

VILIFYING THE DANGEROUS “OTHER”: THE CASE SUB-SAHARAN IMMIGRANTS IN MOROCCAN NEWSPAPERS

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ABSTRACT

Morocco is located in the extreme North-West of Africa, just 14 kilometers away from Spain. Its geographical location has made it a destination for thousands of Sub-Saharan migrants and refugees. Being an Africa state, Morocco is expected to be tolerant to other African immigrants. However, the reality is rather the opposite. Since their arrival in Morocco, Sub-Saharan migrants (SSM) are the subject of fear, mistrust and racism. Public discussions about those immigrants are often infested deprecating and racist tropes; hence, the immigrants are often referred as ‘dirty blacks, black locusts, invaders, and HIV carriers’. Yet, instead of covering events which involve Sub-Saharan migrants with a more objective and less racist discourse, Moroccan newspapers have always endorsed a populist, racist, and fear-mongering discourse. An example of such discourse is an article in a local newspaper and whose title could be translated as ‘Regiments of [African] prostitutes spread HIV in the streets of Morocco’. This paper seeks to analyze the discourse adopted by Moroccan newspapers in reference to SSM, it demonstrates how these newspapers make use of strategies of representation, syntax, transitivity, lexicon, argumentation, as well as rhetorical choices such as euphemism, metaphors, hyperbole used to create a negative image of African immigrants. The paper adopts and adapts tools from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to reflect on the characteristics of racist media discourse in Arabic newspapers. Contrary to the racist and discriminatory discourse adopted by right wing parties in Europe which receives a considerable attention. The deadly attacks against immigrants in South Africa, the massive police raids against migrants in Egypt, and the present day massive, violent, and inhumane deportation of Sub-Saharan migrants in Algeria have received little attention. Similarly, is the media coverage which legitimize and promote improper treatment of the migrants. The paper seeks to shed light on racism in a non-western context.

KEYWORDS: Racism, Discourse, Morocco, Sub-Saharan Migrants

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