**What’s in a frame? (- or choosing the right words for image management)**

In the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, many large international banks received heavy criticism for their business conduct, which involved investments in dubious loans and business projects. For Denmark’s largest bank, Danske Bank, the situation was no different; it went from being considered a prudent, trustworthy – and blameless – actor in the Danish financial sector to being categorised as an irresponsible and greedy institution, heavily criticised for its investment activities in the years leading up to the crisis.

In this presentation, I ask the question of how the Bank’s image could change from excellent to appalling within a number of months without it being able to benefit from its history of impeccable business conduct as the crisis hit (cf. Coombs 1995). In answering this question, I will argue that organisations are not operating in a social vacuum, but need to consider the interaction of various players, such as the media, in the conceptual and discursive construction of their image (Gunnarsson 2009). Specifically, I will demonstrate how the insistence by the Bank and its CEO on constructing its problems as being due to external forces, against the continuous claims by the Danish print press that the Bank itself was at fault, assisted in creating an extremely unfavourable image of the Bank. In this process, the Bank managed to conceptually dissociate itself from not only the readers of Danish newspapers, but also from its lifeblood, the customers, leading to its having the largest number of dissatisfied customers in the Danish financial market in late 2009.

The theoretical and methodological foundation of the analysis is framing (Fillmore 1975, 1982; Hallahan 1999), which provides the analyst with tools for investigating the conceptual and rhetorical/linguistic levels of communication between e.g. organisations and outside groups. Being concerned with the cognitive information processing of the receivers of text, framing can be instantiated through a number of lexical items, including metaphor (e.g. Lakoff and Johnson [1980]2003; Charteris-Black 2004; Kövecses 1986, 2006; Lakoff 1993, 2003). Thus, in my presentation I will be concerned with the ways metaphor interact with other lexical items in the frames used by the Bank and the press to promote particular problem definitions and moral obligations, in turn assessing why these metaphors may or may not resonate with the attitudes of readers and customers. The data for the analysis consist of newspaper articles from the Danish broadsheet press in the period of October 2008 to November 2009 as well as communication material from the Bank’s website.

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