arsenal fan: "Thierry Henry, man! But he never scores for France." Does he feel French? "We hate France and France hates us," he spat, refusing to give even his first name. (*Guardian* 9/11<sup>16</sup>)

The prominent feature in the descriptions of the youths is that they are referred to by their first names, which here may be because the journalist protecting the identity of his sources – which could be seen as especially well motivated as the sources had participated in the disturbances. However, referring to a person by their first name indicates a certain degree of intimacy between people, and can also be used to assert power over a person (Wardhaugh 2006: 268, 269). Although there remains doubt as to why the youths are referred to by their first name, a description containing both first and last names would give more credibility to the source since the person would appear as a fully identified individual. In the case of *Karim*, *17* and *Ali*, *16*, the age of the source is

<sup>16</sup> In the analysis section I have dropped the reference to year (/05) in parenthetical citations as all articles in the material were from 2005; only the date of the day and the month are thus given.

also mentioned. This may be explained by the journalist wanting to emphasize the young age of the participants in the disturbances. This also directs how the readers will position themselves towards the source, as they may doubt the information given by youngsters. The journalist has also chosen to describe the clothing of one of the youths in *Rachid*, *parka hood up against the cold*, which inevitably forms a part of the overall description of the source. Clothing that suggests that the person, intentionally or unintentionally, is trying to hide their person, may lead the readers to doubt the credibility of the source. Furthermore, there is also a source who is identified through “relational identification” (van Leeuwen 1996: 56), since *Ali’s friend* is identified only through his relationship to another person. The identity of this source remains entirely unknown to the readers, who are then unable to form an idea about the credibility of the source.

There was also an exception to the above descriptions of youths who appeared as singular sources, as there was also a case in the reports where the youths appeared as a collective source:

(11) Many *rioters* say they are determined to make Mr Sarkozy pay for his "insults"  
(*Guardian* 7/11)

The sources criticising the Interior Minister are thus collectively described as *rioters*. Although this makes a shorter and therefore more convenient description than alternative descriptions that could have been used, such as *youths participating in the disturbances*, it also carries negative associations that are linked to criminality. Such associations, in turn, are likely to have a negative effect on the perceived credibility of the sources.

Although the youths appeared relatively rarely in person in both editions of the *Guardian*, there was a significant difference in how many youths appeared in the paper’s print and online editions. While the print edition had conducted an interview with eight suburban youths who had, based on the information in the article, participated in the disturbances, and another youth who may or may not have

participated, the online edition reported a statement by only one youth (*Murat* in *guardian.co.uk* 7/11; see example 1). This may be due to the fact that many of the online articles were at least partly sourced to international news agencies, whereas many of the print articles were written by one of *Guardian*'s own journalists. News agencies may not have the resources, or interest, to interview 'ordinary' people even when they are involved in a news event, whereas newspapers may be risking less, or also be more interested, in putting their resources and journalists on finding out and reporting the viewpoints of 'ordinary' people.

In summary terms, although the suburban youths appeared as *identified* and *specific personalised human sources*, their credibility suffered because of their incomplete identification in the form of the person's first name. Also, additional information, such as age and clothing, create associations, for instance to naivety in terms of the person's age, that decrease rather than increase the sources' credibility.

In addition to appearing as news sources, the youths also appeared in the reports as news actors. These descriptions also contribute to what kind of an image the readers will form of the participants in news events. Descriptions of news actors also describe people differently and may be more evaluative in nature than descriptions of sources. For instance, the description *Karim, 17* (see example 10) of a youth that apparently had participated in the disturbances, does not create similar associations of the same news actor as the description *vandal* (*guardian.co.uk* 7/11). When the same news actor is used as a source, their credibility is likely to suffer if they have been described in negative terms as a news actor.

A total of 48 different descriptions of youths as news actors could be detected from the material. The most frequently appearing description was the description *youths*, which appeared 53 times in the material. However, the term *youths* did not always appear on its own, as it could also be accompanied by other descriptions that indicated what types of youths were in question. Thus, for instance, the following descriptions were applied – *immigrant youths* (*Guardian* 1;15;21/11), *black African youths* (*Guardian* 7/11), *bands of youths* (*Guardian* 7/11), *two hooded youths* (*Guardian* 5/11), *gangs of youths*

(*guardian.co.uk* 2/11), *troubled youths* (*guardian.co.uk* 7/11), *youths of African and North African origin* (*guardian.co.uk* 14/11) and *French youths* (*guardian.co.uk* 3/11).

Another term, that was also more evaluative than the term *youths*, was *rioters*, which appeared 24 times in the material. According to the subtype of *attitude* within the Appraisal framework, the term *rioter* inscribes negative *judgement* when it is compared to alternative, and in this context positive, terms such as *demonstrators* or *protestors*<sup>17</sup>. Because of this negative evaluation that creates associations to criminality, news actors described with the term *rioter* also become associated with a lower social status.

The analysis of the material also revealed interesting results about how and in what contexts different descriptions were used of the youths as news actors, as these descriptions were not used randomly. The following extract illustrates how the *guardian.co.uk* used a variety of descriptions of the same news actor:

- (12) As night fell in the southern French city of Toulouse, 50 *rioters* set fire to a bus and pelted police with Molotov cocktails and rocks in the evening's first - but probably not last - unrest on the streets. [...]  
 Last night, the 11th and worst night of violence so far, *vandals* set fire to more than 1,400 vehicles and 36 police were injured [...]  
 In the French capital, 10 riot police officers were injured by *youths* firing fine-grain birdshot in the southern suburb of Grigny [...]  
 Churches were set ablaze in northern Lens and southern Sete, while *arsonists* burned two schools and a bus in the central city of Saint-Etienne [...]  
 The violence has prompted soul-searching about how to ease anger and frustration among *troubled youths* in France's grim public housing estates  
 (*guardian.co.uk* 7/11)

Which description has been chosen, appears to have depended on the context of the utterance. Hence, when the context is property damage the terms used are *rioters*, *vandals* and *arsonists*; in other words, terms that refer to criminal activity. On the other hand, when the context is attacks against the police or poor conditions in the suburbs, the youths are no longer criminals but simply *youths* or *troubled youths*. With such a use of terms, rather than remaining impartial in the matter, the report both condemns the

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<sup>17</sup> This can be compared to the term *terrorist* that also inscribes negative judgement when contrasted to alternative positive terms such as *freedom fighter* or *martyr* (Martin 2005: 243).

youths, by using terms that create negative associations [*vandals*, *arsonists*], and sympathises with them, by using terms that create sympathising associations [*troubled youths*].

Using different descriptions in different contexts of the same news actors also applied when the youths were described in terms of their ethnic origin. In the following extract from the *Guardian* different terms are used alternatively, but not randomly:

(13) *Rioters* in the southern city of Toulouse ordered passengers off a bus and then set it on fire, pelting police with petrol bombs and stones. *Youths* also torched a bus in the north-eastern Paris suburb of Stains, national police spokesman Patrick Hamon said. [...]

The deaths [of the two youths in the electric power station] proved a flashpoint for the frustration and fury of *second- and third-generation north and black African immigrants*. [...]

The interior minister, Nicolas Sarkozy, described the *rioters* as "rabble" and "yobs", fuelling their anger. (*guardian.co.uk* 8/11)

When the topic is the frustration experienced by the youths they are described as *second- and third-generation north and black African immigrants*, which directs the attention to the more profound reasons, such as discrimination, behind the disturbances. However, the same people causing property damage are described as *rioters*, which again turns the attention to the criminal activities by the youths during the unrest. In what appears to be a quote by a police spokesman, these news actors are also described as *youths*, which turns the attention to their young age. All these descriptions foreground different aspects of the news actors that the readers will use to form an image of the news participants as well as their statements as news sources.

As is illustrated in the above extract, the newspaper tended to be meticulous in noting that the Interior Minister referred to the *rioters*, as opposed to the *youths*, as 'rabble' and 'yobs'. There was, however, one exception to this, in that an article in the online edition (*guardian.co.uk* 9/11) stated that the minister in fact referred to the *protestors* as 'rabble'. This is likely to have reduced the credibility of, not the *protestors*, but rather that of the minister. Calling the participants in protests such names namely suggests that

the minister does not tolerate protests in society, rather than that he does not tolerate, for instance, destruction of public property.

The choice of terms seemed to follow the context in that the ‘appropriate’ term described the news participants in each context. Despite being generally consistent in the use of specific terms in specific contexts, there was an instance in *guardian.co.uk*’s reporting where the term used of the news actors was somewhat unexpected:

- (14) Violent skirmishes between police and *immigrant groups* in the suburbs around Paris have continued for the sixth consecutive night [...] officials said today. (*guardian.co.uk* 2/11)

Although the label *immigrant groups* serves to accurately describe the people involved in the disturbances, in that many of them did have an immigrant background, it shows the police in a violent conflict primarily with *immigrants* rather than with *protestors* or *rioters*. When terms such as *gangs* (*guardian.co.uk* 2/11) and *rioters* (*Guardian* 3/11) are elsewhere used in this context, these may lend their negative meaning to the above illustrated *immigrant groups*, who then become associated with negative features.

While terms that created negative associations of the news actors were used in both editions of the *Guardian*, there were differences in what type of such descriptions were used. For instance, a term that could be found in the *Guardian* but not in *guardian.co.uk* was *gunmen*, which was used in reference to youths in an incident during the crowd action where youths had shot and injured ten police officers (*Guardian* 7/11). The incident was also noted in *guardian.co.uk*, but without a reference to *gunmen*. However, the analysis showed that, overall, *guardian.co.uk* used more descriptions of youths that referred to criminals – which indicates negative rather than neutral evaluation. For example, descriptions such as *vandals* (*guardian.co.uk* 7;8;14/11) and *arsonist* (*guardian.co.uk* 7;14/11) could be found in the online edition. Similar descriptions, apart from *rioters* and *gunmen*, could not be found in the print edition.

There was also a case in both editions where the youths were referred to in terms of their French origin. The *guardian.co.uk*, for instance, used the description *French youths* in the following way:

- (15) *French youths* fired at police and burned over 300 cars last night as towns around Paris experienced their worst night of violence in a week of urban unrest. The French prime minister, Dominique de Villepin, was involved in a series of crisis meetings today following the clashes between police and *immigrant groups* in at least 10 poor suburbs, during which *youths* torched car dealerships, public buses and a school. (*guardian.co.uk* 3/11)

The description can also be said to have appeared in a prominent position in the article as it was used in the headline as well: “*French youths* open fire on police”. Nevertheless, as can be seen in the above extract, the same news actors are soon again turned into *immigrant groups* and then *youths*, which indicates that the terms are used as synonyms.

In summary terms, while the descriptions of youths as news sources displayed similarities, such as identification by first name and age, the descriptions of them as news actors were considerably more varied. Sometimes the deciding factor was their involvement in the crowd action, which is when they were *rioters* (*Guardian; guardian.co.uk* 7/11), sometimes it was their age and they were *teenage troublemakers* (*Guardian* 3/11), and sometimes it was their background, which made them *second and third generation African immigrants* (*guardian.co.uk* 8/11). According to Hartley (1993: 166), using a varied vocabulary in news reports about demonstrations means that the participants in the demonstrations are denied a coherent identity. Lacking a coherent identity also has its impact on the perceived credibility of the participants as sources.

#### 4.1.2 The Police

The analysis of the material regarding police sources showed that differently from the suburban youths, these sources appeared most frequently as collective rather than

individual sources. In terms of source specification this meant that the descriptions of police sources fell in the following categories:

- personalised institutional source
- identified
- generic
- plural grouping; collective
- higher Status

The police sources were *personalised institutional sources* as they were represented by the police institution rather than any particular individual from that institution. The institution was also *identified*, but described in *generic* terms since the description *police* was only rarely accompanied by additional information – such as, identification as the police of a certain town area [*police in Evry; police in Orleans (Guardian 7;8/11)*] or a particular type of police [*riot police, mobile police squads (guardian.co.uk 3/11; Guardian 1/11)*]. The police also made a *plural grouping* that consisted of a *collective* of police. The *status* of police was considered *higher* rather than *neutral*, because of the authoritative position of the police in the society. The following extract illustrates the police, described as an institutional source, criticising the Interior Minister who appears as a fully identified human source:

- (16) *Police* yesterday criticised Mr Sarkozy for his policies, which they said had contributed to the problem. In an earlier stint as interior minister, Mr Sarkozy slashed the number of officers on the beat, to beef up resources for investigation. (*Guardian 5/11*)

One implication of describing the police as a grouping and in generic terms is that the source remains somewhat anonymous. In example 16, for instance, it remains unclear who exactly in the police takes the responsibility for criticising the minister for his policies.

Police sources appeared in nearly all of the 24 articles, being absent from only two of the *Guardian's* articles. That the police appeared so frequently as sources is largely explained by the nature of the news event, as journalists are heavily dependent on

“institutions of crime control” when reporting crime news (Hall 1978: 68). The most frequently used description thus referred to the police as a *plural grouping*. However, although the term *police* is plural by definition, this did not imply that the police source in an article was always a *plural grouping*. This could be seen in an instance of the *Guardian*’s reporting, where a statement was attributed specifically to the police chief on one day, example 17, but reappeared the next day as attributed to the police in general, example 18:

(17) *Michel Gaudin, a police chief*, reported a "major lull" (*Guardian* 14/11)

(18) *Police* spoke yesterday of a "confirmed lull" in the violence that has raged through the rundown suburbs of Paris and dozens of other places since October 27 (*Guardian* 15/11)

This would suggest that especially the use of collective sources, both police and other, and those described with general labels may not fully reflect reality, in that an individual source may be behind a statement attributed to a larger group. This, in turn, would indicate that the number of sources used by the newspaper’s both editions is smaller than the reports would suggest.

While the police appeared most frequently as an institutional source, it was occasionally also represented by particular individuals from the institution. These sources tended to be identified by their full names and professional titles, which enhanced the source’s credibility, or, alternatively, only by their professional titles. Both types of descriptions are illustrated in the following extract, where the issue concerns the police using excessive violence during the unrest.

(19) *A police spokesperson* said two of the police officers suspended were suspected of striking a man arrested for questioning in the Paris suburb of La Courneuve with "unwarranted blows"; the six other officers were potential witnesses. The **alleged attack** on Monday night left "superficial lesions" to the man's forehead and right foot.

*The national police chief, Michel Gaudin* said the number of vehicles burned last night was down to 482 from 617 the previous night. (*guardian.co.uk* 10/11)

Despite remaining unidentified and unnamed as a source, the credibility of the *police spokesperson* cannot be said to have decreased, as the professional title endows the source with a type of “impersonal authority” (van Leeuwen 1996: 52). Because of this, the unidentified *police spokesman* does not seem any less credible as a source than the fully identified *national police chief*. It is also interesting to note that the unidentified source is giving information that could be considered sensitive; the suspension of the police officers suspected of “striking a man”. The print edition similarly attributed the same information to an unidentified source, but *generalised* the source of information:

- (20) *It was announced* later that eight police officers had been suspended after a man in the suburb of La Courneuve was beaten. Two of the eight were suspected of dealing "unwarranted blows". (*Guardian* 11/11)

Although the article does not reveal the source’s identity in the above case, this source can also be said to be endowed with “impersonal authority”. Although the source in the *Guardian*’s report remains entirely unknown, even *guardian.co.uk* remains somewhat vague in its source identification. It could be explained either by the sensitive nature of the information provided by the unidentified source and, thus, the source’s identity needed to be protected, or that the identity of the police source giving this type of information was simply deemed irrelevant. Furthermore, the factuality of the event, that is, whether the police did indeed strike the arrested man, is called into question in the *guardian.co.uk*’s report when it is referred to as the *alleged attack*. Because of the high status of the source, although lacking explicit and full identification, the readers are likely to trust the information given by this source.

In summary terms, the police appeared credible both as news sources and as news actors. This credibility was guaranteed to it as an institutional source with authority in the society that was represented by individuals whose high status was illustrated by the use of professional titles.

## 4.2 Dual Sources

Dual news sources were the sources that had dual status as both advocates and arbiters, as these sources were indirectly involved in the disturbances and some even contributed to the conflict, as advocates, rather than merely commented on it, as arbiters. The most prominent of the dual sources were the political sources, as there were more of them than suburban residents, who represented the views of 'ordinary' people, and various organisations and groups. In the following I will discuss how the credibility of these sources appeared in their descriptions.

### 4.2.1 Political Sources

The analysis of the material showed the various political sources to have been very prominent in the coverage, and the descriptions of these sources to have been different from the descriptions of the two previous, the youths and the police, sources. Altogether 19 individuals recognised as political sources were identified in the material. The descriptions of these fell in the following categories of source specification:

- personalised human source
- identified
- specific
- singular grouping
- higher Status

The political sources were *personalised human sources* since they appeared as human beings. Furthermore, they were *identified* as *specific* persons, and were therefore *singular groupings*. Because of the titles that usually accompanied the names of political sources, their *status* was considered to have been *higher*. The descriptions of these sources were seen to have functioned in such a way that their high status was explicit, which would give them credibility as sources. This is illustrated in the following where the descriptions of the ministers differ markedly from those of 'ordinary' people:

(21) *France's interior minister, Nicolas Sarkozy*, yesterday defended his law-and-order tactics and pledged rapid police reinforcements after four nights of rioting in Paris. [...]

At the police station *Mr Sarkozy* met *relatives of the two youths*. *The parents of the boys* yesterday refused to meet the "incompetent" *Mr Sarkozy* and demanded to meet *the prime minister, Dominique de Villepin*. (*Guardian* 1/11)

While the ministers are fully identified with their titles and first and last names, the 'ordinary' people remain somewhat anonymous since they are identified as groupings rather than as individuals - they are *relatives* and *parents*. Similarly to the previously discussed suburban youth, *Ali's friend* (see example 10), these people are also identified through "relational identification", as they are identified only through family relations. The protection of identity in this case is somewhat questionable, since the deceased youths are later fully identified (see example 28), which then gives clues about the identity of their parents.

Apart from professional titles, there was also a case of nomination where journalists had given a news actor a 'pseudo title' (Bell qtd. in van Leeuwen 1996: 54). The nomination concerned the Interior Minister who was referred to as *France's interior minister and presidential hopeful Nicolas Sarkozy* (*Guardian* 17/11), where *presidential hopeful* is the pseudo title. The impact of this pseudo title may be that it further raises the source's status, as it suggests that the source is competent enough to apply for the high position of a president.

While many political figures appeared as fully identified sources, there occurred also cases of unidentified official sources, whose anonymisation could be traced to what type of information the sources were giving. For instance, in the following the police are quoted as giving 'technical' details about the disturbances, that is, what the youths did and how many of them were arrested, while an unidentified official is quoted as describing the 'clashes':

(22) Young people threw rocks at police in six suburbs in the Seine-Saint-Denis region north of Paris that includes Clichy, *police* said. [...]

Nearly 200 vehicles have been torched since the violence began, *police* said. [...]

*An interior ministry official* described the clashes as "more like sporadic harassment, lightweight hit-and-run urban guerrilla fighting, than head-to-head confrontation" (*guardian.co.uk* 3/11)

Although the information given by the official is likely to have been derived from the police who were on the streets witnessing the unrest, the police appear not to have been asked for this type of information. There are several possible explanations for why this source has not been identified; the journalists may, for instance, simply not have known the person's name or title, or the official may not have been expressing their own opinion. It could also be that the source has not been willing to reveal their identity, as labelling the disturbances as "urban guerrilla fighting" is a rather radical choice of words. The credibility of this source, however, does not appear to have suffered because of the anonymisation, as the status of an *official* again endows the source with "impersonal authority".

Although descriptions of fully identified and titled political sources as such did not display any critique towards the sources, critique could be detected from elsewhere in the reports. This is illustrated in the following where a mayor, before being quoted, is described as having taken 'unorthodox' steps during the unrest:

- (23) Other local officials have taken more **unorthodox steps**: *the mayor of the Paris suburb of Draveil, Georges Tron*, said yesterday he was halting council aid, for canteens or creches, for the families of youths convicted of rioting or arson (*Guardian* 15/11)

Critique, of course, has a negative effect on the perceived credibility of a source, as it provides an adverse viewpoint for the readers from which to view the source's statements. In consequence, for instance, a mayor who takes 'unorthodox steps' of the type described above, may lose credibility in the eyes of the readers.

Critique towards the political establishment in an instance also came from a fully identified high-status individual – which was likely to have made the critique more concrete and credible. This occurred in an article (sourced to the Reuters news agency) that was dedicated to the comments of a top French footballer. As a former suburban

resident himself, he sympathised with the youths and their situation and criticised the government's handling of the situation:

- (24) *One of France's top football players* has criticised the government's handling of the riots in major cities and urged authorities to address the problems fuelling the disaffection of youths in the suburbs.  
*Defender Lilian Thuram, the most capped player in the French national squad,* said the violence was the fruit of the economic and social deprivation in the banlieues (*guardian.co.uk* 9/11)

There are a number of features in the source's description that add to his credibility in the above extract. This is, for instance, *one of France's top football players* where his professional title *footballer* gains status as it is noted that he is a *top* footballer. The status is multiplied by the next piece of information that says that he is also *the most capped player in the French national squad*. A less known or less successful French football player may not have enjoyed similar credibility as a source in this case. Also, what cannot be seen in the descriptions but is likely to furthermore add to the credibility of this source is his own suburban background.

There was yet another case of anonymisation of high status news sources. This concerned the *officials* who had suggested a connection between the disturbances and Muslim extremists. The description of the *officials*, however, did not reveal which *officials*, those from the police, the government, or some other body, had suggested the connection:

- (25) The violence does not seem inspired by Muslim extremists, as *some officials* have suggested (*Guardian* 8/11)

The anonymity of the sources could again be explained with the journalist protecting the identity of the sources because of the sensitive nature of the information. With a description, *some officials*, that suggests that the sources are of relatively high status, this could be considered well motivated, but it is also a way for the journalist to be partial while appearing to be neutral. As the revelation of the source's identity may have led to a larger public debate, it has not become one because the journalist has kept the source anonymous and consequently chosen not to foreground the matter. The

credibility of the sources, and consequently their statements, is, nevertheless, protected by the “impersonal authority”.

Comparison of the print and online edition showed that the *guardian.co.uk* had included comments from the heads of other states (the Latvian president and the Spanish prime minister), as well as the president of the European union at the time, while the print edition had not. While it is difficult to theorize why the print edition had not included comments from these sources, it is possible that since the online articles where these political figures appeared (*guardian.co.uk* 8;10;14/11) were partly sourced to news agencies, the articles and their content was directed to an international audience. Because of the inclusion of these sources, the online edition also had more individual political sources appearing in person in its coverage than the print edition; 17 individuals as opposed to 11 in the print edition. Sourcing to news agencies does not, however, explain why a person likely to be known also outside France, Jean-Marie Le Pen, the leader of National Front, appeared only in the online edition (*guardian.co.uk* 10/11). One explanation could be Jean-Marie Le Pen’s anti-immigration opinions, also noted in the *guardian.co.uk*’s article, which makes him a controversial politician both in France and outside it.

Social workers, differently from the politically aligned authorities, appeared only in the print edition, and were infrequent there as well. Statements by individual social workers appeared twice in the material (*Guardian* 3;7/11). In one of these cases, however, the source remained unidentified as far as the name of the source was concerned, since the report only referred to *A social worker in Val-Fourré* (*Guardian* 3/11). The source of the information was, nevertheless, revealed to have been a man, since the statements were attributed to a *he*. Protecting the source’s identity seems an unlikely explanation in this case; instead, it appears that the person’s identity was deemed irrelevant information. Professional title together with full identification would in this case have given the source more credibility, as the title of a *social worker* on its own is not prestigious enough to indicate that the source has high status and, through that, credibility. In another instance of the *Guardian*’s reporting, the social workers were grouped together and formed an *association with officials*:

- (26) But *officials and social workers* also acknowledge that as often as not it is also about youths simply "having a go" at the police [...]  
 "Some of them just come along for the fun," said *Gerard Gaudron, mayor of one of the worst-hit towns, Aulnay sous Bois.* (*Guardian* 5/11)

What is interesting in the above extract is that while it is stated that both *officials* and *social workers* were of the opinion that the youths were not "simply "having a go" at the police", a comment to illustrate this has only been asked from a mayor, who can be counted an official. This may be explained by that the journalists have more routinized interaction with various officials who are therefore more accessible sources to them. Alternatively, a comment from an identified source is desirable to illustrate the credibility of a statement, which is why a comment from another unidentified social worker would not have suited in the above case.

#### 4.2.2 Suburban Residents

In the analysis of the reports, altogether 11 'ordinary' people recognized as suburban residents were identified. The analysis of the descriptions of these sources showed that there were similarities between these and the descriptions of the suburban youths. The descriptions thus fell in the following categories of source specification:

- personalised human source
- identified
- specific
- singular grouping
- Status Neutral

The suburban residents were, similarly to all the previously discussed sources, *personalised human sources* who were *identified* as *specific* individuals and therefore *individual groupings*. They were seen to differ from the suburban youths in that their *status* was seen to have been *neutral* rather than *lower*. Although the 'appropriate' category in this case can be disputed, my interpretation has been that as the sources identified as suburban residents were, differently from the youths, not minors, they

could not be placed on the same line with the youths who lacked any authority or power in the society. In other words, while, for instance, the age of the youths and their involvement in the disturbances was seen to have lowered their social status, corresponding features could not be detected from the descriptions of the suburban residents.

The similarity in the descriptions between suburban residents and suburban youths could be seen in that both were identified primarily by their first name, or first name and age. This is illustrated in the following extract from an article that specifically focused on comments by suburban residents:

(27) "It's madness - more like Baghdad than Seine-Saint-Denis," said *Mourad*, 39, who has lived on the 3000 since he was four. "What are they doing, torching classrooms where their cousins go to school and cars their neighbours use to go to work? [...]"

*Ratiba*, who lives in a fifth-floor flat and has watched up to eight cars burn beneath her window, said she had barely slept for days. "The children wake at every noise," she said. [...]"

"Where are their parents?" asked *Marie-Claude*, 67. "What are these kids doing on the streets at 2am? How dare they mock the police? What is happening in this country?"

A customer at the fresh fish stall, *Pierre-Edouard*, stout in a plush leather car coat, was blunter. "We should send in the fucking army," he said. "Stamp it out hard. They're only doing it for kicks - and we're agonising about it!"

Not everyone was so harsh. Round the corner from the station, *Mounir*, 26, was sweeping the pavement outside his kebab shop. [...] "Burning cars and dodging cops is a lot more fun than playing video games," he said. (*Guardian* 7a/11)

As the above extract illustrates, in addition to the identifying descriptions of first name and age, the looks [*stout in a plush leather car coat*] and whereabouts [*who has lived on the 3000 since he was four*] of the residents are also described in some cases. All these descriptions function to inform the reader about the credibility of the source, by showing in what way the source is connected to the topic at hand. For instance, *Mourad* qualifies as a reliable and credible source as he has been living in the suburbs nearly all his life, *Ratiba* is also credible as a source as she has witnessed the unrest from her apartment window. *Marie-Claude* and *Pierre-Edouard*, on the other hand, who according to the article live in another part of the same suburb, seem to represent the

views of the French majority population, and also, at least in the case of *Marie-Claude*, the older generation. *Mounir* has, as a shop owner in the suburbs, also qualified as a credible source. The use of first name to identify the sources has also removed the possibility to include titles, such as Mr, Mrs or Ms, to the names of these sources; and as a result, the descriptions are even more informal. On the one hand, the newspaper appears to be protecting the identity of its sources by only mentioning their first names and age. On the other hand, this strategy of describing the sources differs markedly from that used of, for instance, political and police sources. In this way the paper can be seen as reproducing the social hierarchy between the members of society. In other words, it appears as natural that public people, such as politicians, are fully identified and titled, whereas private people are only partly identified, lack titles and can also be identified by other criteria, such as their age, looks and residence.

In addition to the above, the *Guardian* (3/11) had interviewed two other suburban residents, *Amadou*, 19 (see example 3) and *Momo*, 26, who were also identified by their first name and age. One of the two suburban residents appearing in person in *guardian.co.uk*, on the other hand, remained unnamed and was identified according to her sex, ethnic origin and place of residence as *a woman of African origin in Aulnay-sous-Bois* (4/11). Full names of suburban residents as sources were never given, whereas they were given in a few cases when they appeared as news actors; one such case appeared in the online edition that referred to the two youths whose deaths sparked the unrest in the suburbs:

- (28) The unrest started on October 27 when young people of mainly north or black African origin took to the streets over the deaths of two teenagers - *Bouna Traore*, 15, and *Zyed Benna*, 17 - who were electrocuted in a power substation where they hid thinking they were being chased by police.  
*Bouna's brother, Siyakah Traore*, today called for the rioters to "calm down and stop ransacking everything." (*guardian.co.uk* 4/11)

It is likely that the primary reason for the inclusion of the last names of the two youths is that they were the two deceased, whereas the inclusion of the brother's last name serves to connect him to one of the deceased. One of the deceased is, nevertheless, in the next paragraph still referred to by his first name, *Bouna*. An explanation for this can,

however, be found in the *Guardian's* style guide. The editor of the style guide has namely stated on the use of honorifics that “[i]f a teenager is killed, for example, you would expect to see his or her first name” (Marsh in Butterworth 2008a). The explanation is that in such cases of tragedy “the use of surnames can sound too harsh” (ibid. 2008a).

While the suburban residents appeared most frequently as individuals, there was also a case where they appeared as a collective source. This appeared when the discussion concerned the discrimination of France’s Muslim population, and whose opinion on this matter was forwarded in the following way:

- (29) It [the unrest] has laid bare discontent simmering in suburbs that are heavily populated by *poor African Muslim immigrants and their French-born children*, many trapped by poverty, crime and poor education.  
*France's Muslim population*, an estimated 5 million, is Western Europe's largest. *Disaffected members* **claim** racism makes the[m] second class citizens. (*guardian.co.uk* 4/11)

The only actual source of information whose comment appears as a paraphrase is a group of unidentified people described as *disaffected members*. What decreases these sources’ credibility is not this description on its own, but the description together with the reporting verb *claim*. By using the verb *claim*, it is indicated that it is doubtful whether the statement about racism and its consequences to the Muslim population is true or not. For instance, another often used reporting verb in news articles, *to say*, does not call into question the truth-value of a statement in the similar way as the verb *to claim*. What would also have made the statement and its source more credible would have been a quote from one identified *disaffected member*.

The suburban residents also appeared as news actors, and a total of 22 different descriptions of them as news actors could be found. These descriptions classified the news participants according to a variety of categories, most frequently describing them as *people* (*guardian.co.uk* 8/11; *Guardian* 7/11) and *residents* (*guardian.co.uk* 3/11; *Guardian* 7/11). There was also classification according to their non-French or ethnic origin, as in *African minorities* (*Guardian* 3/11), *families of immigrant origin*

(*guardian.co.uk* 2/11), and *France's Arab and African immigrants and their descendants* (10/11). The residents were once also classified according to wealth as well as their religion, in *poor African Muslim immigrants and their French-born children* (*guardian.co.uk* 4/11). Similarly to the descriptions of the youths who had participated in the disturbances, it could be argued that this classification into a multitude of categories denies the people a coherent identity. These descriptions also give information to the readers that can be considered private (such as religion). Inclusion of professional titles together with full identification, on the other hand, would have increased the credibility of these sources

There was also a case in the *Guardian's* reporting where the suburban residents, similarly to the previously discussed social workers (see example 26), were grouped together and formed an *association with local officials*:

- (30) *Residents and local officials* vented both anger and frustration as the violence, set off by the accidental deaths of two youths 10 days ago, continued to spread despite repeated pleas for calm. [...]  
 But *one interior ministry official* admitted it was "very hard" to counter small, highly mobile bands of youths, who communicate by mobile phone and are intent on causing "maximum material damage" while avoiding "all confrontation with the police". [...]  
 [...] *Jean-Louis Debré, the conservative mayor of Evreux*, said: "Fewer than 100 people have smashed everything and wreaked desolation. They are not part of the same universe as us." (*Guardian* 7/11)

Similarly to the case with the social workers and officials, also here an interior ministry official as well as a local mayor, rather than a suburban resident, have been asked for comments. The reason for the choice of sources may here also be the same – an interior ministry official, when unidentified, is endowed with an “impersonal authority”, and the credibility of an official and a mayor who can be fully identified and who carry titles may appear as more credible sources than a resident who is likely to be identified by their first name and age.

### 4.2.3 Organisations and Groups

Organisations and groups in this study included various human rights and anti-racism groups, and religious and other organisations. These appeared in the newspaper's reports when the debate around the French unrest concerned the possible reasons for the disturbances, or when it was discussed what the potential economic and other consequences of the unrest would come to be. Three individuals representing these groupings could be identified in the material, and their descriptions showed similarities to the descriptions of political sources, since full identification by first and last name together with titles was common. The descriptions of these sources therefore fell in the following categories of source specification:

- personalised human source
- identified
- specific
- individual grouping
- higher Status

These sources were *personalised human sources* as they appeared as human beings, they were *identified* and *specific* as they could be identified as specific persons. As individual people they formed *individual groupings*, and because of the occupational titles that were attached to their names, they were seen to have *higher Status*.

When organisations, groups and federations were represented by individualised sources, these were the presidents of the organisations; in other words, 'ordinary' workers did not represent their organisations. This is the case in the following, where it is the *head of the employers' federation* who is providing the comment on behalf of the entire federation:

- (31) *Laurence Parisot, head of the employers' federation Medef*, said France's image abroad was being "deeply damaged", and warned of the risk of declining tourism and inward investment. (*Guardian* 8/11)

A source who can be fully identified and who carries an occupational title, particularly one that indicates that they occupy a high position in an organisation, appears as a very credible source of information, and is also the probable reason to why they are chosen as sources over 'ordinary' workers.

In the case of anti-racism groups, individual sources who could be identified and titled were in a minority as preference was given to group sources. This is illustrated in the following extract, where various anti-racism groupings are quoted criticising an announcement by the Interior Minister:

(32) *Human rights groups* sharply criticised Wednesday's announcement by the interior minister, Nicolas Sarkozy, which stated that all foreigners convicted of involvement in the rioting, including those with residence permits but excluding minors, would be deported. *They* were even angrier at a conservative MP's white paper proposing that naturalised citizens found guilty should be stripped of citizenship. [...].

*Dominique Sopo, president of the anti-racism group SOS Racisme*, said the minister's measure was illegal as it amounted to mass deportation. *French law and the European convention on human rights* required expulsions to be considered case by case. Another *anti-racism group, MRAP*, said it was horrified by the "dangerous proposition". *France Terre d'Asile, which assists refugees*, said the measure was "certain to add fuel to the flames" (*Guardian* 11/11).

The only individual source in the above extract is the fully identified and titled *president of the anti-racism group SOS Racisme*. The other human right groups, *MRAP* and *France Terre d'Asile*, are for some reason not represented by human sources and instead appear as *institutional* sources. While the descriptions of these *institutional* sources as such do not decrease their credibility, it can be debated how prominent they are in the article. They or their critique does not, for instance, appear in the article's headline, nor is their critique the main argument or angle of the story around which the rest of the news article would have been constructed. This, then, would seem to confirm, or at least not overrule, van Dijk's remark that "liberal newspapers are not exactly mouthpieces of an explicitly anti-racist perspective" and that they merely represent "the more 'tolerant'" side (1991: 247).

In addition to appearing as sources through individual people and groupings, there was also a case where the human rights groups formed an *association* together with other sources that criticised the Interior Minister:

- (33) *Opposition politicians, human rights groups and even some members of his own centre-right UMP party* have accused Mr Sarkozy of being more interested in high-profile repression than long-term prevention. *They* are also upset at his use of words such as rabble, yobs and louts, which they say is likely to stoke tensions further. "This isn't how we resolve these problems," *a former Socialist prime minister, Laurent Fabius*, said on French radio. (*Guardian* 1/11)

The statements by the *association* are likely to appear very credible, because it shows that the statements are supported by sources with very different backgrounds and interests. What is also interesting in the above extract is which human source has been chosen to illustrate or confirm the statement by the *association*. It is not a member from Sarkozy's own party, nor is it a representative from a human rights group; instead, it is a high-status politician.

Comparison of the two editions of the *Guardian* also showed some interesting results. Firstly, any human rights groups or their representatives did not appear in the online edition, which made the online coverage, in this respect, less diverse. Secondly, it was found that none of the organisations that appeared in the online edition were represented by individual persons.

#### 4.3 Arbiters

Arbiter sources were considered to be the impartial sources that commented on or analysed the unrest. In the present study these included political analysts and researchers, categorised under 'experts', as well as opinion polls. Experts and opinion polls had very similar tasks as sources, as both evaluated the effects of the disturbances on France and its population. Because of their similar tasks these sources often appeared in the same article, so that an expert was asked to speculate on the meaning of a particular result in an opinion poll.

### 4.3.1 Experts

In the analysis of the material three individuals were identified as experts. The descriptions of these sources fell in identical categories of source specification as descriptions of political sources:

- personalised human source
- identified
- specific
- singular grouping
- higher Status

Similarly to political sources, experts were also *personalised human sources* who were fully *identified specific* individuals. They also formed *singular groupings* whose *higher status* was evident in the titles that accompanied their names. This is illustrated in the following extract from the *guardian.co.uk* where a director of research is commenting on the unusual magnitude of the French unrest, and whose title appears equally long to the comment he gives:

- (34) Never had rioting struck so many different French cities simultaneously, said *Sebastian Roche, a director of research at the state-funded National Centre for Scientific Research*. (*guardian.co.uk* 8/11)

That the experts' judgement and professionalism was highly valued could also be seen in that they were the only ones, beside the journalists themselves, who were allowed interpret the results of opinion polls. The collaboration between opinion polls and analysts is illustrated in the following, where the results of a poll are immediately followed by the comments of an analyst:

- (35) After three weeks of urban violence [...], a large majority of French voters firmly back the government's tough law-and-order stance and would favour even stricter controls on immigration, *a poll* showed yesterday. Asked by a newspaper whether France was swinging to the right, *a political analyst, Dominique Reynié*, said: "Yes. There is a strong tendency to shift rightwards, partly for demographic reasons - the French are getting older, and an

ageing nation is a frightened nation. This has been accentuated by the crisis in the suburbs. The shock of November 2005 will stay with us." (*Guardian* 21/11)

The professionalism of the analyst, which indicates his credibility as a source, is shown in his description that includes his occupational title *political analyst*. The headline of the article, "Poll suggests shift to right as voters back Chirac's crackdown", also echoes the analyst's interpretation of the poll result. The journalist is evidently heavily relying on the interpretation provided by the analyst; although also leaving room for alternative interpretations in the headline by saying that the poll *suggests* a shift to right.

In the following extract, another fully identified and titled analyst is basing his evaluation of the opinions of the French public about their Interior Minister on the results of an opinion poll according to which the minister's approval rating had risen:

- (36) Mr Sarkozy, buoyed by an *opinion poll* saying his approval rating had soared by 11 points since the rioting started on October 27 [...]  
 Mr Sarkozy's rise in popularity came despite **widespread criticism** of his **allegedly inflammatory** language and tough-guy approach to the rioting. [...]  
 But **public opinion** has backed him. "It seems clear that while intellectuals, social workers, journalists and the left were offended, the man and woman in the street was not," said one *analyst, Pascal Perrineau*. "They seem to appreciate Sarkozy talking to them in everyday language, which most French politicians never do."  
 (*Guardian* 17/11)

As the previous analyst, this analyst is also asked to comment on opinion poll results, rather than to freely evaluate the political atmosphere. Nicolas Sarkozy's choice of words becomes "everyday language" in the analyst's comments, which partly explains why the journalist has chosen to describe the minister's language as "his *allegedly inflammatory* language". In other words, with the support of opposite evidence from an opinion poll together with the analyst's comments, the journalist has been able to take stance and express doubt about whether the minister's language really was *inflammatory*. Also, the article does not quote any "intellectuals, social workers, journalists and the left" or illustrate any other sources of *widespread criticism* of the minister's language and his approach to the unrest. In this way the criticism against the minister appears to be mitigated and backgrounded, as the opinion of the assumed majority together with the interpretation by a high-status source is foregrounded.

### 4.3.2 Opinion Polls

The analysis of the specification of opinion polls showed that these sources were described differently from all the other sources, since opinion polls did not appear human but as non-human sources. Their descriptions thus fell in the following categories of source specification:

- impersonal source
- identified
- specific
- singular grouping
- Status Neutral

Although opinion polls represent the opinions of human beings, these are turned into impersonal figures and percentages in the poll results, and so polls are categorised as *impersonal sources*. Similarly to all the previously discussed sources, polls are also *identified* and *specific* sources. Polls are also *singular groupings* although the results of opinion polls, expressed in percentages as statistical data, make *aggregate sources*. Although polls have their own authority since they forward the opinions of many, as no particular status-increasing features could be detected from their descriptions, nor were they considered as having a particularly high position in society, their *status* was considered *neutral*.

The data of opinion polls was an important indicator of the French public's opinion in the coverage of the disturbances. The polls were quoted as giving various kinds of information, such as the public's opinions about the decision to impose curfews, the politicians' way of handling the situation, immigration policy, as well as the politicians' approval ratings. The results from polls were, however, not presented without a context. For instance, if a source criticised the behaviour of the political elite during the disturbances, a poll result could be presented to demonstrate an opposite viewpoint:

(37) *Mr de Villepin* has been accused of losing political nerve after invoking the emergency laws on Monday. The measures date back to 1955, when the Algerian war of independence was at its height.

*Commentators* have expressed fears that to the descendants of Algerians, many of whom live in the very suburbs that have seen the worst of the troubles, the move will appear symbolic of a lack of change since that brutal conflict.

However, **three-quarters of the French public** support the emergency laws, according to a *poll* in *Le Parisien* newspaper. (*guardian.co.uk* 10/11)

Presenting two opposing views could be seen as producing a balanced account of the matter. However, in the above extract the critique against the imposing of curfews is presented as coming from an unidentified source, a group of *commentators*, whereas support for it comes through a poll from “three-quarters of the French public”. Although the *commentators* could be seen as sources that have an “impersonal authority” (van Leeuwen 1996: 52), as they could potentially be sources with very high credibility, when they are juxtaposed with *three-quarters of the French public*, they appear to be in an inferior position. The imposing of curfews, therefore, appears to be presented as an overall positive measure, despite some opposing opinions, as it is supported by what appears to be the majority of the public.

Similarly, when it was reported what the violation of the curfew law would result in, the results of an opinion poll, an *aggregate* source, were inserted to indicate that “the population” supported the measures that were taken and, consequently, also the consequences of their violation:

(38) Those violating the curfew law face up to two months in jail and fines of up to €3,750 (£2,535). [...]

A *poll* published in today's *Le Parisien* newspaper showed that **73% of the population** was in favour of the curfews. (*guardian.co.uk* 9/11)

Support for certain policies by the French public was indicated in many ways, and even results that did not unambiguously indicate support, were quoted in such a way that it appeared as if they did:

(39) *The left* demanded interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy resign, accused of inflaming passions by calling troublemakers “yobs” and “scum”. *Many rioters* say they are determined to make Mr Sarkozy pay for his “insults”. A *poll* yesterday found 57%

(and 78% of rightwing voters) approved of his overall approach, 62% believed he was trying to resolve things; however, 63% felt he used language "shocking" for a minister. (*Guardian* 7/11)

Rather than first presenting the poll results that indicate critique and that also have the highest percentage of supporters, the supporting results, though also with a high percentage, are presented first. Whereas *the left* and the *rioters* seemed to have been specifically referring to the minister's use of language in their critique, in the poll results his use of language, which is condemned by a high percentage, is brought up last. This would appear to suggest that the journalist's purpose has specifically been to present a countering opinion, which is done by emphasizing the support figures for the minister's "overall approach". Had the emphasis been on his use of language, the results would have left a different impression of the French public's opinion. Also, while particularly *the left* may appear as a source with "impersonal authority", figures, such as the percentages that illustrate poll results, can be used by journalists as a strategy to guarantee objectivity by indicating precision and exactness (van Dijk 1988: 84, 85). In other words, as there are no sources from *the left*, or *many rioters*, to confirm their statements, while there are percentages confirming the poll results, the poll appears as the more credible source.

A comparison of the two editions of the *Guardian* showed relatively limited use of poll results in the online edition. The online edition namely referred only twice to the poll results carried out by a French newspaper, whereas the print edition was found to have referred nine times to the results of three different surveys. Surveys carried out by companies specialised in doing opinion polls are also likely to appear as more credible sources of information.

#### 4.4 News Photos

The *Guardian* did not only rely on textual accounts in news reports in describing the events in France, but also used visual means, such as photographs, to further illustrate

the matter<sup>18</sup>. Although news photography also claims authenticity and veracity (Holland 2002: 465), in other words, much like news reports claim ‘objectivity’, there is no neutral way of depicting reality as all depictions reflect subjective choices made by the photographer. There were seven photographs, one in the *Guardian* and six in the *guardian.co.uk*, that illustrated the French disturbances in the 24 news reports that served as material for the study. In the following I will discuss some of the photos with the aim of describing how they reflected the point of view taken in the articles and, consequently, did not simply ‘objectively’ depict reality.

The photos were not taken by the *Guardian*’s own photo journalists and were instead sourced to two news agencies; including the French news agency *Agence France-Presse* (AFP) and *Reuters*, as well as the photo agency *The European Pressphoto Agency* (EPA) and the image provider company *Getty Images*. This, however, cannot be said to have reduced the paper’s responsibility for the photos, as the *Guardian* had a choice as to what kind of images to include. A common nominator for all the pictures was that their theme was the unrest as it materialised on the suburban streets, which meant that all photos depicted scenes from places where the disturbances had taken place.

Youths in the midst of the disturbances was the most commonly depicted theme in the *Guardian*’s photos, as it occurred in four photos out of the seven in total. In these four photos, youths were depicted either as running, standing, throwing objects or in otherwise active positions. When it was unclear what was taking place on the photo, the caption would add an explanation. For instance, a photo in the online edition (8/11) depicts from a distance a number of youths on a street, some of whom have covered their faces, who appear to be in active movement on the foreground, while a bus is burning in the background. The seemingly very telling photo does not become meaningful to the readers before they read the caption that says:

(40) Youths throw Molotov cocktails and stones at policemen in front of a burning bus in the Mirail neighbourhood of Toulouse, France.

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<sup>18</sup> When disturbances in the French suburbs were repeated again in 2007, however, the *guardian.co.uk* also included videos from the unrest on the streets.

As the youths are facing the camera, just by looking at the photo the readers cannot draw the conclusion that it was towards the police that the youths were throwing objects. The Molotov cocktails and stones are also not visible on the photo, which the readers then have to 'imagine' into the hands of the youths. The other participants that the caption refers to, the police, are evidently absent from the photo that depicts only the youths.

When police officers appeared on the *Guardian's* photos they were depicted differently compared to the youths. While the youths were depicted as taking action in the disturbances, such as throwing stones and Molotov cocktails, in three out of four photos, the only picture (*Guardian* 3/11) depicting the police shows a group of police officers standing in full riot gear with a vehicle burning in the background. The caption again serves to explain the photo:

(41) Anti-riot policemen patrol in the northern Paris suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois.

Although the police were reported as firing rubber bullets towards the youths (cf. *guardian.co.uk* 2/11), 'clashing' with them (cf. *guardian.co.uk* 10/11), and arresting thousands (cf. *Guardian* 21/11), it is noteworthy that none of this has been depicted on the photos of the police.

As the *Guardian's* photos depicted only certain participants and themes related to the disturbances, it meant that many other related topics were excluded from the photos. For instance, while the articles mentioned the poor conditions in the French suburbs, pictures of suburbs and their residents did not appear in the coverage. Similarly, there were no pictures of French politicians, although politicians were referred to in nearly all articles in the material. Consequently, while the *Guardian* also covered 'the other side' of the French disturbances in its reports, that is, the reasons that were thought to have lead to the unrest, these themes did not appear in the photos. This would suggest that the main theme in the paper's coverage of the French unrest was crowd action or civil unrest as an illegal activity. Depicting conditions in the suburbs, for instance, would

have foregrounded the reasons for the protests, which could not be seen in the photos of the crowd action on the streets.

In addition to being able to select which photos to include in the coverage of an event, newspapers can also choose where on the page to place a news photo. For instance, in *guardian.co.uk*'s articles pictures tended to appear before the article, being situated directly beneath the headline. One implication of this is that the reader may form an opinion of the news event before starting to read the article, basing their opinion on the picture only. For instance, if the picture depicts youths in action in the unrest, throwing stones and setting cars on fire, the reader may interpret the subsequent information in the article in the light of the violence that is depicted in the picture. While the placement of the photo also depended on the size of the picture, in that a smaller picture could be placed beside an article where a wider photo would not fit, photos never appeared in the middle or after an article. This would suggest that the photos were an important component in the reporting of the news events and that they were equally important as the news articles themselves.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this research was to examine whose versions competed in the British newspaper *Guardian's* coverage of the 2005 unrest in France in the 24 news reports that served as material for the study. The focus was on the choice of sources of information and their evaluation. The hypothesis of the study was that while the *Guardian* gave floor to a number of sources, it gave more credibility to some sources rather than others. It was argued that the *Guardian* would favour authorities or experts in its reporting and prioritise these sources over 'ordinary' people.

The study of which individuals and organisations were allowed access to the news, which was examined through the advocate/arbiter division, and the study of the descriptions given to them showed, firstly, that the *Guardian's* version of the French unrest was diverse rather than one-sided. By employing different sources with different social positions and opinions the crowd action was explored from various viewpoints. The inequality in the sources' social status, nevertheless, was seen in their descriptions, which is why the hypothesis of the study was proved to be correct – with some reservations which are noted below. *Dual* sources [politicians and representatives of organisations] and arbiters [experts and opinion polls] of higher social status and authority in society namely tended to appear as fully identified individuals whose credibility was enhanced by the use of professional titles in their descriptions. The credibility of one of the main advocates in the matter [the police] lied in their description as an institution that occupies an authoritative position in the society. Advocates [suburban youths] and dual sources [suburban residents] of lower status, on the other hand, were rarely or never fully identified with their first and last names, and lacked any titles in their descriptions that would have enhanced their credibility. However, despite giving credibility to sources with higher social status in their descriptions, the paper also reported critique towards them by, for instance, quoting critical sources. This shows that the *Guardian* was not entirely uncritical of the authoritative sources with high credibility.

The study furthermore showed that although the *Guardian* was very critical of particularly the Interior Minister's use of language of the youths, the paper itself also condemned the youths' actions, which was evident in their repeated use of descriptions such as *rioters* and *troublemakers*. A comparison of the two editions of the *Guardian* showed that the online edition used more such evaluative descriptions of the youths that were explicitly negative. This could be seen in the use of descriptions such as *gangs* and *vandals*, which did not appear in the print edition. This suggests that the *Guardian* is more careful about what it says in its print edition compared to what is allowed in its online articles. Both editions, nevertheless, also showed the youths from different viewpoints in the coverage, and consequently provided a more diverse picture of the youths than only that of criminals.

A comparison to van Leeuwen's study on the representation of social actors revealed that similarly to the immigrants in van Leeuwen's study, the youths together with suburban residents were the only sources who were classified according to their ethnic origin, race, religion and wealth. Also, similarly to the Australian government, the French government in the present study was also often individualised, that is, personified in the person of various politicians.

What could be detected particularly with source specification was which associations, that is, people who are grouped together because they share a view that is being argued in the text, were formed of the news actors. For instance, an association was formed of suburban residents and officials because both condemned the disturbances in the suburbs. A similar association was, however, not formed of the suburban youths and the French political establishment, although both emphasized the issue of racism in France.

Although many sources were used and many viewpoints brought up in the news articles, the news photos did not display similar variety. The photos that accompanied some of the articles namely all showed scenes from the streets where the unrest was taking place. A likely explanation for the preference to these types of photos is that such photos were deemed to be visually more interesting, as they often depicted action on the streets. The pictures could also be seen as providing the newspaper's readership an

insight into a 'dangerous' situation; a depiction of what seemed to be real-life criminal activity by 'gangs', which a large part of the readership was unlikely to have had personal experience of. However, images of the poor conditions in the suburbs could have been equally visually interesting and would also have turned the audience's attention more on the reasons for the unrest.

For further study, the much neglected news sources could generally afford more study. Furthermore, the model for source specification would suit particularly well for analysing what type of information is attributed to unidentified, as opposed to identified sources; as the analysis in this study suggested that sources were not identified or left anonymous randomly. Also fruitful for further study would be to conduct a comparative study between broadsheet and tabloid newspapers' evaluation of sources, as newspapers with different policies are likely to display differences also in this respect. How evaluation is expressed in news reports should generally provide plenty of viewpoints and material for further research. The ever increasing role of Internet, in turn, gives reason to more studies on online, in addition to paper, editions of newspapers. A comparative study of this type could trace differences between the editions, as this study showed that there are likely to be differences. In future studies, the concepts of advocates and arbiters could also be explored and developed further, as they proved to be useful tools for classifying news sources.

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