

HOMOGENISING AFRICA:
THE PERSISTENCE OF RACIST AND NEO-COLONIAL
LANGUAGE IN THE AFRICA-DISOURSE OF THE
GERMAN MEDIA

A QUALITATIVE NEWSPAPER ANALYSIS

Int 1: Inquiry and Analysis I b
Project

Submission Date: 05. May 2006

ABSTRACT

This paper is a qualitative analysis of the construction of Africa in German newspapers. Although there have been investigations into the representation of Africa in school books and quantitative studies of the German media, a qualitative approach focussing on Africa-specific language has as yet not been attempted (Brookes, 1995).

The only comparable British review dates back fifteen years. By analysing the terminology of two German newspapers with opposing ideological positions, this paper reveals a homogenising Africa-discourse in Germany which emphasises violence, poverty and helplessness. The language employed contributes to a process of racialisation and illustrates the persistence of a racist, neo-colonial representation of the continent and its people.

NOTE TO THE EXAMINER

As permitted in Brendan Burchell's "Rough Guide to the Inquiry and Analysis Project", I have included 341 words of qualitative data in form of quotes from the newspapers I analysed in this study, which are not part of the overall word count.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	1
Introduction	1
Reflexive Note	2
Literature Review	2
Africa in the German Media.....	2
Africa in Minds of Germans.....	3
The Importance of Language.....	3
Racialisation.....	4
Past Analyses.....	5
Method	6
Newspaper Choice.....	6
Article Choice.....	6
Pilot Study.....	7
Quantitative Component.....	7
Design.....	8
Execution.....	9
Limitations.....	10
Results	10
Number of Articles.....	10
Connotations.....	11
Metaphors.....	13
Skin Colour.....	14
Homogenisation.....	15
Downgrading of Africa(ns).....	16
Exceptions from the General Negative Discourse.....	17
Discussion.....	17
Homogenisation.....	17
Negativity.....	18
Positive Articles.....	19
Neo-colonialism.....	19
Metaphors.....	20
Implications.....	21

Future Research.....	22
Desiderata.....	23
Conclusion.....	24
References.....	25
Appendix 1.....	27
Appendix 2.....	28
Appendix 3.....	29

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks go to the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung which kindly provided me with the relevant newspapers. I am grateful to Dr. Arndt, Dr. Brookes for responding to my questions and indebted to Dr. Hornscheidt and Dr. Poenicke for engaging in an insightful dialogue with me.

INTRODUCTION

In the light of globalisation and the plethora of information on even remote places that is available today, one would expect the popular knowledge of various cultures and places to have expanded. With the simultaneous expansion of philosophies valuing human equality and the abandonment of racial hierarchies (Rorty, 1993: 114), colonialist discourses would have been expected to wither away. However, the knowledge about the African continent remains generally poor in Germany (Pichlhöfer, 1999). Western media perpetuate a neo-colonial and racist representation of Africa (Brookes, 1995; Onu, 1979) in which Africa continues to be portrayed as a homogenous place characterised by ‘darkness’ (Jarosz, 1992: 106). While there have been several studies on Germany’s Africa-terminology (Arndt & Hornscheidt, 2004) or its racist representation of Africa in schoolbooks (Poenicke, 2003), detailed analyses of its written media are scarce. Therefore this paper aims to expose how far German newspapers engage in an Africa-specific discourse in reporting the continent by analysing the language employed the German media in relation to Africa. The aim is to ascertain to what extent today’s discourse has departed from the racist or neo-colonial media discourses discovered in past research (e.g. Brookes, 1995). It is important to note that this study does not reveal anything about how readers perceive

or interpret any such discourse. Although this question is of great significance, it would have to be explored in subsequent further research.

Reflexive Note

Being German-Nigerian I have faced racism throughout my life. Living abroad I discovered that racist and stereotypical prejudice is widely spread throughout societies. Wondering about the origin of this I have turned to the media, which for most Europeans provides the major source of information about Africa. I am aware that this background of negative experience bears the potential of over-sensitising, which could potentially bias my results. Therefore, I have only included terms or themes in this study that have been recognised as racist/ neo-colonial in previous literature (e.g. Arndt & Hornscheidt, 2004; Poenicke, 2003).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Africa in the German Media

The extensive analyses of the representation of Africa in Germany during the 1970-80s, found an abrupt end in the 1990s when the interest shifted to (Turkish) migrants (Poenicke, 2001: 7). However, the colonial and racist representations of Africa that were discussed thirty years ago continue to exist, although often in a subtler form. The derogatory and deficient representation of Africa originates in racist strategies to justify Europe's crimes on the continent and is deeply rooted in European thought (Poenicke, 2001: 7). Generally Africa tends to receive little coverage in the German press. Less than three per cent of the daily foreign reports are dedicated to Africa (Arsendorp, 2002: 5). The African popular political movements thriving for

democracy in the 1990s were not deemed newsworthy, unlike comparable movements in Eastern Europe. It is true that South Africa under apartheid received thorough coverage, yet studies suggest that the reporting on South Africa is untypical, because political players and parts of the population are of European descent (Downing, 1990).

Overall more than 85 per cent of the newspaper reporting about Africa is negative (Poenicke, 2001: 18). It focuses on humanitarian catastrophes, which are sometimes even exaggerated (Michler, 1991). Globally, there has been a decline in interest in foreign reports (Ellis, 2000: 221) particularly when dealing with African news (Schlaflinger, 2002: 2). While one reads daily about the peace process in the Middle East, reports about the peace negotiations of Congo or Burundi are largely absent.

Africa in the Minds of Germans

A survey among German children, teenagers and students identified poverty, blackness and tribal conflicts as their main associations with Africa (Poenicke, 2003: 8). These deficits are often listed with at least a subliminal causality between 'Black' and 'poor' (Schmidt-Wulffen, 1998). Students perceive their own culture as a culture of helpers, intellectually and materially superior. The own culture is only rarely critically reflected as one of exploiters (Reichart-Burikukiye, 2002).

The Importance of Language

Although research on Africa-representation has increased in recent years (e.g. Poenicke, 2003), none of the studies examined the role of the specific language employed in the media when discussing Africa. However, only by scrutinising

subtleties of language, the common metaphors, descriptions and emphases as well as recurring themes, can the full extent of the persistence of a neo-colonial Africa-discourse be unveiled. Therefore language-reliant media carry a special responsibility, since 'by perpetual repetitions of certain words, phrases and expressions from a position of power, their use and with it the related concepts intrude people's way of thinking' (Arndt & Hornscheidt, 2004: 21). Arndt & Hornscheidt (2004) present a critical analysis of the German language used in relation to Africa in terms of its origins, connotations and implications. They illustrate vividly how a language of inadequacy works to foster and sustain beliefs about people and places. The authors provide a practicable methodology to help discern whether a term or phrase should be deemed inappropriate. By examining the contexts in which word combinations and figures of speech occur, it becomes clear how they are connoted. Testing whether a term like 'tribe' or 'ethnic group' can be transferred to the German/European context shows whether it is neutral or Africa-/ 'Third World'-specific.

Racialisation

Arndt's 'AfrikaBilder' (2001: ch.1) elaborates that language does not merely reflect a consciousness, but simultaneously creates it. If used inappropriately it can contribute decisively to a process of racialisation. This is an ideological process, which delineates boundaries of a group and allocates persons within these by reference to (supposedly) inherent (and/or biological) attributes (Miles, 1982: 157). The resulting ideology of racism is dialectical in that the 'negative characteristics of the Other mirror the positive characteristics of the Self' (Miles, 1989: 79). Thus renunciation of such language is an indispensable step to stimulate reflection and to overcome racist thought and action (Arndt & Poenicke, 2004: 9).

Past Analyses

Edward Said (1978) undertook a discourse analysis of the representation of the Orient. He illustrated that Western knowledge about the Orient was characterized by subtle yet persistent Eurocentric prejudice. The false images of the region constituted an implicit justification for colonial ambitions. In 1979, Eze Onu attempted to shed light upon the representation of Africa in the media. He compared three major Canadian newspapers and the New York Times for the month of July 1974. His quantitative analysis revealed that only 0.57 per cent of the Canadian column inches were dedicated to African news. The evaluative assertion analysis technique, which measures evaluative judgments used in the discussion of a subject irrespective of the facts behind the story, showed that the overall presentation of Africa was unfavourable.

Two decades later, Heather Brookes' study (1995) of the British press revealed virtually identical results. Her critical discourse analysis worked to 'uncover how language works to construct meanings that signify people, objects and events [...] (Brookes, 1995: 462) with the objective of examining the ideological construction of Africa. It sought to unveil how discourse creates social identities, social relations, as well as systems of belief and knowledge. She studied newspapers that were ideologically opposed and found strikingly similar discourses. This demonstrates the discourses' uniformity and naturalisation. She affirmed that Africa received little media attention. When there was coverage of Africa, it centred on civil war, poverty or disaster. Additionally, she showed how Western institutional power over the media and the ensuing use of Western sources as primary definers was accountable for the stereotypical ideological framework. This discourse presented itself as persistent 'self-evident reality'. 'From the Ancient writings of Herodotus [...]

to the modern daily newspaper, it's the same old story' (Brookes, 1995: 491). Brookes expected that despite some modifications, much of the discourse discovered 1995 would persist until today owing to the perpetuation of the same history books and literature (personal communication, 07.04.2006). Since one's own ideology is rarely perceived as problematic, it continues to be reproduced without challenge.

METHOD

Newspaper Choice

Like in Brookes' study (1995), two national highbrow newspapers representing opposing ideological positions were chosen for this study, with 'Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung' (FAZ) representing the conservative spectrum, while 'die tageszeitung' (TAZ) provides a leftist alternative. National newspapers are more likely to print foreign news and are more likely to have their own foreign correspondents, rather than relying exclusively on news agencies. As highbrow newspapers they would be expected to be more sophisticated than other newspapers, i.e. more likely to avoid stereotypes and represent a realistic picture of Africa. Thus if both newspapers were to exhibit a similar discourse, this would allow for generalisations about the degree to which this discourse is stereotypical, naturalised and dominant in Germany. Unlike previous studies, a two months period, October-November 2005, was chosen to increase generalisability.

Article Choice

Every article focussing on African countries or people either as a central theme or as part of another subject in October and November 2005 was analysed. Unlike previous

studies (e.g. Poenicke, 2003) articles about North Africa(ns) or Africans in Europe were also included. The relevant articles from TAZ were obtained using the newspaper's online search engine entering 'Africa', 'Africans' and all African nation-states. The editions of FAZ were available in paper and could thus be scrutinised issue by issue for articles about African countries, people or issues relating to them. All newspaper sections, commentaries and interviews were included in the analysis.

Pilot Study

In a pilot study, newspaper issues from the first two weeks of October were read to receive a broad impression of recurring themes or terms. Differences between FAZ and TAZ were immediately noticeable, in that the latter appeared to make a greater differentiation between single countries and included one contribution that had positive connotations. TAZ's focus was less Eurocentric and it was possible to trace an attempt to present African perspectives. However, in both newspapers the vast majority of articles were negative, focussing on the refugee crisis of Ceuta and Melilla. Both readily resorted to emotional, threatening metaphors such as 'wave' or 'stampede' of refugees. Imagery of the 'dark continent' and drastic direful metaphors were reiterated. Additionally, Blacks and Africans were used interchangeably. The terms 'Black Africans' and 'developing country' appeared repeatedly. Headlines of both newspapers frequently failed to present Africa as a continent or to distinguish singular countries. FAZ ascribed poverty and misery to all Africans collectively.

Quantitative Component

Only a qualitative analysis permits the evaluation of neologisms or metaphors, which play a decisive role in depicting the African continent for German readers. However,

having discovered ‘darkness’ and ‘crisis’ to be major pillars in reporting the continent, a quantitative element was added by counting the recurrence of these themes and key terms like ‘Black Africa(n)’ throughout the articles. First, the overall number of articles dealing with Africa was counted. They were then sorted according to themes, which in turn were coded into negative/ positive connotations and recorded numerically.

Design

Discourse analysis provides a unique possibility to unveil subtle patterns of racism in everyday language (Brookes, 1995; Wetherell & Potter, 1992) An Africa-specific discourse amounts to a particular pattern of language and themes that are associated with Africa. Such discursive practices create knowledge about the continent while maintaining unequal power relations (Brookes, 1995: 462). A systematic textual analysis consists of both a linguistic and an intertextual analysis (Fairclough, 1992). Systemic linguistics regards language as multifunctional and focuses on how it is used to represent the world or maintain relationships. The intertextual analysis seeks to identify historical and contemporary discourses and genres which readers and writers draw upon (Brookes, 1995: 463).

To practically establish whether terms are Africa-specific, thus part of a specific discourse, Arndt and Hornscheidt (2004: 36) recommend asking whether a word in question can be applied to the European context too. It thus becomes apparent that the term ‘Black Africans’ uniquely emphasises the skin colour of a group of people and homogenises everyone falling into that category. The asymmetric extension of meaning in the African context can further contribute to a neo-colonial paternalism. In the past, language aimed to legitimate Africa’s colonisation by

spreading the myth that Africa was the homogenous, inferior Other in need of “civilising” by Europe. As part of this creation of superiority African terms were ignored. There was a refusal to employ terms which were valid for European societies, to an African context. If houses are referred to as ‘huts’ or languages as ‘dialects’, this associates a certain primitivism and inferiority with African architecture and parlance respectively (Arndt & Hornscheidt, 2004: 45). Establishing a word’s etymological origin, as well as its lexical connection or associations, helps evaluate whether a term is racist (Arndt, 2001: 26). Throughout the analysis in this study, special attention was paid to deviations from any discourse. This was done through looking at changes in perspective, tone or terminology of the articles to detect any potential heterogeneity in the discourse.

Execution

All articles focussing on Africa were read and scrutinised with regard to subject, positive or negative connotation, and whether the terminology was, a) of racist or neo-colonial origin, and/or b) Africa-specific. Metaphors were noted and interpreted. Metaphors are an essential feature of our conceptual system and the language of everyday life (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). They constitute an important method of painting mental pictures of places, thus bringing them to life. Hence the communicated images in each article were examined for connotations, like threat (‘stampede of refugees’) or peace (‘peaceful tranquillity’), civilisation (‘skill’) or savage-like animal imagery (‘taming’ a person). Imagery was further checked for Africa-specificity, for instance alluding to the ‘white in the eye of a Black person’. The language was also scrutinised for relicts of colonial legitimisation, i.e. whether it portrayed Africans as inferior to Europeans, e.g. by depicting Africans as less capable

than Europeans, thus responsible for their economic or political misery. The degree to which any depicted negativity was questioned or its origins explained was also assessed in each article. All linguistic devices, like neologisms or similes were checked for their contribution to a picture of homogeneity or stereotypes. It was also noted when language diverted from these stereotypes. The study also assessed how far the articles differentiated between single countries or regions or whether single instances were taken to be representations of the entire nation/ continent. Deviations from a particular pattern were noted. This emphasis on textual analysis enabled a revelation of 'hidden patterns of form and meaning which demonstrate convincingly the racist ideologies inherent in the discourse' (Brookes, 1995: 463).

Limitations

This type of analysis does not consider how readers consume and interpret the article. Thompson (1995) points out that readers do not merely ingest what the media present to them. Conclusions from this study are therefore limited to newspaper discourse in Germany, and do not necessarily reflect the general picture that people have about Africa.

RESULTS

(Appendices 1 and 2 list all the analysed articles of FAZ and TAZ respectively, numbered in order of occurrence.)

Number of Articles

As depicted in Table 1, between October and November 2005 TAZ printed 47 articles about Africa(ns), two being notices, i.e. consisting of 35 lines or less. FAZ contained

48 Africa articles of which 10 can be classified as notices. It is important to acknowledge that TAZ included several additional articles focussing on Africa-related topics in its different local inserts. However, these were excluded from the analysis since they are not nationally available.

Table 1. Total of Africa-related articles in Tageszeitung and Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

	TAZ	FAZ
Total Number of Articles	47	48
Of which Notices	2	10

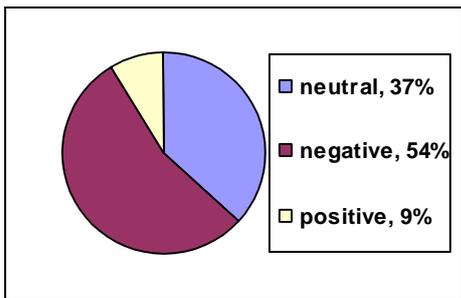
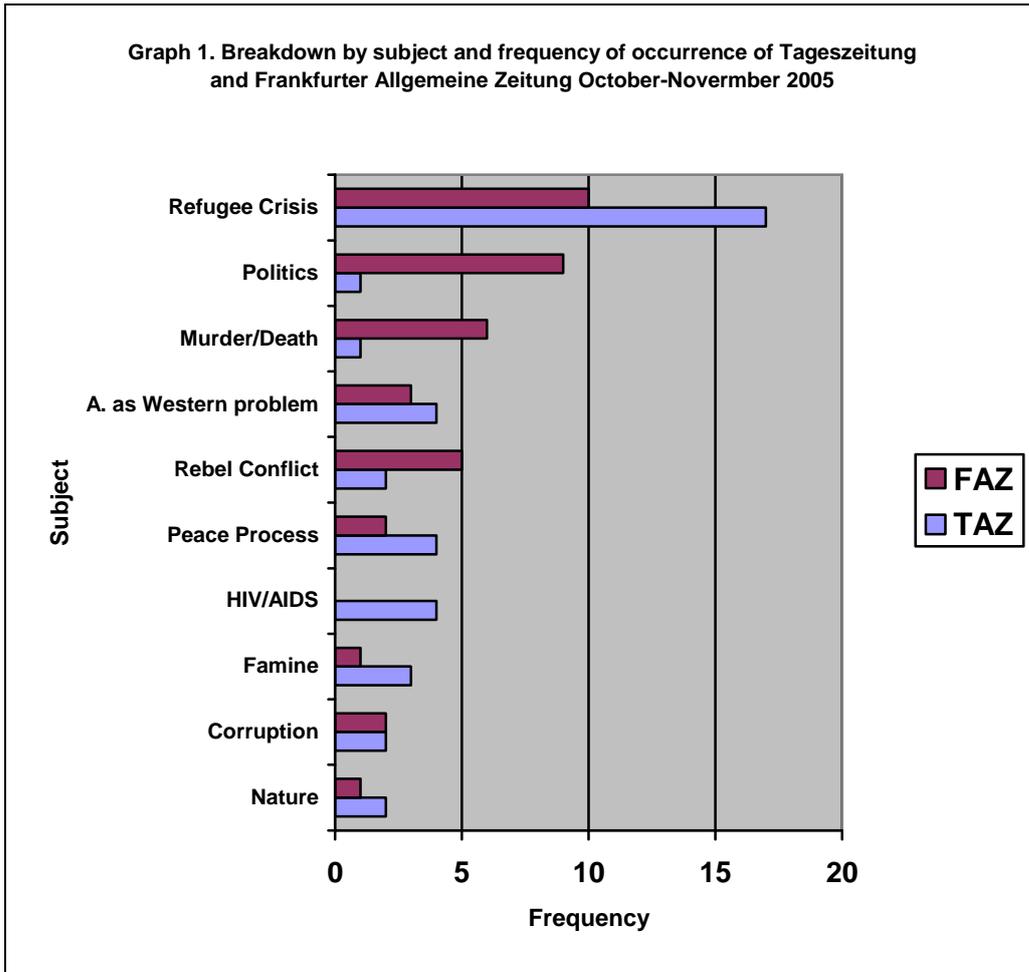
Connotations

To establish whether or not there were dominant topics in the newspaper coverage, the articles were sorted according to subjects. Table 2 shows that a range of themes were featured in both newspapers. However, Graph 1 illustrates that among the 10 most frequent subjects, the majority had negative connotations presenting Africa as castigated by problems. Articles were then coded as positive or negative in nuance. Drawing on Pratt's (1972) evaluative assertion analysis technique, articles which focussed on poverty, HIV/AIDS, famine, refugee pressures, corruption, death or terrorism were classified as negative, since these are generally regarded as unfavourable or undesirable by society. Likewise, those covering promising political or economic development, cultural or natural wealth were categorised as positive. Neutral articles were those that restricted themselves to non-evaluative, factual reports such as conferences or summits. They often took the shape of a notice. FAZ included 4 positive, 25 negative and 17 thematically neutral articles. TAZ contained 5 positive,

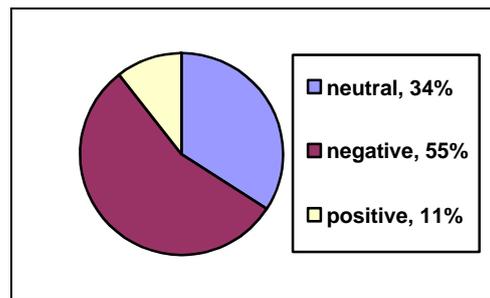
26 negative and 16 neutral articles. Graph 2A and 2B illustrate that despite the topical diversity, both newspapers emphasised negativity.

Table 2. Breakdown of subjects and their frequency of occurrence in Tageszeitung (TAZ) and Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ) from October- November 2005

Subjects	Frequency	
	TAZ	FAZ
Refugee Crises	17	10
Politics	1	9
Murder/ Death	1	6
Africa as a Western Problem	4	3
Rebel-induced Conflict	3	5
Problems with Peace Process	4	2
HIV/AIDS	4	/
Famine	3	1
Corruption	2	2
Nature/ Wildlife	2	1
Individual Country Report	1	2
Sports	1	1
Colonial History	/	2
Economics	/	2
Female Circumcision	1	/
Poverty	1	/
Nuclear Energy	1	/
Polygamy	/	1
Terrorism	1	/
Cultural	/	1
Total	47	48



Graph 2A FAZ articles- thematic connotation



Graph 2B TAZ articles- thematic connotation

Metaphors

The newspaper analysis showed that colonial-metaphors of the ‘dark’¹ (FAZ41) or ‘black continent’² (FAZ11) were frequently naturalised in FAZ. Threatening imagery

was particularly salient in the coverage of Melilla's refugee crisis. For example, the continent was described to 'be brimming over'³ or the 'cork being driven out'⁴ (FAZ1) due to the large number of refugees. There was talk about 'a stream of illegal immigrants from Africa'⁵ (FAZ12) or 'a stampede'⁶ to Europe (FAZ9). The 'stampede'-metaphor also appeared in TAZ9 or slightly modified as 'the impression of a stampede'⁷ (TAZ14).

Imagery conveying backwardness was common in FAZ. Liberia was described to 'have been shot into the stone age'⁸ (FAZ6). Metaphors about corruption also featured prominently. For instance Western aid was said to 'disappear in the sleaze of the corrupt regimes of their African homelands'⁹ (FAZ9). Reporting on a Melillan refugee camp, 'the African night' was described to 'smell of rotten eatables, faeces and cold sweat'¹⁰ (FAZ1), presenting the continent as the epitome of negativity.

Animal-imagery was repeatedly employed when describing Africans. For instance, Africans were reported to 'be straying like scared game'¹¹ (FAZ1). The President of the Ivory Coast was complemented by a 'Prime Minister who is meant to tame him'¹² (FAZ24). However, it is crucial to note that such sweepingly negative metaphors were largely absent in TAZ. TAZ did not contain animal-imagery either.

Skin Colour

'Black' was the dominant term to refer to Africans' skin colour. However, terms like 'dark skinned'¹³ or 'coloured'¹⁴ (FAZ46) featured too. 'Blackness' was only mentioned when referring to people from Sub-Saharan Africa. Thereby the term 'Black Africa(n)'¹⁵ was frequently employed, featuring 23 times in FAZ and 12 times in TAZ. In the context of some stories, black-white dichotomies were frequently illustrated in metaphors such as 'to give white land into black hands'¹⁶ (FAZ45) in the

context of Namibia's land reallocation. Referring to an instance at night, 'the Black Africans (...) were reported to 'only see the white in the eyes of each other'¹⁷ (FAZ1).

Homogenisations

North Africans, such as Moroccans, were specified as such while the people from Sub-Saharan Africa were collectively referred to as 'Africans'¹⁸ in FAZ. Occasionally these 'Africans' were subsequently differentiated as e.g. 'coming from Mali, Senegal and Cameroon'¹⁹ (FAZ8). Even where a qualification through commonalities like 'francophone' or 'West' would have been practicable (FAZ4), the general term 'Africans' was preferred. The continent's diversity was ignored by perpetually portraying it as a single, homogenous locality. For instance, the 'exhibition object El Negro is flown to Africa'²⁰ (FAZ10), without any attempt to qualify what institution, city or at least country it was transported to. A subheading described a journalist to be 'reporting from Africa'²¹ (FAZ12) without further specification. In the context of the Melilla refugee crisis, Africa was homogenised to 'the continent of lost hope and empty promises'²² with its people 'sitting on packed suitcases'²³, implying that all Africans wished to leave (FAZ12). Repeatedly, the African continent was referred to next to specific countries in other continents, for instance 'famine in Africa, floods in Guatemala'²⁴ (FAZ 14.10.).

TAZ also used the broad term 'Africans'²⁵ (TAZ3) frequently, yet sometime attempted to qualify locations, such as 'Africa south of the Sahara'²⁶ (TAZ19) or 'West Africa'²⁷ (TAZ30). It too termed Africa 'the crisis continent'²⁸ (TAZ32), thus generalising and homogenising. However, occasionally it was instead referred to 'some specific, permanent crisis regions'²⁹ (TAZ28). In TAZ the term 'Africa'³⁰ was

mostly employed in comparison to other continents (TAZ36), not juxtaposed to discussions of other countries.

Downgrading of Africa(ns)

Reporting Namibia's land reallocation, the Black population was described as incapable, lazy and state-dependent 'with their newly acquired farms degenerating',³¹ (FAZ45). While this behaviour was criticised in the article, no attempt to explain the situation was made. The White landowners in contrast were portrayed as able, competent and willing to help. Thus African helplessness and incapability was dichotomised to European philanthropy. 'About 500 Africans were discovered and helped',³² (FAZ4) illustrates the same dichotomy. The Namibians population's claims of racism by White citizens were played down as a 'huge dog and pony show',³³ and 'reviving the cliché of the bad White man',³⁴ (FAZ45). This approach was however absent in TAZ.

Both newspapers described various African landscapes repeatedly with the derogatory and oversimplifying term 'bush',³⁵ (TAZ29, FAZ6).

Exceptions from the General Negative Discourse

All articles discussing nature or wildlife were positive, yet the emphasis was clearly on nature, as opposed to people (FAZ17, TAZ39). FAZ22 portrayed Sudanese coffee extremely positively, leaving the civil war unmentioned. Keywords were 'motherly charm',³⁶ 'peaceful',³⁷ or phrases like 'the most delicious coffee that one could imagine',³⁸. It was the only unrestrictedly positive article in both newspapers. FAZ41 presented a clear break from the common Africa-discourse by acknowledging 'how

little we know of Africa'³⁹. It criticised Germany for failing to distinguish between different African nationalities.

TAZ-commentaries generally took a Europe-critical stance, and repeatedly questioned Western hegemony and wealth. Metaphors like 'Stampede of the masses'⁴⁰ were critically discussed (TAZ10) and consistently used in quotation marks.

DISCUSSION

The plethora of examples in both newspapers show that the language used in German newspapers results in the portrayal of the African continent as a homogenous place characterised by violence, poverty and helplessness. There are clear attempts by TAZ to break the generalising style of reporting and to distinguish between different nation-states in Africa. However, both newspapers focus on negative aspects, thereby creating a 'people' united by deficiency and backwardness. This Africa-discourse continues to employ neo-colonial terminology. By drawing dichotomies with respect to Europe, the impression of backwardness and inferiority in Africa is reinforced and Western hegemony is justified. Although TAZ featured articles explicitly questioning this hierarchy, the language employed as well as the topics covered amount to a similar Africa-discourse. Dealing with newspapers of opposing political directions, the similarities in the discourse suggest 'a stereotypical, naturalised and dominant discourse on Africa' (Brookes, 1995: 464).

Homogenisation

Both newspapers, though more frequently in FAZ, employed the term 'Africans' as a generic term, even if only two or three nationalities were being discussed. Referring to

individuals as ‘Africans (...) from Mali, Senegal Cameroon’ (FAZ30) rather than Malians, etc. presents being African as if it was a nationality itself. This language contributes to a process of racialisation. It creates a homogenous ‘nation’ of Africans united by and essentialized to largely negative attributes. There was no awareness that ascribing attributes to ‘Africans’ implies ascribing these to 840 million individuals. The failure to acknowledge the continent’s complexity and diversity is exemplified when it is referred to alongside with single countries ‘Famine in Africa, floods in Guatemala’⁴¹ (FAZ14.10).

It is true that both newspapers bore some attempts to break the pattern of homogenisation, however, in FAZ these were scarce exceptions to the rule. TAZ is the only German newspaper that has turned Africa into one of their focal themes, and it generally discussed Africa in relation to other continents. Locations and people were mostly differentiated, yet in broader topics and headlines, ‘Africa’ featured regularly as a general term for only a restricted region (TAZ28).

Negativity

Thematically negative articles accounted for over half of the articles in both newspapers. Topics of violence, poverty and helplessness were therefore most prominent. The multiplicity of words related to these themes including ‘refugees’, ‘violence’ or ‘conflict’ highlight the preoccupation of the media with these themes (Brookes, 1995: 465). Both newspapers portrayed the entire continent as a homogenous block suffering poverty, violence, helplessness, human rights abuses and lack of democracy. Except for the theme of poverty, these findings are almost identical to Brookes’ analysis of the British Press in 1995. She states that ‘the regular occurrence of these subjects establishes them as legitimate areas on which to report in

conjunction with Africa. (...) The cumulative effect of a homogenous selection of regularly occurring subjects is the construction of a stereotypical representation of Africa in the minds of readers' (Brookes, 1995: 465). Contrasting these clearly negative themes to Western wealth, peace and aid reinforced the dominantly negative representation of Africa. FAZ did not comment on this, while TAZ continuously questioned the legitimacy of Western prosperity.

Positive Articles

Both newspapers featured some positive articles. However, three of the total of nine positive articles, focussed on nature or animals rather than people. Thus Africa's positive aspects were reduced to wildlife, perpetuating the colonial stereotype of Africa still being in its original, 'natural' state. It depicts a 'virgin territory', without a previous owner, which thus, legitimised and justified colonisation. Simultaneously, the old dichotomy of nature (Africa) versus culture (Europe) is reinforced. By focussing on the original state of flora and fauna, this primeval aspect is also ascribed to and associated with the population, bolstering connotations of primitivism (Arndt & Hornscheidt, 2004: 20). Moreover, the scarcity of positive reporting failed to provide for a balanced perspective of the continent and the ultimate impression of Africa being characterised by 'crises, wars and catastrophes' remains (Poenicke, 2003: 14).

Neo-colonialism

Single expressions, are of paramount importance to the broader discourse, although they form only a small part of it. Apart from their empirical functions, words also express views and attitudes. They are thus evaluative and can induce readers to foster

certain evaluations of events or people (Brookes, 1995: 471). The term 'tribe', which was still present in Brookes' analysis (1995: 480), was absent in the German newspapers, but neo-colonial language was still naturalised in TAZ and FAZ.

Most striking is the regular use of the term 'Black African' which was frequently found in both newspapers although less often in TAZ. This dated expression originates in colonialism, and aims to separate 'White' (Mediterranean) Africa, ascribed with a thousand-year long history, from the Black rest. 'Black Africa is looked on as a region that is inert, brutal, uncivilized - in a word, savage' (Fanon, 1961: 138). The cultural, linguistic and religious pluralities of the territories are ignored. Africans of European or Asian descent remain unmentioned. The term 'Sub-Saharan Africa', utilised by TAZ, presents no alternative. Although the term avoids a reference to race, it implies homogeneity equally strongly (Machnik, 2004: 205) and thus racialises. Referring to 'white territory' within Africa demonstrates the persisting belief that the colonial acquisition was justified.

The etymological origin of the word 'bush', employed by TAZ and FAZ equally, reveals its datedness and inappropriateness. It arose as part of the colonial construction of Africa as 'nature' in opposition to 'culture' and 'civilisation', the epitome of Europe. It has reached a metaphoric connotation of the inscrutable and unknown and creates a picture of the unordered, chaotic nature and the related dangers for humans (Whites) persists (Göttel, 2004: 97). This impression is reinforced by depicting Africans with animal imagery and jargon as found in FAZ.

Metaphors

As discussed previously, metaphors are of ideological significance since they allow the construction of reality in different ways. 'Because metaphor is a pervasive part of

language and frequently naturalised within cultures, we are generally unaware of it and its structuring of our beliefs, thought and action' (Brookes, 1995: 473). The perpetuation of the imagery of the 'dark continent' originates from colonialism and continues to construct Africa as a mythical 'terra incognita'. It stands in opposition to the Whiteness, as purity and order, of Europe. Based on this, and other contrasting dichotomies, Africans were portrayed as the biologically and essentially different Other. This further masks the continent's heterogeneity (Machnik, 2004: 205). The metaphors of 'stampede' or 'flood' are associated with fear in face of these masses of people trying to enter Europe. At least TAZ showed an awareness of this problem by dedicating a critical commentary to this metaphor. However, in FAZ the metaphors were naturalised and were not commented upon. FAZ1's 'the African night smells of rotten eatables, faeces and cold sweat' summarises the shortcomings of the German media's reporting on Africa. An impression of a single instance and location is used to draw generalisations about the entire 30,300,000 square kilometres of Africa. Furthermore decay and rottenness allude to subhuman, brute conditions, which are ascribed to the continent as a whole.

Implications

'Words can be like tiny doses of arsenic: they are swallowed unnoticed, appear to have no effect, and then after a little time the toxic reaction sets in after all' (Klemperer, 1987: 21). Although referring to Third-Reich-language, this statement is equally true about contemporary racism in the language of everyday life. However, language is often perceived to constitute a neutral medium, which only reflects the given. Hence, refusals to refrain from neo-colonial terminologies are common.

Brookes' assertion 'that the entrenched stability of this discourse holds little possibility for challenge or transformation' (1995: 1) appears confirmed by this study. Language as a mirror of consciousness can only be changed if critical social debates provide the basis for this. However, Hornscheidt (personal communication, 18.04.2006) is convinced that Germany is only now beginning to come to terms with the colonial past. She believes that the reason for this is Germany's focus on its Nazi past, neglecting the colonial history. Consequently, when colonialism is discussed this occurs in a legitimising way. Hornscheidt further asserts that racism constitutes an unreflected normality in the German self-perception. As such it remains undiscussed and is reproduced in terminology. Poenicke (personal communication, 19.04.2006) more drastically sees Germans' and Europeans' lack of interest in questioning their terminology as the key root of the persisting racist discourse. Portraying Europe as the kind 'helper' of a helpless Africa is very comfortable. Questioning this dichotomy and exploring Europe's contribution to Africa's poverty would be most unprofitable. Thus colonial terminology is perpetuated.

Germany's presentation of Africa as politically, economically and culturally inferior could be interpreted as a form of symbolic violence (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Europe constitutes the dominant section of the global society and imposes its own culture as the legitimate one. This partly occurs with the complicity of Africans, who have sometimes adopted European derogatory terms, which makes it even harder to change this discourse (Poenicke, 2001: 6).

Future Research

To establish in how far this racist, neo-colonialist discourse is Africa-specific, future research would have to include other countries from the non-Western world or would

have to look specifically at less-economically developed countries. Only with this inclusion would it be possible to establish whether the discourse of homogeneity and negativity is exclusively applied in the context of Africa and in how far it might be part of a broader discourse which could be tied to economic development. The same methodology, time span and newspapers could be used. However all foreign news items would be included as part of the analysis.

Although this study examines the dominant Africa-discourse in the German media, it does not reveal whether readers actually perceive the continent as homogenous and negative. Multiple readings of a text are always possible with this type of qualitative analysis. Thus data about how TAZ or FAZ readers perceive the discourse would be insightful.

DESIDERATA

Instead of taking two consecutive months in the year 2005, the time periods from which the articles were extracted should have been spread over the year, possibly taking a week from every month of the year. October 2005 featured the refugee crisis in Melillia and Ceuta, hence the number of articles in this month is likely to have been higher than average. This was already indicated by a decrease of articles in November. In addition, the articles tended to be centred on this topic, which had negative connotations. The significance and generalisability of the results could have been increased by analysing articles from diverse time periods of the year.

Additionally, the analysis should have been broadened to include three or four national German newspapers because TAZ and FAZ are on the extreme ends of the German daily newspapers in terms of ideology. TAZ is the first and only German

newspaper that has made Africa one of its focus themes of news coverage, whereas FAZ is the most conservative of the large German dailies. Hence by including more moderate newspapers like 'Die Welt' or 'Süddeutsche', the analysis could have received further significance.

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that there is a dominant homogenising Africa-discourse in German newspapers, which still utilises homogenising, derogatory and neo-colonial terminology. At times, TAZ succeeded in breaking up this discourse by incorporating African perspectives, questioning European hegemony, and, or differentiating the various complex African cultures. However, racist terminology was still frequent and naturalised in both newspapers. Both newspapers focussed on negative themes, thereby portraying Africa as homogenously poor, in conflict and helpless.

REFERENCES

- Arndt, Susan & Hornscheidt, Antje (eds.) (2004) – *Afrika und die deutsche Sprache*, Münster: Unrast-Verlag
- Arndt, Susan (ed.) (2001) – *AfrikaBilder: Studien zu Rassismus in Deutschland*, Münster: Unrast-Verlag
- Arsendorp, Dirk (2002) - *Zwischen Hölle und Paradies: Das Afrikabild in den deutschen Medien*, Südwestrundfunk
- Bourdieu, Pierre, Wacquant, Loic (1992) – *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Cambridge, Polity Press
- Brookes, Heather Jean (1996) – ‘*Suit, tie and a touch of juju*’ – *the ideological construction of Africa: a critical discourse analysis of news on Africa in the British press*, *Discourse & Society*, Vol.6, No.4, pp. 461-494
- Dilg, Ute (1998) – *Der Demokratisierungsprozess in Schwarzafrika im Spiegel der überregionalen deutschen Presse*, Dipl. Eichstätt (unpublished)
- Downing, J.D.H. (1990) – *US Media Discourse on South Africa: The Development of a Situation Model*, *Discourse & Society*, Vol.1, No 1, pp.39-60
- Ellis, Stephen (2000) – *Reporting Africa*, *Current History*, Vol.99, No. 633-641, pp. 221- 226
- Fairclough, N. (1992) - *Discourse and Text: Linguistic and Intertextual Analysis within Discourse Analysis*, *Discourse & Society*, Vol.3, No.2, pp.193-217
- Fanon, Frantz (1965) – *The Wretched of the Earth*, London: MacGibbon & Kee
- Göttel, Stefan (2004) – „*Busch*“, in *Afrika und die deutsche Sprache* (ed. Arndt & Hornscheidt), Münster, Unrast-Verlag
- Jarosz, Lucy (1992) – *Constructing the Dark Continent: Metaphor as Geographic Representation of Africa*, *Geografiska Annaler*, Vol. 74 B, No.2, pp.105-115
- Klemperer, Victor (1987) – *Notizen eines Philologen*, Leipzig: Reclam Verlag
- Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1980) – *Metaphors we Live By*, Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press
- Machnik, Katharine (2004) – „*Schwarzafrika*“, in *Afrika und die deutsche Sprache* (ed. Arndt & Hornscheidt), Münster, Unrast-Verlag
- Michler, Walter (1991) – *Weißbuch Afrika*, Bonn: Dietz Verlag
- Miles, Robert (1989) – *Racism*, New York: Routledge

- Onu, Eze, P. (1979) – *The Dilemma of presenting an African image abroad: the kind of African news contained in Canadian newspapers*, African Studies Review, Vol. 22, No.2, pp. 95- 107
- Pichlhöfer, Harald (1999) *Typisch Afrika: über die Interpretation von Afrikabildern; eine semiotische Studie*, Wien: Sonderzahl Verlag
- Poenicke, Anke (2001) – *Afrika in deutschen Medien und Schulbüchern*, Sankt Augustin: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.
- Poenicke, Anke (2003) – *Afrika realistisch darstellen: Diskussionen und Alternativen zur gängigen Praxis*, Sankt Augustin: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.
- Pratt, David (1972) – *How to Find and Measure Bias in Textbooks*, New York: Educational Technology Publications
- Reichart-Burikukiye (2002) - *Wo liegt Afrika? Das Afrikabild an Berliner Schulen*, Berliner Blätter, Vol. 25, pp. 72-97
- Rorty, Richard (1993) - *Human rights, rationality and sentimentality*, in On human rights: the Oxford amnesty lectures, (eds. Shute & Hurley) New York: Basic Books, pp. 111-134.
- Said, Edward W. (1978) – *Orientalism- Western Conceptions of the Orient*, London: Penguin Books
- Schlafinger, Knut (2002) – *Zwischen Hölle und Paradies: Das Afrikabild in den deutschen Medien*, Südwestrundfunk
- Schmidt-Wulffen, Wulf-Dieter (1998) - *Jugendliche und die "Dritte Welt" – Bewusstsein, Wissen und Interesse*, Erdkundeunterricht Vol.6, pp. 368-372
- Thompson, John (1995) - *The Media and Modernity*, Cambridge: Polity
- Wetherell, Margaret & Potter, Jonathan (1992) – *Mapping the Language of Racism, Discourse and the Legitimation of Exploitation*, New York: Columbia University Press

APPENDIX 1

FAZ Headlines

- FAZ1 Nichts zu verlieren außer dem Leben 8.10.05
- FAZ2 Wahlen in Liberia 10.10.05
- FAZ3 AU-Soldaten in Darfur getötet (notice) 10.10.05
- FAZ4 Marokko holt Flüchtlinge aus der Wüste zurück 10.10.05
- FAZ5 Ziele unbekannt 11.10.05
- FAZ6 Hundert Dollar pro Stimme 11.10.05
- FAZ7 Tote bei Massaker in Kongo 12.10.05
- FAZ8 Enttäuschung in Marokko 12.10.05
- FAZ9 Wir haben sie kommen sehen 12.10.05
- FAZ10 Der ausgestopfte Afrikaner 12.10.05
- FAZ11 EU legt Strategie für Afrika dar 13.10.05
- FAZ12 Flucht vom Kontinent der verlorenen Hoffnung 13.10.05
- FAZ13 Marokko kann nicht abschieben 13.10.05
- FAZ14 Berlin für Ölembargo gegen Sudan 13.10.05
- FAZ15 Die Haupttrouten der Schlepper 13.10.05
- FAZ16 Beobachter zufrieden mit Wahl in Liberia 13.10.05
- FAZ17 Warum surft das Flußpferd am Strand 13.10.05
- FAZ18 Mugabe vergleicht Bush mit Hitler (notice) 18.10.05
- FAZ19 Die Odyssee der Afrikaner 19.10.05
- FAZ20 Keine Überlebenden bei Flugzeugabsturz 24.10.05
- FAZ21 Nigerias First Lady in Marbella gestorben (notice) 25.10.05
- FAZ22 Prost Qahwa 26.10.05
- FAZ23 Was ein Denkmal in Bamako erzählt 26.10.05
- FAZ24 Ein Frühstücksdirektor für die Elfenbeinküste 27.10.05
- FAZ25 Studie: 8000 afrikanische Einwanderer gestorben (notice) 29.10.05
- FAZ26 Blockade in Äthiopien 29.10.05
- FAZ27 UN verlängern Kongo-Mission (notice) 31.10.05
- FAZ28 Regierung von Guinea-Bissau entlassen (notice) 31.10.05
- FAZ29 Lohnendes Teamwork für Kenia 31.10.05
- FAZ30 Präsident Sansibars wieder gewählt 2.11
- FAZ31 5 Tote bei Protesten in Äthiopien (notice) 2.11.05
- FAZ32 Vorwürfe gegen französische Soldaten 4.11.05
- FAZ33 Köhler für „offenen Dialog“ mit Afrika (notice) 4.11.05
- FAZ34 Unruhen in Addis Abeba dauern an (notice) 4.11.05
- FAZ35 Sorge vor neuem Krieg 4.11.05
- FAZ36 Köhler will Partnerschaft mit Ländern Afrikas 7.11.05
- FAZ37 George Weah Favorit bei Wahl in Liberia 9.11.05
- FAZ38 Beginn der Parlamentswahl in Ägypten 9.11.05
- FAZ39 Die Kinder sollen Geld verdienen 9.11.05
- FAZ40 Diamantenkonzern De Beers muß Macht in Südafrika teilen 9.11.05
- FAZ41 Verstreute Nachrichten vom dunklen Kontinent 10.11.05
- FAZ42 Ohne Sicherheit geht nichts 12.11.05
- FAZ43 Notstand in Sambia wegen drohender Hungersnot (notice) 12.11.05
- FAZ44 Verwahrlosung durch Polygamie 17.11.05
- FAZ45 Willige Käufer, Unwille Verkäufer 18.11.05
- FAZ46 Junge Schule 29.11.05
- FAZ47 Südafrikas Aktienmarkt boot seit 15 Jahren 29.11.05
- FAZ48 Wählen in Ägypten 30.11.05

APPENDIX 2

TAZ Headlines

- TAZ1 Lebenslang für rassistischen Mord mit Löwen 1.10.05
- TAZ2 Kongo-Zeitplan wankt 4.10.05
- TAZ3 Neues Anrennen auf Melilla 4.10.05
- TAZ4 Melilla: der Zaun muss weg 6.10.05
- TAZ5 Der Sprung nach Europa 6.10.05
- TAZ6 Zäune gegen Menschen 6.10.05
- TAZ7 Flucht vor dem Politikversagen 6.10.05
- TAZ8 Europa gibt nicht nur Geld für Gitter 6.10.05
- TAZ9 Gelobter Kontinent 7.10.05
- TAZ10 Profiteure der Armutsmigration 10.10.05
- TAZ11 Siegeshunger der schwarzen Antilopen 10.10.05
- TAZ12 „Wir müssen die Einwanderung organisieren“ 12.10.05
- TAZ13 Staatsaufbau im Kongo: oben hui, unten pfui 13.10.05
- TAZ14 EU will Flüchtlinge zu Hause betreuen 13.10.05
- TAZ15 Mangelnde Gleichberechtigung tötet 13.10.05
- TAZ16 „Es gibt mehr Geld und das ist sehr wichtig“ 13.10.05
- TAZ17 „Eine Frage des Überlebens“ 13.10.05
- TAZ18 Zehn Jahre für Afrika 13.10.05
- TAZ19 Gegen Ideenarmut 15.10.05
- TAZ20 Chronische Armut bleibt 15.10.05
- TAZ21 Unterm Sandschleier 15.10.05
- TAZ22 Kettenpanzer für die Elfenbeinküste 19.10.05
- TAZ23 Das ‚Schwarze Haus‘ vergeigt 19.10.05
- TAZ24 Auf Wanderschaft in die Welt 20.10.05
- TAZ25 Fast alle wollen übers Meer 20.10.05
- TAZ26 „Die Diktaturen leeren Afrika“ 21.10.05
- TAZ27 Eine mörderische Weltordnung 21.10.05
- TAZ28 Afrikanischer Albtraum 24.10.05
- TAZ29 Die Kindermörder und die Angst am Nil 25.10.05
- TAZ30 Statt Asyl in Spanien: Deportation nach Mali 25.10.05
- TAZ31 Aids bei Kindern in Afrika 26.10.05
- TAZ32 Alumni organisiert Afrika-programm 26.10.05
- TAZ33 Armee bleibt am Horn 3.11.05
- TAZ34 „Wir sind außen vor“ 4.11.05
- TAZ35 Afrika-Konferenz 7.11.05
- TAZ36 Äthiopien: die Unruhe nach dem Sturm 7.11.05
- TAZ37 Liberia wird politischer Vorreiter in Afrika 12.11.05
- TAZ38 Fiktive Soldaten halten Kongos Generäle reich 15.11
- TAZ39 Wildtiere zur Zukunftssicherung 19.11.05
- TAZ40 Angola ist ein Reiseziel 19.11.05
- TAZ41 Auswanderer bekämpfen die Armut 19.11.05
- TAZ42 Keine Trendwende 22.11.05
- TAZ43 Das Leben eines Afrikaners gilt weniger als der Patentschutz 22.11.05
- TAZ44 Robert Mugabe strahlt 22.11.05
- TAZ45 Initiative gegen Spendenmangel 22.11.05
- TAZ46 Massenflucht im Osten des Kongo 24.11.05
- TAZ47 Beschneidung in Deutschland 25.11.05

APPENDIX 3

-
- 1 „dunkel“
 - 2 „schwarzer Kontinent“
 - 3 „...wo Afrika nach Europa überquillt...“
 - 4 „...die Korken hinaustreiben werde...“
 - 5 „...Strom illegaler Einwanderer aus Afrika“
 - 6 „Ansturm“
 - 7 „...unter dem Eindruck des Massenansturms“
 - 8 „...in die Steinzeit geschossen...“
 - 9 „...die Hilfsmittel aus Europa und den Vereinigten Staaten sind im Filz korrupten Regime ihrer Heimatländer verschwunden“
 - 10 „Die afrikanische Nacht riecht nach verdorbenen Lebensmitteln, Fäkalien und Angstschweiß.“
 - 11 „...wie verschrecktes Wild im Unterholz umherirren“
 - 12 „... Ein Ministerpräsident soll ihn bändigen“.
 - 13 „dunkelhäutig“
 - 14 „farbig“
 - 15 „Schwarzafrikaner“
 - 16 „...weißes Land in schwarze Hände zu übertragen“
 - 17 „Bei Nacht sehen die Schwarzafrikaner (...) nur das Weiße im Auge der anderen“
 - 18 „Afrikaner“
 - 19 „...aus Mali, Senegal und Kamerun“
 - 20 „...und nach Afrika geflogen“
 - 21 „Aus Afrika berichtet Thomas Scheen“
 - 22 „Afrika, der Kontinent der verlorenen Hoffnungen und leeren Versprechungen“
 - 23 „...sitzt auf gepackten Koffern“
 - 24 „...Hungersnöte in Afrika, Fluten in Guatemala...“
 - 25 „...kamen zwei weitere Afrikaner zu Tode“
 - 26 „...in Afrika südlich der Sahara“
 - 27 „Westafrika“
 - 28 „Krisenkontinent“
 - 29 „Dauerkriesengebiete Afrikas“
 - 30 „Afrika“
 - 31 „... der schwarzen Bevölkerung helfen, doch deren neue Farmen verkommen“
 - 32 „...fünfhundert Afrikaner wurden entdeckt und geholfen“
 - 33 „Riesenzirkus“
 - 34 „...das Klischee vom bösen weißen Mann wiederbelebt wurde“.
 - 35 „Busch“
 - 36 „mütterlichem Charme“
 - 37 „friedlich“
 - 38 „...den köstlichsten Kaffee, den man sich vorstellen kann.“
 - 39 „Von Afrika wissen wir wenig...“
 - 40 „Ansturm der Massen“
 - 41 „...Hungersnöte in Afrika, Fluten in Guatemala...“