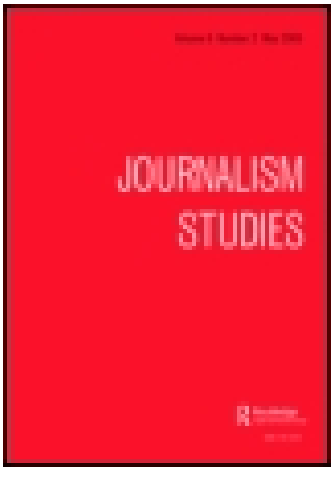
This article was downloaded by: [Florida International University]
On: 20 June 2014, At: 15:37
Publisher: Routledge
Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Journalism Studies
Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjos20

Boosterism as Banishment

Robert E. Gutsche Jr.

Published online: 19 Jun 2014.

To cite this article: Robert E. Gutsche Jr. (2014): Boosterism as Banishment, Journalism Studies, DOI: 10.1080/1461670X.2014.924730

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2014.924730

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions

BOOSTERISM AS BANISHMENT
Identifying the power function of local, business news and coverage of city spaces

Robert E. Gutsche Jr.

This paper performs a qualitative critical discourse analysis of 52 local news articles from four Florida (United States) newspapers to identify and expand the notion of journalistic boosterism. In the paper, I argue that boosterism—everyday news that promotes mediatized notions of a community's dominant traditions, dominant identities, and potential for future prosperities—functions as a form of social control by performing, as banishment, an act that secludes particular social groups from participating in community spaces, social roles, and storytelling. This paper conceptualizes journalistic boosterism as operating via a duality of community building and social banishment, a practice that continues to spread across the globe.

KEYWORDS banishment; boosterism; critical discourse analysis; geography; local news; place

Downloaded by [Florida International University] at 15:37 20 June 2014

Introduction

In late November 2012, the *Tampa Bay Times* in St. Petersburg, Florida (United States) published a profile on a downtown jeweler set to retire after 66 years on the job (Puente 2012). "It's just time to go," the business owner told the newspaper, which listed among the jeweler's reasons to retire "hordes of homeless people congregating on the corner or across the street in Williams Park" that he "fears" have kept and will continue to scare away customers. Following the story that noted the park's homeless "problems," the *Times* began focusing on how to "clean up Williams Park" (Puente 2013). Specifically, journalists turned to city officials and business owners who wanted to transform the park from a "home to a new community" by removing from the downtown those people the newspaper called "drug dealers and drug-addicts, hell-raisers and drunks, hustlers and philosophers" (Cox 2013c). The space, then, would be returned to what it was in its heyday when "Ronald Reagan, Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford addressed thousands" from the park's bandstand, one article stated. Failing to address homelessness in the downtown park, the *Times* reported, would breed "a haven for drug dealing and substance abuse that bleeds beyond the borders of those 4.3 acres in the heart of the downtown" (Cox 2013a). If not "reclaimed" from the homeless, one newspaper editorial explained, the park will continue to serve as "less a front porch, more an open-air flophouse … where dreams go to die in the shadows of memories recalling a city's elegant past" (*Tampa Bay Times* 2013)—that could also "bleed" into the broader community.

Also in the fall of 2012, three other Florida newspapers reported on issues related to homelessness, high-end business development, and the gentrification of a low-income neighborhood in terms of how these issues will influence local community values and futures. Coverage also prescribed solutions to disorder, many of which included removing homeless from city spaces, increasing private and "upscale" development, and using

Journalism Studies, 2014
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2014.924730
© 2014 Taylor & Francis

police to enforce local ordinances that limited access to public spaces to the wealthy. The *Miami Herald*, for instance, presented its city's Wynwood art district as a benefit of gentrification—including the removal of homeless and racial minorities—while newspapers in West Palm Beach and Sarasota cast their city geographies as being spaces for the "public good" that could only be realized by reserving the spaces for wealthy residents and private developers. While these sets of news coverage may represent the press' role in providing a public forum for community issues, this paper argues that such coverage—all as a means to maintain traditional community values and identities—is better categorized and explained as *journalistic boosterism* (Burd 1977; Kaniss 1991).

A concept that articulates how everyday news promotes mediatized notions of a community's dominant identities, boosterism is a vital function of the press to define a community's identities (Gans 2004); however, through this paper's critical discourse analysis (Wodak and Meyer 2009) of 52 local news articles from four Florida newspapers, I argue that boosterism also serves as a means of controlling public behavior and sets social standards for public investment. To explicate elements of control within journalistic boosterism and to further complicate the concept, I explore news through the notion of *banishment*, a process of social stigma and regulation that restricts particular social groups from participating in community spaces and in social roles (Beckett and Herbert 2009). As banishment practices spread in societies across the globe (McCann 2013), it becomes crucial to understand its communicative function and appearance in everyday life. In St. Petersburg's case, then, I argue local news not only covered elements of banishment, including the removal of homeless from public spaces, but justified such policies by presenting banishment as necessary to "boost" the community's economies and maintain its dominant values.

The paper begins with a conceptual discussion of news as cultural text and research related to journalistic boosterism and social banishment. I then present the study's methodology and briefly introduce the four newspapers and respective news coverage at the center of this study. Next, I conduct an analysis of language, sources, and vantage points in coverage of local events, issues, people, and places. The paper concludes with suggestions for future research that will deepen explanations of how the press operate as social and cultural operatives in local geographies.

Local Press as Purveyor of Cultural and Social Norms

What appears in the news is presented to the public as having endured a rigorous treatment of journalistic standards and norms such as accuracy and sourcing to transform the news into an objective reflection of an audience's "reality" (Riffe and Reader 2007). At the same time, however, journalism provides an ideological interpretation of everyday events and an explanation of the inexplicable, shaped by journalistic practice and presentation, but also by dominant social and economic pressures (Klocke and McDevitt 2013; O'Neill and O'Connor 2008). Specific to this paper, therefore, is the intersection of journalism as a form of ideological control and public service (Gutsche, forthcoming). I am particularly interested in forms of control inherent in local news coverage that present public policies (i.e. local ordinances that mandate approved behaviors in public spaces, privatization of public spaces, expanded policing, and social stigmatization of the poor and racial minorities) as means to maintain dominant, mediatized community values and identities (Gutsche 2011, 2013).

Downloaded by [Florida International University] at 15:37 20 June 2014

Building Community in News

Journalists negotiate complex sets of social and economic pressures within ideological frameworks of dominant culture that shape journalists' interpretations and presentations of news (Hellmueller, Vos, and Poepsel 2013; Hindman and Thomas 2013; McCombs and Funk 2011; Moon and Hyun 2009). Community building is an especially important ideological function of the press at the local level (Kaniss 1991; Robinson and DeShano 2011), particularly in terms of what has become known as *journalistic boosterism*—everyday news that highlights the positive qualities of local environments, that profiles the successes of local personalities, and that promotes geography's inherent promise for economic and cultural wealth (Burd 1977; Gutsche 2014a).

Since its conception, journalistic boosterism has been applied to popular discussions of news (Hardin 2005). Journalistic boosterism has also become aligned with the concept of agenda-setting. McCombs (1997), for instance, refers to boosterism as news that teeters on "cheerleading" (438) that balances covering "everything from the new jobs that can result from a business firm coming to the community to the expenditure of public funds for construction of roads and community facilities" (438). Yet, boosterism—a concept still in its conceptual infancy—holds elements of social control, particularly in terms of its construction of dominant interpretations of wealth, public good, and community identity. To explore issues of power related to boosterism's interest in shaping dominant articulations of space, place, and people, then, I wish to apply an outcome of boosterism—that of *social banishment*.

Scholars have come to apply social banishment to describe and explain the growing contested nature of geography resulting from encroaching public–private enterprises and the use of control and stigmatization to enforce the "rights" and interest of the local power elites (Cook and Whowell 2011; Gibson 2011; Goetz 2013; Harvey 2009; Naughton 2014; Soja 2010). In other words, banishment is a process of institutions imposing "place-based restrictions" in particular social spaces and to maintain that which is considered acceptable public behavior, to enhance notions of personal security, to encourage private economic development, and to maintain dominant societal and cultural norms (Beckett and Herbert 2009).

Modern-day banishment occurs through much more subtle means than in ancient times, which relied on physical force. Cities, for instance, support the wealthy and well-off through anti-loitering ordinances that restrict "undesirable" populations (i.e. homeless, youth, racial minorities, and social agitators) from public spaces, including parks, sidewalks, and business districts (Katz 1989). In Italy, for example, Aiello (2011) argues that Bologna's "cultural district" has been altered by businesses and politicians to attract tourists and remove the city's poorer citizens. Throughout the United States and United Kingdom, zero-tolerance laws designed to keep its residents "safe" criminalize the most minor of violations, such as littering, and militarize the process of "cleaning up" city spaces (Graham 2010). Throughout North America, China, Southeast Asia, and Latin America, zoning laws encourage private expansion into public spaces to "improve" public services (Becker and Müller 2013; McCann 2013).

Yet banishment is as much a communicative function of power as it is one that applies physical force—a function that is at the center of this paper's purpose to further explore how the press communicates geographic places (Gutsche 2014b; Matei, Ball-Rokeach, and Qui 2001). Therefore, to help explore the cultural role and control function of journalistic

Downloaded by [Florida International University] at 15:37 20 June 2014

boosterism as a form of social banishment, this study is guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: In what ways did journalists ascribe value to local public spaces and businesses?
RQ2: How did journalists explain economic development and social banishment as solutions to disorder in each case?
RQ3: What meanings can be derived from exploring such explanations?

Method

This paper is based on a critical discourse analysis (Wodak and Meyer 2009) of 52 articles from the general news and business sections, letters to the editor, and editorials related to news coverage of private development and of permissible behavior in public spaces, all of which appeared in four Florida newspapers.[1] News stories about Williams Park, public green space described in the introduction, provided data for the first of four cases examined in this study. The park, located in a residential neighborhood just west of St. Petersburg, Florida's (population 244,000) downtown waterfront, near expensive high-rise apartment buildings and art galleries, serves as a social space for local homeless and for large social gatherings, such as public concerts. Articles from the *Tampa Bay Times* (formerly the *St. Petersburg Times*),[2] a 292,000 daily circulation newspaper (429,000 on Sundays) supplied texts for this portion of the study. I was particularly interested in how journalists described the contested nature of the park's purposes; therefore, I searched the newspaper's online archive for "Williams Park" between November 24, 2012, beginning with mention of the park as a possible reason for the retirement of a local businessman and ending on February 24, 2013. This search yielded 15 news stories that were included in the study.

News coverage surrounding debate about the affect of homelessness in two Sarasota, Florida (population 52,000) public parks on local business and tourism provides a second set of news texts for this analysis. Local debate about how to tackle homelessness in the city first emerged in 2006 when Sarasota was named by the National Coalition for the Homeless as the country's "meanest city," because of excessive policing of local homeless and for restrictive policies that limited where homeless could gather and sleep (*USA Today* 2006). Controversy reemerged in November 2012 when police arrested a homeless man for charging his cell phone at an electric outlet in a public park. Using the terms "Five Points Park" and "Gillespie Park," two parks at the center of the most recent debate, a search of the *Sarasota Herald Tribune*'s online website (the *Herald* has a print circulation of 83,000 daily, with 106,000 on Sundays) between November 12, 2012, the date of the arrest, and February 12, 2013 yielded 13 articles about local homelessness and public spaces.

A third set of news coverage used for this study surrounds upscale redevelopment of commercial space in West Palm Beach, Florida (population 52,000), specifically the demolition of a large, traditional shopping mall to make way for the Palm Beach Outlets, an open-air mall that houses brand name fashion stores. I was particularly interested in redevelopment of an area surrounded by racially homogeneous, wealthy subdivisions and country clubs to its east, west, and north, but modest and more racially diverse neighborhoods to the south. Therefore, I searched "West Palm Beach Outlet," "Palm Beach Mall," and "Palm Beach Outlets" (terms that were used interchangeably by local press) in

Downloaded by [Florida International University] at 15:37 20 June 2014

the website archives of *The Palm Beach Post*, an 117,000 daily circulation paper (429,000 on Sundays) between the dates of December 15, 2012 (when demolition of the older mall was announced) and March 15, 2013. This search yielded nine texts that discussed the development; each was used for the study.

Lastly, news surrounding Miami, Florida's (population 408,000) Wynwood art district serves as a fourth and final set of news coverage for this paper. Surrounded by largely low-income Hispanic and black residential neighborhoods, Wynwood is located inland, several blocks west of Biscayne Bay, bordered by low-income geographies—including Liberty City and Overtown.[3] Both Liberty City and Overtown were scenes of race riots in the early 1980s (Portes and Stepick 1993). In recent years, the Wynwood district has been branded by city officials and local business owners as an emerging club and art scene, with both private and public entities investing in development to replace poverty, abandoned warehouses and drug-dealing to minimize future stigma associated with nearby, black and low-income neighborhoods (Hinton 2013).

Because I was interested in how journalists described this changing city space, I used the term "Wynwood" to search the website archive of the *Miami Herald*, a 173,000 daily circulation newspaper (217,000 on Sundays). I began the search on December 2, 2012, the Sunday before the three-day famous Art Basel, and ended it on March 2, 2013. This search yielded 74 articles. I read all texts to identify those that described the character and personalities of the Wynwood district, resulting in a total of 15 articles that were used in the study.[4]

I performed multiple readings of these texts, guided by the conceptual lens outlined above, a common approach to qualitative textual analysis in the field of journalism studies (Berkowitz and Eko 2007; Lindlof and Taylor 2010; Wodak and Meyer 2009). Readings focused on reporters' use of language, the vantage points of news sources, and the narratives applied to explain social policies and dominant community identities. By taking notes on the texts themselves and recording them in an electronic database, I identified consistent themes of coverage and cultural explanation (Berkowitz and Gutsche 2012). As qualitative research, the findings presented below are not generalizable, but are meant to further conceptual understandings of how news presents dominant meanings to audiences.

Additionally, the following analysis is not meant as a normative critique of journalistic coverage, but represents the approach that considers news a social and cultural construction that, in the end, contributes to local policies and social outcomes by assigning power to particular ideologies—and populations (Berkowitz 2011; Tuchman 1973). Such inquiry is at the core of critical discourse analysis, an interdisciplinary approach that "de-mystifies ideologies and power" through examination of language, narrative, and sources of power that construct discourse (Wodak and Meyer 2009).

Boosterism and Banishment as Journalistic Function

In the following analysis, I examine how language, vantage points, and narratives used in local news stories contributed to banishment policies in each through journalistic boosterism. I present this boosterism–banishment dynamic by examining three elements that appeared across each case.

Downloaded by [Florida International University] at 15:37 20 June 2014

Downloaded by [Florida International University] at 15:37 20 June 2014

Valuing Space: Boosterism as Journalistic Place-making

News coverage explored in this paper employs tools of storytelling (Sillars 1991) to value city spaces, such as city parks and business districts. More specifically, news stories cast city spaces as living beings that serve as lifeblood for their respective communities, allowing journalists to relay meanings of community identity and values through personification embedded in reporting related to homelessness, economic development, and policing.

Tampa Bay Times coverage of St. Petersburg's "troubled" Williams Park, for instance, elevates the park's community importance by awarding it human characteristics. One news story refers to the park as "a *passive* green space in the *heart* of St. Petersburg's central business district" (Gadsden 2013, emphasis added), as though a park has the ability to be passive while another places the park "in the *heart* of the downtown" (Puente 2012, emphasis added). Yet another article states that Williams Park has become "a haven for drug dealing and substance abuse that *bleeds* beyond the borders of the 4.3 acres in the *heart* of downtown" (Cox 2013a, emphasis added), emphasizing the sense of living, breathing—and bleeding.

Similarly, the *Miami Herald* presented the city's Wynwood district as "a *dying* warehouse district" in the "*heart* of the city," which has been given attention through gentrification so that the district "can *thrive*" (*Miami Herald* 2013, emphasis added). Furthermore, one *Herald* article states that gentrification will continue to help the district function as the "*heart*" of an art district, where "signs of life … begin to appear like ants vying for a sugar cube" (Santiago 2013, emphasis added). News stories presented city spaces as active beings under attack from "undesirable" people and problems—elements of humanization and personification that allow the "morals of the story" to emerge through storytelling of this space (Bird and Dardenne 1997).

In Sarasota, for example, parks and business districts were presented as holding "potential" to influence community spirit and prosperity. One *Herald-Tribune* guest columnist criticized citizens for not supporting increased police enforcement to curb "negative behavior" that was endangering these important spaces (Gorevan 2012). Though the article does not define "negative behavior," it does point to homeless people "drawing with chalk on the sidewalks" and "sleeping, drinking and cellphone charging" as deviant behavior, and suggests that there is little difference between "a homeless person and a bum."

In another article, the *Herald-Tribune* provides a legalistic explanation for disorder, writing that local authorities define "vagrancy, such as panhandling and sleeping outdoors" as "illegal lodging" (Van Berkel 2012). These perspectives mirror news coverage across all cases in this paper: The Sarasota community—and its police force—is "waging war" (Gorevan 2012) against the homeless to reclaim the primary and "natural" use of "public" space; politicians and community leaders in St. Petersburg "fight" for traditional values associated with Williams Park (*Tampa Bay Times* 2012); "culture" and "art" in Miami's Wynwood district are up against urban decay (*Miami Herald* 2012); upscale commerce and housing in West Palm Beach will benefit the "public good" (Abramson 2012).

Such spatial meanings, however, were determined and presented in news pages by select voices. A new homeless shelter in Miami's Wynwood district, for instance, turns to a local developer, an architect, and the shelter manager who, in true boosteristic fashion, present the space as a "cheap-chic dorm for homeless men" with exposed rafters, private lockers, and a "simple-cool style" (Viglucci 2012). Ignoring perspectives of what may cause

local homelessness and perspectives from homeless people, themselves, the story instead calls attention to the building's design and "swooping canopy" as a way to better the lives of the shelter's "growing clientele" in a "gentrifying Wynwood."

Justifying Banishment: Authorizing "Official" Social Action

Boosteristic evaluations of city spaces and economic development relied upon these select, "authorized knowers" (Ericson, Baranek, and Chan 1991) whose social roles in the local community reified official actions of banishment, such as increased policing, banishment of homeless and the poor, and public investment in economic development targeted at the wealthy. In turn, news coverage that celebrated the civic and economic potential of public spaces and private development, while ignoring or marginalizing alternative definitions of city spaces and banishment policies, served a dual, authoritative function; first, to "boost" local community values by the purposes and values of city spaces; and, second, to assist in defining and explaining such forms of banishment through a lens of serving the public good.

In the case of Miami's Wynwood district, the *Miami Herald* quotes a developer as saying that "gentrification is good for" reducing crime (Viglucci 2012). Another story quotes a member of the district's historical homeowner's association as stating that a proposed Wal-Mart is a "good fit for the Wynwood community" that will provide affordable goods and create 350 jobs (McGrory and Viglucci 2013). Yet another *Herald* article relies on the authority of high-end brands and art and fashion directors to argue that Wynwood has now become "hip" because of "the makeover of the adjacent Design District into subtropical Rodeo Drive, anchored by luxury retailers such as Louis Vuitton, Cartier, Hermes and Christian Dior" (*Miami Herald* 2012). The article continues that the Wynwood district emerged "out of *nothing* by a dusty old rail yard" (emphasis added), as though the district had not been a place of life before big brands came along.

In Sarasota, police sources are quoted as saying that the homeless and their activities—such as charging cell phones with public electrical outlets—will destroy community values (Williams 2012b). For example, one woman who relies on an electric wheelchair that she sometimes charges in parks is said to have "slurred" speech, "lives with friends in a homeless camp," and is seeking "an assisted-living center *willing to take her*" (Williams 2012b). In another story headlined, "Homeless Remain a Challenge for Sarasota" (Lush 2013), the homeless—not homelessness—are presented as a problem. The article presents one scene where homeless citizens are in a "*cluster*" who have "*lounged* on the *back steps* of a building, *grimy* backpacks and *bags at their feet*, while a few folks *ambled* to the nearby bus station" (emphasis added). Yet, the article, written by the Associated Press, places little scrutiny upon official sources who say they know little about homeless and wish to address them as community "complaints."

In St. Petersburg, the *Tampa Bay Times* used similar rhetoric to explain the desires of local business owners and officials to banish homeless from the downtown, lest they drive away patrons and destroy the small-town feel (Puente 2012). "To neighboring businesses and residents," the article states, "[Williams Park] plagues some of the priciest real estate in the city," so much so that "[p]arents no long push strollers on its sidewalks. Downtown workers don't want to eat lunch on its benches" (Puente 2013). The news story states that local officials had already installed "a wrought iron fence," deployed "more homeless outreach workers" to the park, and "added concession stands and an increased police

Downloaded by [Florida International University] at 15:37 20 June 2014

presence" (Cox 2013a) to remove unwanted persons from the park. Yet, according to the news stories, these efforts to "transform the park from a homeless drug den to a flourishing playground for families and downtown workers" had "floundered" (Cox 2013a).

Still, the *Tampa Bay Times* quotes the mayor as suggesting that a continued commitment to "consistent programming—such as luncheons, concerts, and markets—eventually will make the lawbreakers *too uncomfortable*" and would, therefore, make the park more "*palatable*" (Cox 2013b, emphasis added). Indeed, journalists turned to several local authorities, including ministers, educators, and attorneys in a nearby law firm, to construct rationales and explanations for banishment policies rather than addressing social issues related to homelessness. Journalists even consulted a co-owner of an adult-themed business, Club Lust—which in some communities might be cast as an undesirable business—who said that in order to improve Williams Park, the city must "*get the crap out* [of the park] and you can't do that without moving the buses … That's the first thing" (Cox, 2013b, emphasis added).

Lastly, in West Palm Beach, *Palm Beach Post* sources such as developers, mayors, chamber of commerce officials, and business owners, articulated upscale development as vital to community prosperity (Clough 2012b; Abramson 2012; Roach 2013a). Coverage about the upscale outlet mall presents local officials as peddling positive outlooks about its ability to boost economic development (Clough 2012a). One story quotes an "upbeat" mayor, saying she desires to see the city officials, police, and business leaders working to attract more business that will lead to local control, including that "the police will be in the community doing community policing, being responsive to what the community wants, what the neighborhoods want" (Abramson 2013). Views from a local billionaire developer and one-time US Senate candidate promoted the $200-million mall and adjoining "luxury apartments" (Abramson 2012).[5] Moreover, the developer says, the mall will "fit in an area that he believes will improve." He said, "There's no question if you go in a certain direction around the property it's certainly not considered a luxury neighborhood … But I think we're building an upscale, nice apartment complex that's going to be affordable."[6]

Together, the use of public and private sources, each sharing in boosteristic perspectives and messages, contributed to overarching subtle but consistent authorization of banishment policies. Manoff (1986) calls such an ideological approach a "shadow text," a storyline of dominant cultural meaning that appears in representations of a story's characters, plot, and dialogue that guides the reader through a journey that appears real and objective. In this case, the shadow text that supported banning homeless from city parks and developing wealthy districts to out-price low-income residents serve as "sites of struggle" (Wodak and Meyer 2009, 10) by which rhetoric, presented by official sources (and selected by journalists for publication), removed bias from journalists and placed it on either the reader's interpretation of official information or on the sources themselves. Yet, the authority of officials and of the press alone did not legitimize banishment policies as a means for "public good." Rather, they operated simultaneously with dominant narratives of poverty and progress.

Solidifying Banishment with Narrative Explanation

Journalistic boosterism that signaled the need for banishment was further reified by embedded, nostalgic narratives of *small-town pastoralism* (Fry 2003; Gans 2004)—story-telling of a geography's "traditional values" related to mythical small-town America and

Downloaded by [Florida International University] at 15:37 20 June 2014

blame narratives designed to identify those threatening dominant community identities (Heider 2004; Iyengar 1991; Katz 1989).

In St. Petersburg, for example, newspaper coverage turned to nostalgic narratives of city spaces to call for maintenance of or a return to the community's "traditional" values, uses, and identities. A *Tampa Bay Times* editorial presents Williams Park as once being the city's "front porch" that had hosted "society card parties, music recitals, family picnics, folk festivals, weddings and the occasional soap box for the likes of Robert Taft, Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan" (*Tampa Bay Times* 2013). The park, the editorial continues, "was as quaint as the city its founder intended … Now Williams Park has become a boozy, drug-hazed haven for the city's homeless." The editorial ends with a call to action:

> Reclaiming [the park's] former charm won't be easy, as long as the park remains a place where dreams go to die in the shadow of memories recalling a city's elegant past. But it's time to try something different—starting with moving the bus stops.

In Sarasota, coverage suggested homelessness had replaced traditional community identities of small-town neighborhoods with devious behaviors and class divides that require increased policing (Van Berkel 2012, 2013b). The homeless, the *Herald-Tribune* writes, have contributed to a "divide between neighborhoods and development" (Van Berkel 2013a) and have fueled a "bitter divide" over "treatment of the homeless" by police (*Herald-Tribune* 2013). In one article about a homeless man arrested for charging his cell phone in a park, journalists provided a single sentence of indifference: "The chief would not address the propriety of the charges" (Williams 2012a).

In the case of *The Palm Beach Post*, for instance, "official sources," such as the director of the local Chamber of Commerce, were presented in news coverage as local celebrities, set to uphold traditional, capitalistic values of building community through economic development. A question-and-answer article with the Chamber director sought answers to his hometown, education, and information "about your company." Other questions asked the official to discuss his "first paying job and what you learned from it," his "first big break in the business," his "power lunch spot," and his "favorite smartphone app" (Clough 2012a). In answering what he sees for the future of Palm Beach County, his answer identifies local exceptionalism that is rooted in economic prosperity:

> We are blessed with the extraordinary attributes of a great geography, climate, tax structure, culture, and a diverse population … While there will always be challenges and disappointments, the prognosis for Palm Beach County is as good as anywhere in America.

Another *Palm Beach Post* article regarding the new mall echoed similar narratives of economic promise and potential that comes with high-end development (Roach 2013a). Yet another news story profiled the mayor of West Palm Beach discussing the mayor's "successes and surprises" during her first term and quoted her saying that the region is "open for business and we want to grow and we want to develop … we want to look at what we can do to bring businesses in" (Abramson 2013). She further connects high-end economic development with bettering community: "I think we'll continue to have great neighborhoods," she says, "and continue to do the work that needs to be done to keep them great."

News focus on economic and physical banishment operated alongside overarching blame narratives of the poor. Such a narrative reinforced security features provided by

Downloaded by [Florida International University] at 15:37 20 June 2014

banishment as a means to protect dominant community identities and future development. The *Miami Herald*'s coverage of the city's Wynwood district, for example, relied on dominant narratives of disorder related to homeless and the low-income, particularly those related to fear that then showed the need for added policing (Rodriguez 2013; Mor 2013). One editorial equated economic development to the need for further safety services (*Miami Herald* 2013).

Indeed, coverage of the Wynwood district focused on increased public and private investment in art galleries and "culture" throughout the end of 2012, referring to its "hip" culture. Such characterizations continued until a black, high school football player from the nearby Overtown neighborhood was shot in Wynwood, in what the *Miami Herald* labeled a "crime-plagued area" (Edgerton and Medina 2013). In this story, the Wynwood district shared—for a brief moment—in the news narrative of devious, minority inner cities (Parisi 1998) in which blame for historical economic and racial tensions—and resulting street violence—is placed on "choices" and behaviors of neighborhood residents who, then, endanger boosteristic aims. In turn, the news presented these narratives—and their characters—as things that should be banished.

For example, the *Herald* turned to the injured youth's parents who, according to the newspaper, describe their neighborhoods' violence as "exactly the kind of violence [the youth's] parents were trying to escape when they moved from Los Angeles to South Florida 12 years ago" so as not to see "bodies pile up outside my apartment window." The *Herald* also turned to other Overtown residents to tap into fears of the inner city: "I'm too scared to go outside," one youth told reporters. "The streets aren't safe, 'cause it's like crazy out there … Too much trouble, too many drive-bys," though the news story did little to place the Overtown and Wynwood areas within a context of larger crime statistics or voices that would complicate the newspaper's characterizations of the neighborhoods' dangerousness.

In turn, news narratives cast desirable residents (the wealthy) as victims who require banishment policies instituted by local officials, police, and business owners to remove undesirables (the poor and homeless) as a means to reify dominant values and uses of city spaces. Narratives of undesirable homeless in St. Petersburg's Williams Park and in the desire of a particular type of economic development in West Palm Beach said to improve the larger community, for example, served as subtle reminders of what the community is—and should be. In Sarasota, the *Herald-Tribune* juxtaposed narratives of disorderly homeless men with scenes of the types of environments that banishment policies will yield: Take, for instance, the lead for one story titled, "Homeless Remain a Challenge for Sarasota":

> Newer, wealthy residents in the Gulf City known for its art scene and beautiful beaches are buying expensive downtown condos so they can live an urban lifestyle—but they don't want the problems associated with a city, including the 700 or so homeless people who inhabit the county… (Lush 2013)

Together, these three elements of journalistic boosterism—humanizing city spaces to enhance their local value, legitimizing banishment policies by applying the authority of local power elites, and explaining the need for banishment through news narratives—solidify media messages of banishment, the meanings of which I further explicate below.

Downloaded by [Florida International University] at 15:37 20 June 2014

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper explores news as value-laden text that functions as social control in two ways. First, it examines the ways in which journalistic boosterism embeds dominant meanings of place through storytelling, sources, and narratives of explanation. Second, the paper identifies the control mechanism of boosterism through social banishment, revealing the potential of boosteristic discourses and explanations for social spaces and conditions to reify banishment policies. Here, I explicate this paper's contributions in the dominant themes of boosterism identified above. I do not argue that these boosteristic characteristics and functions operated in the order presented below, but suggest they functioned simultaneously to present seamless storylines about city spaces and its peoples.

Valuing Space

By presenting geographies as "bleeding" or being at the "heart" of the community, journalistic boosterism applied economic and ideological values that fell in-line with those of local business and civic leaders, casting these spaces as being under attack by physical threat. In turn, boosteristic spatial humanization replaced overt moral overtones about the value of individuals presented as a threat to be banished, thereby maintaining a sense of journalistic objectivity of "just covering the news." In this analysis, therefore, boosterism appeared to be a source of moral storytelling that contributed to banishment of (or, as one newspaper wrote, a "war" against) undesirable populations and economies as a means of serving the "public good." These spaces, then, became more about dominant community identities in need of protection than mere geographies that needed to be "saved."

Justifying Banishment

Boosterism relied on news sources' focus on "saving" city spaces (and connected ideologies) from "threats" as a means to justify and authorize policies that remove particular people from particular places or that restrict particular activities in those spaces. By providing a consistent voice of policy in the "public good," news coverage extended its community of "authorized knowers" from the traditional "official sources," such as government and police officials, to private citizens, including local business owners who argued for boosteristic principles. The *Miami Herald*, for example, presented a private developer to say that "gentrification is good," while the *Tampa Bay Times* presented downtown public–private events and concession stands to make a park "uncomfortable" for undesirables and more "palatable" for the wealthy. By relying on local "knowers" who operated without "official" ties to "official" titles, these "regular people" helped normalize banishment practices in spaces around which community identities were formed.

Solidifying Banishment

Boosterism operated in these cases by rooting coverage in overarching cultural news narratives related to homelessness, economic development, and police protection. Through these narratives, coverage about the potential for the "public good" through private, upscale development in Wynwood and West Palm Beach and in the removal of undesirables in St. Petersburg and Sarasota parks presents banishment as a positive

Downloaded by [Florida International University] at 15:37 20 June 2014

solution to disorder among homeless, and of urban pathologies. Indeed, the expanded community of "authorized knowers"—and their language, such as referring to homeless as "bums"—were reified by each other's comments that provided a naturalizing power to narratives of prosperity and aligned dominant rhetoric with the aims of banishment.

At the core of this study is recognizing the subtleness of banishment as a communicative function, its aims and practices appearing through "shadow texts" of journalistic storytelling and place-making. In this sense, banishment is not to be confused with overt calls for displacement and punishment, or physical representations of walls, barriers, or boundaries, but should be considered for its ability to build ideological divides that may result in more covert actions. This study also complicates the idea of journalistic boosterism as being more than merely "positive news" to show that boosterism also holds restrictive and divisive purposes, which in these cases allowed "positive news" to perform its own type of banishment by restricting particular voices and perspectives from socio-spatial rhetoric. By implicating the press as a purveyor of cultural meaning—and of social control—audiences and researchers can better understand the power of community storytelling and place-making in the news.

Downloaded by [Florida International University] at 15:37 20 June 2014

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Bianca Morrison, Hugo Ottolenghi, Bob Franklin, and the two reviewers for their comments and direction.

NOTES

1. I selected these cases as an avid reader of Florida news, drawn to consistencies in news coverage of social conditions. I included news texts, editorials, and reader submissions for a layered and holistic approach to local press coverage. While reporters do not produce readers' letters and guest columns, newspaper staff select such texts that contribute to overarching news coverage (Gutsche 2014b; Kaniss 1991; Nielsen 2010).
2. The *Tampa Bay Times* also covers Tampa, Florida, which has its own newspaper (*The Tampa Tribune*), but which was not read for this study, because the *Tribune* is not considered St. Petersburg's hometown newspaper. The *Tampa Bay Times* received a 2014 Pulitzer Prize for its 2013 reporting related to city housing for the homeless, though none of the 2013 articles read for this paper were included in those awarded the prize. Yet, I remind readers that I am not interested in critiquing news but in examining that within what may even be considered "good journalism" are cultural meanings rooted in perpetuating dominant ideology.
3. Miamigov.com/Planning/pages/services/Census.asp shows specific racial and economic data for neighborhoods surrounding Wynwood.
4. Fifty-nine of the articles I read only mentioned Wynwood as an address for galleries or new businesses. My selection of articles for analysis is not to suggest such texts are inconsequential; however, I am mostly interested in analyzing news coverage that explicitly discussed the neighborhood's values and development.
5. In addition to selling fashionable goods and increasing tourism, the newspaper quotes the developer as suggesting future mall employees could rent the apartments, though the story does not compare average rental prices for "luxury" living (monthly rents were

projected at $950–1350), nor does it present the estimated average pay for service workers, who tend to be among the least-paid (Shipler 2005).

6. Online comments for *The Palm Beach Post* stories include narratives of concern about the development, namely that the mall will not alter the deviousness and poverty of adjacent neighborhoods. While online comments were not included in this analysis, they do provide interesting perspectives, including discussions related to neighborhood inequalities.

REFERENCES

Abramson, Andrew. 2012. "Billionaire Palm Beacher Plans 548 Apartments behind Home Depot on Palm Beach Lakes Boulevard." *The Palm Beach Post*, December 23.

Abramson, Andrew. 2013. "West Palm's Mayor Jeri Muoio Upbeat on Changes, Challenges." *The Palm Beach Post*, February 2.

Aiello, Giorgia. 2011. "From Wound to Enclave: The Visual-Material Performance of Urban Renewal in Bologna's Manifattura delle Arti." *Western Journal of Communication* 75 (4): 341–366. doi:10.1080/10570314.2011.586971.

Becker, Anne, and Markus-Michael Müller. 2013. "The Securitization of Urban Space and the 'Rescue' of Downtown Mexico City: Vision and Practice." *Latin American Perspectives* 40 (2): 77–94. doi:10.1177/0094582X12467762.

Beckett, Katherine, and Steve Herbert. 2009. *Banished: The New Social Control in Urban America*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Berkowitz, Dan. 2011. *Cultural Meanings of News: A Text Reader*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Berkowitz, Dan, and Leo Eko. 2007. "Blasphemy as Sacred Rite/Right: 'The Mohammed Cartoons Affair' and Maintenance of Journalistic Ideology." *Journalism Studies* 8 (5): 779–797. doi:10.1080/14616700701504757.

Berkowitz, Dan, and Robert. E. Gutsche, Jr. 2012. "Drawing Lines in the Journalistic Sand: Jon Stewart, Edward R. Murrow and Memory of News Gone By." *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 89 (4): 643–656. doi:10.1177/1077699012456020.

Bird, S. Elizabeth, and Robert W. Dardenne. 1997. "Myth, Chronicle and Story: Exploring the Narrative Qualities of News." In *Social Meanings of News*, edited by D. Berkowitz, 333–350. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Burd, Gene. 1977. "The Selling of the Sunbelt: Civic Boosterism in the Media." In *The Rise of Sunbelt Cities*, 14, edited by D. C. Perry and A. J. Watkins, 129–149. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Clough, Alexandra. 2012a. "New Chamber of Commerce of the Palm Beaches Chairman Ready to Lead on Major Business Projects." *The Palm Beach Post*, December 23.

Clough, Alexandra. 2012b. "Taverna Opa in Battle with its Franchise Company." *The Palm Beach Post*, December 15.

Cook, I. R., and M. Whowell. 2011. "Visibility and the Policing of Public Space." *Geography Compass* 5 (8): 610–622. doi:10.1111/j.1749-8198.2011.00437.x.

Cox, John W. 2013a. "Downtown Businesses Want Williams Park Cleaned up." *Tampa Bay Times*, February 22.

Cox, John W. 2013b. "What Can Be Done to Fix Williams Park?" *Tampa Bay Times*, February 16.

Cox, John W. 2013c. "In Williams Park, 'Spice' Addicts Overwhelm Idyllic Setting." *Tampa Bay Times*, February 16.

Edgerton, Anna, and Brenda Medina. 2013. "Overtown Teen Shot in Crime-plagued Area Fights to Recover." *Miami Herald*, January 1.

Downloaded by [Florida International University] at 15:37 20 June 2014

Ericson, Richard V., Patricia M. Baranek, and Janet B. L. Chan. 1991. *Representing Order: Crime, Law, and Justice in the News Media*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Fry, Kathleen. 2003. *Constructing the Heartland: Television News and Natural Disaster*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Gadsden, Sandra. J. 2013. "Williams Park Question Seems to Defy Answers in St. Petersburg." *Tampa Bay Times*, February 23.

Gans, Herbert. 2004. *Deciding What's News: A study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek and Time*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Gibson, Kristina E. 2011. *Street Kids: Homeless Youth, Outreach, and Policing New York's Streets*. New York: NYU Press.

Goetz, Edward G. 2013. *New Deal Ruins: Race, Economic Justice, & Public Housing Policy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Gorevan, Bob. 2012. "Mixed signals on Homeless." *Herald-Tribune*, November 15.

Graham, Stephen. 2010. *Cities under Siege: The New Military Urbanism*. London: Verso.

Gutsche, Robert. E., Jr. 2011. "Building Boundaries: A Case Study of the Use of News Photographs and Cultural Narratives in the Coverage of Local Crime and in the Creation of Urban Space." *Visual Communication Quarterly* 18 (3): 140–154.

Gutsche, Robert. E., Jr. 2013. "Zombies, Drugs, & Florida Weirdness: 'Imaginative Power' & Resonance in Coverage of Miami's 'Causeway Cannibal.'" *Journalism Studies* 14 (4): 555–567. doi:10.1080/1461670X.2013.779106.

Gutsche, Robert. E., Jr. forthcoming. "News Place-making: Applying 'Mental Mapping' to Explore the Journalistic Interpretive Community." Visual Communication 13 (4).

Gutsche, Robert E., Jr. 2014a. "There's No Place Like Home: Storytelling of War in Afghanistan and Street Crime 'at Home' in the Omaha World-Herald." *Journalism Practice* 8 (1): 65–79. doi:10.1080/17512786.2013.778602.

Gutsche, Robert E., Jr. 2014b. *A Transplanted Chicago: Race, Place and Press in Iowa City*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland.

Hardin, Marie. 2005. "Survey Finds Boosterism, Freebies Remain Problem for Newspaper Sports Departments." *Newspaper Research Journal* 26 (1): 66–72.

Harvey, David. 2009. *Social Justice and the City*. Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press.

Heider, Don. 2004. *Class and News*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Hellmueller, Lea, Timothy P. Vos, and Mark A. Poepsel. 2013. "Shifting Journalistic Capital? Transparency and Objectivity in the Twenty-First Century." *Journalism Studies* 14 (3): 287–304. doi:10.1080/1461670X.2012.697686.

Herald-Tribune. 2013. "New Chief, Longtime Challenges." *Herald-Tribune*, January 23.

Hindman, Elizabeth B., and Ryan J. Thomas 2013. "Journalism's 'Crazy Old Aunt': Helen Thomas and Paradigm Repair." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 90 (2): 267–286. doi:10.1177/1077699013482909.

Hinton, Marva. 2013. "How Wynwood went from Abandoned Warehouses to Hipster Hangout." *WLRN*. Accessed January 19, 2014. http://wlrn.org/post/how-wynwood-went-abandoned-warehouses-hipster-hangout.

Iyengar, Shanto. 1991. *Is Anyone Responsible? How Television Frames Political Issues*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kaniss, Phyllis. 1991. *Making Local News*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Katz, Michael B. 1989. *The Undeserving Poor: From the War on Poverty to the War on Welfare*. New York: Pantheon.

Downloaded by [Florida International University] at 15:37 20 June 2014

Klocke, Brian, and Michael McDevitt. 2013. "Foreclosing Deliberation: Journalists' Lowering of Expectations in the Marketplace of Ideas." *Journalism Studies* 14 (6): 891–906. doi:10.1080/1461670X.2012.755373.

Lindlof, Thomas R., and Brian Taylor. 2010. *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lush, Tamara. 2013. "Homeless Remain a Challenge for Sarasota." *Herald-Tribune*, January 18.

Manoff, Robert K. 1986. "Writing the News (by Telling the 'Story')." In *Reading the News*, edited by R. K. Manoff, and M. Schudson, 197–229. New York: Pantheon.

Matei, Sorin, Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach, and Jack L. Qui. 2001. "Fear and Misperception of Los Angeles Urban Space: A Spatial-Statistical Study of Communication-Shaped Mental Maps." *Communication Research* 28 (4): 429–463. doi:10.1177/009365001028004004.

McCann, Eugene. 2013. "Policy Boosterism, Policy Mobilities, and the Extrospective City." *Urban Geography* 34 (1): 5–29.

McCombs, Maxwell. 1997. "Building Consensus: The News Media's Agenda-setting Roles." *Political Communication* 14 (4): 433–443. doi:10.1080/105846097199236.

McCombs, Maxwell, and Marcus Funk. 2011. "Shaping the Agenda of Local Daily Newspapers: A Methodology Merging the Agenda Setting and Community Structure Perspectives." *Mass Communication and Society* 14 (6): 905–919. doi:10.1080/15205436.2011.615447.

McGrory, Kathleen, and Andres Viglucci. 2013. "Zoning Proposal Reignites Debate over Midtown Miami Walmart." *Miami Herald*, February 20.

Miami Herald. 2012. "In Miami, Culture Begets More Culture with Art Basel Arrival." *Miami Herald*, December 2.

Miami Herald. 2013. "No Pain, No Gain." *Miami Herald*, January 9.

Moon, Soo Jung, and Ki D. Hyun. 2009. "The Salience of Stakeholders and Their Attributes in Public Relations and Business News." *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* 24 (1): 59–75. doi:10.1080/08900520802644428.

Mor, Ricardo. 2013. "Gramps Aims to Be Hometown Bar." *Miami Herald*, February 7.

Naughton, Linda. 2014. "Geographical Narratives of Social Capital: Telling Different Stories about the Socio-economy with Context, Space, Place, Power and Agency." *Progress in Human Geography*. 38 (1): 3–21. doi:10.1177/0309132513488731.

Nielsen, Rasmus K. 2010. "Participation through Letters to the Editor: Circulation, Considerations, and Genres in the Letters Institution." *Journalism* 11 (1): 21–35. doi:10.1177/1464884909350641.

O'Neill, Deirdre, and Catherine O'Connor. 2008. "The Passive Journalist: How Sources Dominate Local News." *Journalism Practice* 2 (3): 487–500. doi:10.1080/17512780802281248.

Parisi, Peter. 1998. "The New York Times Looks at One Block in Harlem: Narratives of Race in Journalism." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 15: 236–254. doi:10.1080/15295039809367047.

Portes, Alejandro and Alex Stepick. 1993. *City on the Edge: The Transformation of Miami*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Puente, Mark. 2012. "Gilbert Jewelers to Close at Year's End after 66 Years in Downtown St. Petersburg." *Tampa Bay Times*, November 23.

Puente, Mark. 2013. "St. Petersburg Council Members Want to Clean Up Williams Park." *Tampa Bay Times*, February 18.

Riffe, Daniel, and Bill Reader. 2007. "Most Rely on Newspapers for Local Business News." *Newspaper Research Journal* 28 (2): 82–98.

Downloaded by [Florida International University] at 15:37 20 June 2014

Roach, Emily. 2013a. "Palm Beach Outlets to Open in February 2014, a Three-month Delay, Developers Say." *The Palm Beach Post*, January 30.

Roach, Emily. 2013b. "Crews Begin to Tear Down the Old Palm Beach Mall." *The Palm Beach Post*, January 17.

Robinson, Sue, and Cathy DeShano. 2011. "'Anyone Can Know': Citizen Journalism and the Interpretive Community of the Mainstream Press." *Journalism* 12 (8): 963–982. doi:10.1177/1464884911415973.

Rodriguez, Rene. 2013. "In Miami's Wynwood District, the Party has Overtaken the Art." *Miami Herald*, January 7.

Santiago, Fabiloa. 2013. "Everywhere You Turn, Wynwood is an Original." *Miami Herald*, January 1.

Shipler, David K. 2005. *The Working Poor: Invisible in America*. New York: Random House.

Sillars, Malcolm O. 1991. *Messages, Meanings, and Culture: Approaches to Communication Criticism*. New York: HarperCollins.

Soja, Edward. W. 2010. *Seeking Spatial Justice*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Tampa Bay Times. 2012. "First Night St. Petersburg Ready to Celebrate its 20th Year." *Tampa Bay Times*, December 26.

Tampa Bay Times. 2013. "Editorial: Reclaiming a City Park's Charm." Tampa Bay Times, February 22.

Tuchman, Gaye. 1973. "Making News by Doing Work: Routinizing the Unexpected." *American Journal of Sociology* 79 (1): 110–131. doi:10.1086/225510.

USA Today. 2006. "Sarasota, Fla. Named Meanest City for Homeless." *USA Today*, January 13.

Van Berkel, Jessie. 2012. "Sarasota's Sporadic Approach to Homelessness." *Herald-Tribune*, November 26.

Van Berkel, Jessie. 2013a. "Sarasota City Candidates meet Voters." *Herald-Tribune*, February 7.

Van Berkel, Jessie. 2013b. "Homeless Issues Dominate Forum with New Sarasota Leaders." *Herald-Tribune*, February 5.

Viglucci, Andres. 2012. "In Artsy Wynwood, Miami Rescue Mission Expands with Cheap-chic Dorm for Homeless Men." *Miami Herald*, December 16.

Williams, Lee. 2012a. "Power Struggle Puts Sarasota back in Spotlight over Homeless." *Herald-Tribune*, November 13.

Williams, Lee. 2012b. "Homeless Man Arrested for Charging Phone in Park." *Herald-Tribune*, November 12.

Wodak, Ruth, and Michael Meyer. 2009. *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Sage.

Robert E. Gutsche Jr., School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Florida International University, USA. E-mail: rgutsche@fiu.edu. Web: http://www.robertgutschejr.com

Downloaded by [Florida International University] at 15:37 20 June 2014