Discrimination via Discourse

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1 Introduction/Definitions

The starting point for a discourse analytical approach to the complex phenomenon of discrimination is to realize that racism, as a social practice and as an ideology, manifests itself discursively and thus through a range of discursive and material practices. On the one hand, discriminatory opinions, stereotypes, prejudices and beliefs are produced and reproduced by means of discourse; and through discourse, discriminatory exclusionary practices are prepared, implemented, justified and legitimated. On the other hand, discourse offers a space in which to criticize, delegitimate and argue against racist opinions and practices, that is, to pursue anti-racist strategies.

In his seminal book Prejudice in Discourse, Teun A. van Dijk (1984) focuses in great detail on the “rationalization and justification of discriminatory acts against minority groups.” He labels the categories used to rationalize prejudice against minority groups as “the 7 D’s of Discrimination.” These are dominance, differentiation, distance, diffusion, diversion, depersonalization or destruction, and daily discrimination. These strategies serve in various ways to legitimize and enact the distinction of ‘the other,’ for example, by dominating minority groups, by excluding them from social activities, and even by destroying and murdering them (van Dijk 1984: 40).

The public management of ‘inclusion’ and ‘exclusion’ via a range of policy papers and laws is a question of ‘grading’ and ‘scales’, ranging from explicit legal and economic restrictions to implicit discursive negotiations and decisions. I assume that ‘inclusion/exclusion’ of, and related discriminatory practices against, migrant groups change due to different criteria of how insiders and outsiders are defined in each instance. In this way, various topologies, criteria, or group memberships are arbitrarily constructed, which sometimes include a certain group, and sometimes do not, depending on sociopolitical and situational contexts and political interests as well as necessities (Wodak 2007a,b,c).

Thus, a specific migrant status (coming from a certain host country) may serve as a criterion for exclusion; sometimes, however, language competence is defined as salient. Foreigners or migrants arrive from different countries, with different motives and goals, with various educational backgrounds, religious and political affiliations, and cultural (gendered) traditions. Specifically, right-wing populist rhetoric seems to merge all foreigners into one homogeneous group that symbolizes the negative ‘other.’ Furthermore, a specific job qualification may mean...
inclusion, despite the respective migrant coming from an otherwise excluded country; in other cases, religion and gender are regarded as criteria that discriminate against specific groups. The mere use of certain labels manifests the fluidity of definitions and membership categories. Recent research on the British press, for example, has illustrated that the semantic concepts of ‘migrant,’ ‘refugee’ and ‘asylum seeker’ have become conflated and that all of these concepts are sometimes used in contemporary media to label all “foreigners who are not welcome,” always defined anew in a context-dependent way. Such multifaceted processes necessarily call for an interdisciplinary approach that integrates historical, socio-political, and socio-psychological and discourse analytic approaches in a more general problem-oriented framework.

Discrimination implies deprivation of access through means of explicit or symbolic power (in Pierre Bourdieu’s sense) implemented by the social elites: access to participation, citizenship, the media, information, language learning, power positions, certain organizations, jobs, housing, education, etc. Moreover, debates about immigration and nationhood are crucially linked to assumptions about place. ‘Our’ culture belongs ‘here’ within the bounded homeland, whilst the culture of ‘foreigners’ belongs ‘elsewhere.’ The theme of place is particularly threatening to groups who are seen to have no ‘natural’ homeland, such as the Romani or other diasporic communities today, or the Jews in the first half of the twentieth century. Religion as a central condition for inclusion/exclusion and discrimination, frequently triggered by indexical markers such as the ‘headscarf’ worn by Muslim women, has become dominant in some EU countries only in recent years.

Powerful elites frequently justify such exclusion in various ways. Reference is then made, explicitly or implicitly, to status, belonging, ethnicity or gender, by discursively creating ever new topologies: modern and global forms of discrimination and exclusion can, I claim, be most acutely symbolized by somebody having or not having a ‘passport’ to enter the countries of their choice. Hence, acquisition of citizenship becomes a legal means for inclusion, which, however, does not guarantee that migrants or refugees become accepted members of the respective host country once they have legally become citizens.

In this paper, I cannot elaborate and explain in all its facets the complex phenomenon of discrimination against autochthonous, linguistic or sexual minorities, foreigners, and specific ethnic and/or religious groups. Rather, I restrict myself in what follows to discussing and elaborating several important dimensions of discrimination and othering via text, image and talk, i.e., via manifold written, oral and visual discursive practices: below, I focus briefly on three manifestations of the rhetoric of exclusion (i.e., discriminatory rhetoric), while having to neglect many other linguistic expressions of discrimination for reasons of space (such as explicit hate speech; word plays; comparative dimensions across various public spaces; and so forth): on the discursive construction of in-groups and out-groups, which relates to strategies of positive self- and negative-other presentation; on strategies of justification and legitimation of exclusionary practices through argumentative devices; and, thirdly, on the denial of racism that frequently accompanies and introduces discriminatory rhetoric. Finally, I will illustrate some of these discursive practices with one example from the Viennese election campaign in October 2010 by analyzing a poster from the Austrian Freedom Party (Freiheitliche Partei Österreich; FPÖ) as this integrates many elements of extreme right-wing ideology and related discursive practices. The debate about this poster is typical regarding the so-called strategy of provocation and the strategy of calculated ambivalence, which both emerged in the past two decades (since 1986) in the propaganda launched by the FPÖ (Engel & Wodak 2013; Wodak & Richardson 2013a; Wodak et al. 2013b).

At this point, it is important to emphasise that such exclusionary and discriminatory discursive practices are, of course, not new but have been part and parcel of manipulative and persuasive rhetoric and propaganda for centuries, have accompanied, or indeed prepared the
ground for, physical violence, struggles, and wars. Thus, we should not be surprised that such discursive practices still exist and continue to be employed; rather, it is salient to investigate continuities and changes, for example during and after crises, during and after wars, and during election campaigns, from governing parties and from the opposition (in democratic systems).12 Moreover, it is salient, I believe, for social scientists, historians, and so forth to be aware not only of the possible mobilizing effects of such discursive practices but also of the context-dependent, complex and intricate linguistic forms that are employed, while exploiting all available communicative channels (such as new social media). Of course, new modes of resistance to discrimination and exclusion via social media should also be analysed systematically and in detail in order to understand the challenging and rapid socio-political changes with which our globalised world is currently confronted.13

2 Historical and Current Socio-political Perspectives

The European Union Context

Before embarking on a discussion of the salient characteristics of discrimination via text and talk, it is important to recall the European legal framework that defines and regulates discrimination, thus accounting for David Goldberg’s – quite controversial but legitimate – claim that “the state is inherently contradictory and internally fractured, consisting not only of agencies and bureaucracies, legislatures and courts, but also of norms and principles, individuals and institutions” (2002: 7). In Goldberg’s view, there is no singular modern state, and no singular racialized state. On the contrary, he claims that both are intertwined, the “histories of the former at once accountable in terms of the projected spatialities and temporalities of the latter” (p. 7). It is important, therefore, to acknowledge – as Goldberg states – that modern states are racial in their modernity and modern in their racial quality. Taking this view further, it becomes obvious that the rhetoric of discrimination and exclusion has, on the one hand, to be analysed in its specific historical context; on the other, transnational and global patterns also have to (and can) be detected and deconstructed. In this chapter, I thus attempt to point to general developments and tendencies while also presenting an in-depth analysis of a contextualized example.

In 2000, the European Union (EU) adopted two directives (Sugarman & Butler 2011): the Employment Equality Directive prohibited discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, religious belief, age, and disability in the area of employment; the Racial Equality Directive prohibited discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity in the context of employment, but also in accessing the welfare system and social security, and goods and services. These directives imply a significant expansion of the scope of non-discrimination law by the EU, which recognises explicitly that in order to allow individuals to reach their full potential in the employment market, it is also essential to guarantee them equal access to areas such as health, education and housing.

In 2004, the Gender Goods and Services Directive expanded the scope of sex discrimination to the area of goods and services. Protection on the grounds of gender does not, however, quite match the scope of protection under the Racial Equality Directive since the Gender Social Security Directive guarantees equal treatment in relation to social security only, and not to the broader welfare system, such as social protection and access to healthcare and education. Although sexual orientation, religious belief, disability and age are protected grounds only in the context of employment, a proposal to extend protection on these grounds to the area of accessing goods and services (known as a ‘Horizontal Directive’) is currently being debated in the EU institutions.14
Human Rights Charter and Access to Citizenship

It is quite remarkable, I believe, that the original treaties of the European Communities did not contain any reference to human rights or their protection, in spite of the aftermath of World War II. It was not believed in the early 1950s that the creation of an area of free trade in Europe could have any impact relevant to human rights. As cases began to appear, however, before the European Court of Justice (ECJ), alleging human rights breaches caused by Community law, the ECJ developed a body of judge-made law known as the ‘general principles’ of Community Law (Sugarman & Butler 2011: 6). In recognising that its policies could have an impact on human rights and in an effort to make citizens feel ‘closer’ to the EU, the EU and its Member States proclaimed the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights in 2000. The Charter contains a list of human rights, inspired by the rights stated in the constitutions of the Member States, the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and universal human rights treaties, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Charter, as adopted in 2000, was merely a ‘declaration,’ which means that it was not legally binding, although the European Commission stated that its proposals would be in compliance. When the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force in 2009, it altered the status of the Charter of Fundamental Rights to make it a legally binding document (see also Wodak 2011a). As a result, the institutions of the EU are bound to comply with it. EU Member States also comply with the Charter, but only when implementing EU law. It remains to be seen how well these laws are implemented in all EU Member States and beyond; or how far changes and adaptations occur when recontextualising such legislation nationally or even locally (Wodak & Fairclough 2010). Thus, it is relevant to recognise the dialectics between the scale of the EU and national or even regional entities, i.e., to be aware that the insistence on rights locally, at least normatively, is at once also the realization of rights more generally, tentatively more globally. . . . If rights are generalizations from local practice and local embodiments of generalized extensions, then my right – the right of those like me, of “my people” – at once contains the kernel of the rights (or their restriction and lack) for all. Goldberg (2002: 273)

Along this vein, it is important to discuss and investigate policies of exclusion with respect to citizenship (Bauböck & Faist 2010). In general, we can perceive nation-states as ‘imagined communities’ (Anderson 1985), which are also (re)produced in everyday lives by banal forms of nationalism (Billig 1995). This banal nationalism, for example, uses specific forms of deixis in newspapers and in political rhetoric, so that ‘here’ is assumed to be the national homeland, and ‘us,’ by inference, the members of the imagined national community. The banal nationalism of nation-states is vague about who exactly ‘we’ are: sometimes the particular ‘we’ of the nation means the general ‘we’ of all ‘reasonable people’ (Billig 1995). In other cases the ‘we’ is very clearly defined and restricted to membership of certain groups (see below). Nation-states, however, also have laws that enable discrimination to be practised with precision: Typically, as already hinted at above, nation-states will have laws that discriminate between those who are permitted citizenship of the state and those who are not. Similarly, they will have laws that grant residency to some non-citizens but not others, often linked nowadays to restrictive language tests (de Cillia & Wodak 2006, Wodak 2011b).

3 Relevant Methodologies of Analysis

The study of discriminatory practices necessarily implies qualitative in-depth analysis as traditional methods of measurement encounter huge obstacles when trying to account for racist,
antisemitic or xenophobic attitudes. Indeed, much research has provided ample evidence that more educated people understated their prejudiced beliefs; moreover, the ideological value of tolerance is widespread in contemporary capitalist societies, so that the explicit promulgation of exclusionary politics conflicts with the generally accepted values of liberalism. Hence, discriminatory utterances tend to be ‘coded’ in official rhetoric so as to avoid sanctions; linguistic cues such as insinuations are frequently only comprehensible to insiders. Indeed, the very terms ‘discrimination,’ ‘exclusion’ or ‘prejudice’ carry negative connotations. Few would admit in public or when interviewed to agreeing with the exclusion of, or prejudice or discrimination against, minority groups. This is why opinion polls and interviews are inherently doomed to fail when investigating racist belief systems. Usually people deny these beliefs and try to present themselves in a positive way as they are aware that such opinions are taboo or might even be associated with extremist right-wing political affiliations. This is also why the study of exclusionary rhetoric has tended to attract critical analysts, who do not take what people say at face value but seek to examine the – often latent – ideological/discriminatory, complex nature of discourse. This means studying how discursive practices can accomplish exclusion in its many facets without the explicitly acknowledged intention of actors; exclusion becomes ‘normality’ and thus acceptable, and integrated into all dimensions of our societies.

3.1 Positive Self- and Negative Other-Presentation

According to Reisigl and Wodak (2001: 1), racism/discrimination/exclusion manifests itself discursively: “racist opinions and beliefs are produced and reproduced by means of discourse. . . . through discourse, discriminatory exclusionary practices are prepared, promulgated and legitimized.” The construction of in- and out-groups necessarily implies the use of strategies of positive self-presentation and the negative presentation of others. In this paper, I focus on five types of discursive strategies, which are all involved in positive self- and negative other-presentation. These discursive strategies underpin the justification/legitimisation of inclusion/exclusion and the constructions of identities. ‘Strategy’ generally means a (more or less accurate and more or less intentional) plan of practices, including discursive practices, adopted to achieve a particular social, political, psychological or linguistic goal. Heuristically, I distinguish between five questions:

1. How are persons, objects, phenomena/events, processes and actions named and referred to linguistically?
2. What characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to social actors, objects, phenomena/events and processes?
3. What arguments are employed in the discourse in question?
4. From what perspective are these nominations, attributions and arguments expressed?
5. Are the respective utterances articulated overtly; are they intensified or mitigated?

Table 24.1 summarizes the five strategies and some of the related linguistic, pragmatic, rhetorical and argumentative means used in specific genres and contexts to realise the respective strategies.

4 Important Dimensions

4.1 The Denial of Exclusion and Racism

Linked to positive self-presentation and the construction of positive group and collective identities is the denial of racism. Recall the well-known examples of justification discourses, such
Table 24.1 A selection of discursive strategies (adapted from Reisigl & Wodak 2009: p. 95)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Devices</th>
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| referential / nomination | discursive construction of social actors, objects/phenomena/events and processes/actions | • membership categorization devices, deictics, anthroponyms, etc.  
• tropes such as metaphors, metonymies, and synecdoches *(pars pro toto, totem pro parte)*  
• verbs and nouns used to denote processes and actions |
| predication           | discursive qualification of social actors, objects/phenomena/events and processes/actions (more or less positively or negatively) | • stereotypical evaluative attributions of negative or positive traits (e.g., in the form of adjectives, appositions, prepositional phrases, relative clauses, conjunctional clauses, infinitive clauses and participial clauses or groups)  
• explicit predicates or predicative nouns/pronouns  
• collocations  
• explicit comparisons, similes, metaphors, and other rhetorical figures (including metonymies, hyperboles, litotes, euphemisms)  
• allusions, evocations, presuppositions/implicatures |
| argumentation         | justification and questioning of claims of truth and normative rightness | • topoi (formal or content-related)  
• fallacies |
| perspectivization, framing or discourse representation | positioning speaker’s or writer’s point of view and expressing involvement or distance | • deictics  
• direct, indirect, or free indirect speech  
• quotation marks, discourse markers/particles  
• metaphors  
• animating prosody |
| intensification, mitigation | modifying (intensifying or mitigating) the illocutionary force and thus the epistemic or deontic status of utterances | • diminutives or augmentatives  
• (modal) particles, tag questions, subjunctives, hesitations, vague expressions, etc.  
• hyperboles, litotes  
• indirect speech acts (e.g., question instead of assertion)  
• verbs of saying, feeling, thinking |

as ‘I have nothing against . . . , but,’ ‘my best friends are . . . , but,’ ‘we are tolerant, but,’ ‘we would like to help, but the boot is full,’ etc. All these discursive utterances, labelled as ‘disclaimers,’ manifest the ‘denial of racism or exclusion’ and emphasize positive self-presentation (see above; van Dijk 1989). By and large, speakers in such debates seek to justify the practice of exclusion without employing related overt discriminatory rhetoric.

Such overt denials of prejudice basically involve two presuppositions. First, they presuppose the existence of ‘real’ prejudice. In this regard, the existence of extreme, outwardly fascist groups enables defenders of mainstream racism/exclusion/discrimination to present their own rhetoric as being unprejudiced – by comparison. Second, speakers, in denying prejudice, will claim that their criticisms of minority group members are ‘factual,’ ‘objective,’ and ‘reasonable,’ rather than being based upon irrational feelings, and will accordingly employ a range of discursive strategies of legitimisation (Billig 2005). Speakers can, of course, use similar denials
of prejudice and arguments of reasonableness when talking about different forms of discrimination, such as sexism, racism, antisemitism or religious discrimination. Additionally, each type of exclusionary practice will integrate particular themes, stereotypes and argumentative devices (topoi), all contributing to the syncretic nature of mainstream discriminatory discourse.

4.2 Justification and Legitimation Discourses: The Logic of Argumentation

Positive self- and negative other-presentation requires the explicit or implicit (coded) use of justification and legitimation strategies; the latter imply the usually strategic and manipulative application of specific argumentation schemes as well as topoi and fallacies (Reisigl & Wodak 2009: 102). Within argumentation theory, ‘topoi’ can be described as parts of argumentation, which belong to the required premises. They are the formal or content-related warrants or ‘conclusion rules’ that connect the argument(s) with the conclusion, the claim. As such, they justify the transition from the argument(s) to the conclusion (Kienpointner 1996: 194). Topoi are not always expressed explicitly, but can always be made explicit as conditional or causal paraphrases such as ‘if x, then y’ or ‘y, because x.’

Argumentation schemes are reasonable or fallacious. If the latter is the case, we label them fallacies. There are rules for rational disputes and constructive argument, which allow the discerning of reasonable topoi from fallacies. These rules include the freedom to argue, the obligation to give reasons, correct references to the previous discourse by the antagonist, the obligation to ‘matter-of-factness,’ the correct references to implicit premises, the respect of shared standpoints, the use of plausible arguments and schemes of argumentation, logical validity, the acceptance of the discussion’s results, and clarity of expression and correct interpretation. If these rules are flouted, fallacies occur. However, as Reisigl and Wodak (2009: 102) admit, it is not always easy to distinguish precisely without contextual knowledge whether an argumentation scheme has been employed as reasonable topos or as fallacy.

In debates about immigration and religious difference or in media reporting, speakers/writers will often employ arguments about ‘culture,’ depicting it as an essentially bounded entity whose integrity is threatened by the presence of residents supposedly belonging to a different ‘culture’ and thus not being willing to learn and adopt ‘our’ conventions and norms, i.e., to assimilate; in these argumentative sequences, deictic elements acquire salience and culture is regarded as a static entity that somebody either knows about or not; has or does not have. Culture is thus essentialised in such debates (see above). For example, van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999) observed regimes of exclusion and discrimination when analysing official rejection letters by the magistrate of the city of Vienna, denying ‘family reunion,’ i.e., rejecting applications of migrants who had already settled in the host country to have their families come and join them. Indeed, in the latter case, a number of moral and rational legitimation strategies were employed that were used to justify exclusion by referring to statistics or to moral values (ethics, humanitarianism, religion, etc.). The topos of culture was particularly salient in this case.

When analysing discriminatory and exclusionary rhetoric in post-war Europe, four factors typically have to be taken into account, albeit realised linguistically in context-dependent ways: a) exclusionary practices occur in situations of differential power; b) the powerful actors need not possess a conscious goal or intention; indeed, they may deny that any discrimination/exclusion has occurred; c) the powerful actors consider their own actions ‘reasonable’ and ‘natural’ and d) the actions that lead to exclusion are usually conducted through ‘coded’ language; overt exclusionary language is rarely to be observed.
Discrimination via Discourse

5 Current Contributions and Research: A Discourse-Historical Analysis of the FPÖ’s Discriminatory Rhetoric

5.1 Socio-political and Historical Context

In their political discourse in general and especially in their past election campaigns, the FPÖ (the Austrian Freedom Party) has developed a specific discursive pattern that has led to much discussion in the media as well as in academic work. So far, research has provided evidence that similar discursive practices and argumentation schemata emerge time and again, albeit with certain variations.

Since Jörg Haider’s 1986 coup to gain leadership of the FPÖ, all its election campaigns have successfully combined traditional and innovative means of election campaigning (events both small and large, including speeches and other performances by the top candidates in public spaces, beer tents and discotheques, posters, advertisements, party-run newspapers, media appearances, distribution of printed materials, etc.), as well as the new social media (the internet, brochures designed to look like comic books, a rap song specifically written for and performed by the party leader). This has effectively opened up avenues for communication with diverse target groups and created a whole network of texts and images intertwined with each other. The contents distributed by such means include open and covert constructions of marginalising and discriminatory statements that draw on xenophobic, Islamophobic, antisemitic, homophobic and other resentments. Examples from earlier election campaigns include the slogans ‘Daham statt Islam’ in 2006 and ‘Abendland in Christenhand’ in 2009. While such statements regularly test the boundaries of the socially acceptable and legally permissible, it is rare for a slogan to cross the legal boundaries of the freedom of speech, although moral thresholds defined by mainstream society are often violated. The FPÖ-MP Susanne Winter, for instance, was tried and convicted by a criminal court of justice for hate incitement (‘Verhetzung’) and the vilification of religious teachings, because she had used her speech at a New Year’s meeting of the FPÖ to claim that the founder of Islamic religion had written the Koran during epileptic fits and had also been a paedophile.

It is through precisely this strategy of provocation that the FPÖ has placed the general public, but especially its political competitors, in a dilemma: Even if it is one of the basic rules of politics that any reaction raises the attention given to a political adversary and should therefore be avoided, the principle ‘By remaining silent, we agree’ also applies here. There are, however, statements that cannot be left unchallenged – these, of course, are precisely those that the FPÖ launches intentionally in order to provoke and set the agenda.

The by now predictable response to such reactions on the part of the FPÖ is, in turn, an integral part of the campaigns themselves and is used to reinforce the FPÖ’s status as a victim, inviting voters through a strengthened sense of group identity against a common enemy on the outside (see, for example, Haider’s poster slogan 1994: ‘Sie sind gegen ihn, weil er für Euch ist’). Thus, reaction and counter-reaction can lead to an escalation of the debate that virtually guarantees the FPÖ unanimous attention, a process through which the party succeeds in dominating the political agenda.

In the following, I first provide a brief history of the FPÖ in post-war Austria; then I summarise some important characteristics of the Vienna election campaign in 2010. These two sections provide the broad historical and socio-political contexts that both allow embedding and contextualising of the immediate event. Finally I analyse and interpret a specific FPÖ poster using the background of the contextual information and the linguistic methodology provided above. In this way, the so-called ‘Four-Level-Context’ Model of the Discourse-Historical Approach
to Critical Discourse Analysis serves to make the analysis and interpretation both transparent and retroductable (see Wodak 2001, 2011a). The first level is descriptive, while the other three develop the Discourse-Historical Approach to meaning in ‘context’:

1. the immediate, language or text internal co-text;
2. the intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between utterances, texts, genres, and discourses;
3. the extralinguistic social/sociological variables and institutional frames of a specific ‘context of situation’;
4. the broader socio-political and historical contexts, which the discursive practices are embedded in and related to (Wodak 2001: 67).

These four levels of context illustrate that discourses, genres and socio-political contexts are dependent on each other, i.e., linked in a dialectical relationship.

5.2 The Austrian Freedom Party

In 1949, ‘liberals’ with a strong German National orientation and not much of a classical liberal tradition (see Bailer-Galanda & Neugebauer 1997: 326), who felt unable to support either the Social Democrats (SPÖ) or the Christian Conservative People’s Party (ÖVP), founded the VdU (Verband der Unabhängigen – Association of Independents). This party became the electoral home for many former Austrian Nazis. The FPÖ, founded in 1956, was the successor party to the VdU, retaining an explicit attachment to a so-called ‘German cultural community.’

In the 1949 parliamentary elections, the VdU won 12% of the national vote, making it the third-strongest party. Soon thereafter the VdU called for the abolition of all laws governing de-nazification procedures. The argument that the VdU employed to this end rested above all on the reversal of the perpetrator–victim dichotomy: the real victims were not those persecuted by the Nazi regime, but rather former members of the NSDAP (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei – National Socialist German Workers’ Party), who were now being singled out. Accordingly, the VdU used a “grotesque conception of fascism” (Manoschek 2002: 6), based on a crude view of totalitarianism, “to attack the de-nazification policies of the government and to equate Nazism with other political systems” (p. 6). Hence, “when the VdU spoke about fascism, it mentioned neither National Socialism nor the Holocaust, at best indicating the ‘positive aspects’ of German fascism, such as – infamously – full employment and economic growth” (p. 6), thereby allowing for a revival of Austrian ‘pro-fascist’ sentiment on a national scale and making such sentiments a significant element of the country’s political agenda and of public discourses for many years to come.

Given the early VdU ideology, as well as the fact that the party was a conglomerate of members sharing a very broad spectrum of views on the role of an Austrian ‘third political force,’ it did not take long before the party entered a significant crisis, resulting in an even stronger pan-Germanist and pro-fascist agenda coming to the fore. It was amidst this crisis that the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) was established in 1955–56, clearly being “funded as a German nationalist party of the far right, in which former, seriously incriminated National Socialists took the leading functions” (Schiedel & Neugebauer 2002: 16). For example, the first FPÖ chairman, Anton Reintaller, had once been “a member of the National Steering Committee of the Austrian NSDAP and the SS-Brigadenführer, and held the position of Minister of Agriculture in the first Nazi-led Austrian government” (p. 16).
In its more than fifty-year history, the FPÖ has, therefore, never been a ‘liberal’ party in the European sense, although there were always tensions between more liberal and more conservative members of the party. For instance, in 1986 Jörg Haider was elected as leader of the party, unseating Norbert Steger, who belonged to the liberal wing. Since then, the FPÖ has progressively gained votes, reaching 26.9% of all the votes cast in the Austrian elections of October 1999 (1,244,087 voters). Throughout the 1990s, the FPÖ’s party policy and politics became conspicuously more anti-immigrant, anti-European Union and widely populist, resembling Le Pen’s Front National in France.

From 4 February 2000, the FPÖ constituted part of the Austrian government, having formed a coalition with the conservative ÖVP. This development caused a major upheaval internationally and nationally, and led to the so-called ‘sanctions’ against the Austrian government by the 14 other Member States of the European Union. In September 2000, the sanctions were lifted due to a report of the three ‘Wise Men’ appointed by the European Commission to investigate the situation in Austria and recommend how a face-saving solution could be found. Nevertheless, the report stated that the FPÖ should be regarded as a “right wing extremist populist party, a right wing populist party with radical elements.”

In May 2005, a section of the FPÖ splintered off to form a new party, the Bündnis Zukunft Österreich (Association for the Future of Austria – BZÖ). Haider, a chief architect of the BZÖ’s creation, remained regional governor in Carinthia, but Peter Westenthaler took over the leadership of the party. Heinz-Christian Strache, in many ways emulating the younger Haider, took over the far more right-wing, traditional FPÖ. The FPÖ continues to thrive on explicit xenophobia, pan-Germanic sentiments, antisemitism and Islamophobia, in contrast to the BZÖ, which has continued its more economically oriented populist programme with – sometimes – relatively subtle xenophobic and antisemitic subtexts.32 In the 2006 parliamentary elections, the SPÖ (Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs – Social Democratic Party of Austria) gained the majority in Austria after having been in opposition for six years. The BZÖ proportion of the vote was reduced to 5%, securing only seven seats in parliament; the FPÖ attracted around 11% of the vote and was also represented in parliament.

Since 2006, however, the FPÖ under the leadership of Heinz-Christian Strache has achieved 17.5% in national elections (2008), and almost 26% in the most recent Vienna municipal elections (2010). While the FPÖ’s extreme right-wing nationalist base (some of whom are former Nazis) constitutes only a small portion of the electorate, it is still catered to deliberately through a strategy of calculated ambivalence about questions of war guilt, the Holocaust, Nazi ideology, xenophobia and racism.

5.3 The Vienna Election Campaign 2010

The summer of 2010, leading to the local election set for 10 October, saw a poster campaign featuring subjects that in various ways did not correspond to the familiar patterns: one of them read “Wir geben unseren Wienerinnen und Wienern ENDLICH SICHERHEIT”33 and featured the front-runner H. C. Strache in conversation with a woman and a man in police uniform. The discourse of security, which the target audience of people living in Vienna very likely associated with this poster, comprises both a theme related to the number of police officers in Vienna in general and to the number of officers in the field in particular, as well as a second theme positing that criminality can be virtually equated with certain groups of offenders from foreign countries. Put in these terms, the poster’s subject did indeed conform to the usual topics raised by the FPÖ, but it lacked the usual rhymes and did not constitute a discursive provocation. Such a provocation was, however, delivered by a poster first spread across the city in mid-August 2010 (see Figure 24.1).
The poster is situated in the action field of political advertising. The social actors involved are the politician Heinz-Christian Strache, the Austrian Freedom Party FPÖ (both on a national and a local, i.e., Viennese, level), the Viennese we-group with its “Viennese blood,” foreigners referred to by objectifying and nominalizing metonymy, i.e., ‘Fremdes’ (‘the Foreign’ [foreignness]), and the Viennese voters who are asked to vote for Strache and the FPÖ. Indirectly, political opponents are of course presupposed, since a democratic election always includes more than one option and the comparative “more courage” implies that there must also be political competitors with “less courage.”

Very bright overall, the poster predominantly uses white, blue (the traditional colour of the party, derived from the cornflower, also known as blue-bottle, worn by the German Nationalists of the nineteenth century) and red (the second colour of the party logo, not discernible in a black-and-white reproduction: The letter Ö is printed in red, F and P are both blue). The colour red is also the colour of the slogan used on the right-hand side of this poster. The call to vote for the party in the upcoming election, spread across the foot of the poster, is printed in white over a blue background and provides some cohesion for the different elements of the poster (van Leeuwen 2011). The representation of the man, born in 1969, is youthful, casual, clean and healthy: a spotless white shirt, unbuttoned at the top, no jacket or tie, brilliant blue eyes and white teeth, a tanned complexion, dense brown hair with only a touch of grey at the temples; he smiles self-confidently from the poster’s surface.

At the top, on the poster’s right, we find the party logo, consisting of two elements: the party acronym FPÖ and the predication ‘Die soziale Heimatpartei,’ meaning ‘The Social Homeland Party.’
Party.' The logo thus emphasizes the self-presentation of the party as liberal, social and homeland oriented. These three predications also fulfil the important principle of multiple addressing as the party acronym satisfies both traditional FPÖ voters and the whole party. The attribute "social" is a positive signal to socialist voters who are dissatisfied with current policies of the governing social democratic party. The compound 'Heimatpartei' with its specifying predication 'Heimat' obviously fishes in the water of conservatives and nationalists. The German flag-word 'Heimat' is intended to evoke patriotic feelings of belonging to the local community, oriented towards traditional rural values.

Beneath the logo, on the right, there is a rhyme in red letters: 'More COURAGE for our “Viennese blood”'; in German: ‘Mehr MUT für unser “Wiener Blut”’. And slightly beneath the rhyme, in black, is: “Too much of the Foreign is not good for anybody.” (“Zu viel Fremdes tut niemandem gut.”)

The rhyming speech act is an elliptical appeal and request in slogan-like nominal style, constructing a ‘we-group’ that is characterized by its blood. The blood is thus specified as having the quality of being ‘Viennese’: the biologizing metaphor of blood with its localizing predication ‘Viennese’ is certainly ambiguous. Its use follows the above mentioned principle of calculated ambivalence, which allows for manifold convenient readings (see Reisigl 2002: 170ff, Engel & Wodak 2009, 2013).

Blood stands firstly for biological descent, kinship and ancestry. The opposition of “our Viennese blood” and the depersonalizing metonymy “too much of the Foreign” contributes to the both naturalizing and homogenizing construction of a Viennese we-group that seems endangered by ‘too’ many foreign immigrants. The producers of the poster, however, took precautions against such a literal biologist reading of “Viennese blood” – which implies that they were obviously conscious of the intended biologising meaning. By framing the phrase in quotation marks, the authors attempt to indicate distance from the literal meaning (perspectiva-tion strategy). In this sense, the inverted commas mitigate the potentially racist meaning of the appeal/request.

Secondly, “Viennese blood” implies Viennese culture, since “Wiener Blut” – and this is the third meaning intertextually recoverable from the collocation – is the title of the well-known waltz and operetta by Johann Strauss (Jr). Strauss and his music are clear identity markers for a specific Austrian and particularly Viennese culture. Thus, the red and black catchphrases construct a dichotomy between the Viennese and foreign culture, the latter a threat to the former. In the Discourse-Historical Approach, however, it is necessary to look at the respective text of Strauss’ operetta and reconstruct the intertextual links. The refrain starts as follows: “Wiener Blut, / Wiener Blut! Eign’er Saft, / Voller Kraft, / Voller Glut. / Wiener Blut, / selt’nes Gut, / Du erhebst, / Du belebst / Unser’n Mut!” (“Viennese blood, / Viennese blood! / Special sap / full of force, / full of fire. / Viennese blood, / exceptional good; / You turn on, / You liven up / Our courage!”). When contextualising these lines within the plot of the operetta, listeners probably realise that boiling “Viennese blood” is considered to be responsible for various love affairs; moreover, that several of the operetta’s protagonists are ‘blue-blooded,’ i.e., aristocrats. In addition, it becomes obvious that the FPÖ’s demand for ‘more courage’ is linked intertextually to the libretto of the operetta, where “Viennese blood” is said to ‘liven up our courage.’ However, it is also obvious that the FPÖ poster recontextualizes ‘courage’ and “Viennese blood” quite differently: audacity, for example, is no longer connected to amorous passion.

Indeed, the request for “more courage for our Viennese blood” presupposes that, nowadays, political opponents are not brave enough to engage in protection of the “Viennese essence.” Hence, the appeal suggests that the FPÖ – in contrast to the other political parties – is ready to
protect this “Viennese essence” against “too much of the Foreign”; and this ‘fact’ further implies that the party deserves to be elected. The ellipsis at the bottom of the poster concludes with the claim: “Therefore, Yes for HC Strache.” (“Deshalb Ja zu HC Strache.”). The claim is visually supplemented by a circle marked with a hand-drawn red cross.

In sum, the salient message of the poster condenses the following argumentation scheme: “You should vote Strache and the FPÖ, because he and his party are more courageous than their political opponents and will protect our “Viennese blood” against “too much of the Foreign.” The statement “Too much of the Foreign is not good for anybody” takes the form of a generalizing assertive speech act. The assertion refers to the relationship between “Own” and “Foreign,” suggesting that the “Own” can be exposed to – only – a certain amount of any “Foreign.” At this point, one question remains: What do Strache and the FPÖ consider being “too much of the Foreign”? The answer is not explicitly given in the poster, but it can be found in other election campaign material with anti-foreigner and particularly anti-Muslim statements and sentiments.

Such indirect and implicit triggering of ‘xenophobic’ anxieties by the construction of unreal frightening scenarios is a well-known strategy of the FPÖ and permits the denial of any accusations of racism. The fearmongering of the FPÖ had its intended effect: in the Vienna election, the FPÖ achieved 25.8% of the votes – 11% more than in 2005. In a public opinion poll after the election, 68% of the respondents who voted for the FPÖ argued that they did so because the FPÖ engages actively against migration (see Köhler & Wodak 2011: 73).

Indeed, the FPÖ did reject all criticism and produced in response a new advertisement, on the topic ‘What do we mean by “Too much of the Foreign is not good for anybody.”’ On the surface, this creates the appearance of a rational discourse; the content of its arguments, however, are recognisable as a mixture of insinuations and indirect statements, formulated as conditional clauses, which makes it almost impossible to reject them directly. The arguments brought forth in this poster do, however, clarify what is meant by “the Foreign.” On the one hand, they attack the FPÖ’s main political opponent, the SPÖ, for its alleged political position regarding immigration and integration. On the other hand, they focus specifically on religion, in particular on Islam.

6 Future Directions

The rise of right-wing populist movements in recent years – and, related to this phenomenon, the frequently repeated requests for more discrimination against out-groups in increasingly blatant and explicit rhetoric – would not have been possible without massive media support. This does not, of course, imply that all newspapers share the same positions; although some tabloids, of course, do.

Hence, leading populist politicians have to be – and usually are – media-savvy. Anthropologist André Gingrich (2002) rightly describes such a leader as “a man/woman for all seasons.”

On the other hand, they intentionally provoke the media by violating publicly accepted liberal norms. In this way, the media are forced into a ‘no-win’ situation: if they do not report a scandalous racist remark, they might be perceived as endorsing it. If they do write about this, they explicitly reproduce the xenophobic utterance. A predictable dynamic is triggered that allows right-wing populist parties to set the agenda and distract the media from other important news as any new scandal would be publicised immediately, in great detail. The dynamic consists of several stages:

The scandal is first denied; once some evidence is produced, the scandal is re-defined and equated with entirely different phenomena. Predictably, the provocateur then claims the right
of freedom of speech for themselves, as a justificatory strategy: “Why can’t one be critical?” or “It must be permitted to criticise Turks, Roma, Muslims, Jews . . .!” or “We dare say what everybody thinks,” and so forth. Such utterances, of course, immediately trigger another debate – unrelated to the original scandal – about freedom of speech and political correctness. Simultaneously, victimhood is claimed by the original provocateur, and the event is dramatised and exaggerated. This leads to the construction of a conspiracy: somebody must be ‘pulling the strings’ against the original producer of the scandal: scapegoats (Muslims, Jews, Turks, Roma, foreigners, and so forth) are quickly discovered. Once the accused member of the respective minority finally receives a chance to present substantial counter-evidence, a new scandal is launched. Possibly, a ‘quasi-apology’ might follow, should ‘misunderstandings’ have occurred; and the entire process starts all over again.

This dynamic implies that right-wing populist parties strategically manage to frame media debates; other parties and politicians are thus forced to react and respond to endless newly staged scandals. Few opportunities remain to present other agendas, frames, values and counter-arguments. In this way, right-wing populist parties in Europe and beyond succeed in dominating the media and public debates; moreover, in this way, the dissemination of discriminating rhetoric persists and is continuously (re)produced.

Related Topics

7 Language Ideologies (Kroskrity); 14 Discursive Practices, Linguistic Repertoire, and Racial Identities (Baugh); 15 Language and Racialization (Chun, Lo); 25 Racism in the Press (Van Dijk).

Notes

1 I am very grateful to the peer-reviewed journal *Zeitgeschichte* for allowing me to reprint a shortened and revised as well as updated version of the paper ‘Discourse and Discrimination: Theories and Methodologies’ (2013) as chapter for this volume.
3 See Flam & Beauzamy, 2011; Pedwell 2007 for gender-related dimensions.
4 See Baker et al. 2008; Delany et al. 2011a.
5 See Delany et al. 2011a; Jones & Krzyżanowski 2011; Krzyżanowski & Wodak 2007; Wodak 2008a,b; 2009, for theoretical and methodological elaborations of the concepts of ‘identity’ and ‘belonging’. There, I draw on the results of the 5th EU framework project XENOPHOB in which I was the PI of the Viennese team involved in the discourse analysis of political speeches and party programmes of right-wing populist parties (across the European Union) and of the focus group data of migrant participants. See Krzyżanowski & Wodak (2009) for more details of the specific Austrian case.
6 See Billig 2005; Delany 2011a; Schweitzer 2012.
8 See, for example, Jiwani & Richardson 2011; Pelinka, Bischof, Stöger, 2009; Poliakov 1993.
9 See Chilton 2004; Billig 1978, 2005; KhorovaniNik 2009, 2010a,b; Reisigl & Wodak 2000, 2001; Richardson 2004; van Dijk, 2005a, b; Wodak 2007a, b, c; 2008a, b; 2009, 2011a, 2015; for extensive overviews. In this chapter I can only point to some linguistic manifestations in the brief illustration of exclusionary rhetoric in one example. I have to refer readers to the many detailed linguistic analyses in the huge body of literature referred to above.
10 See also Köhler & Wodak 2011; Wodak & Köhler 2010 for more extensive examples and analysis.
11 See, for example, the vast literature on propaganda and manipulation in general; and specific research on the propaganda in the Third Reich (Römer 1989; Judt 2007).
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13 See Schweitzer 2012 for manifold examples of exclusionary practices and rhetoric as well as conspiracy theories created by conservative new social and traditional media and instrumentalised by many politicians of the US ‘Tea Party’ Movement, all intended to disqualify and denounce the Obama government and President Obama directly. As Schweitzer is able to illustrate in her in-depth investigation, the Tea Party movement has changed significantly from its inception in the nineteenth century and is now manifested across various different groups and also individuals in a range of different ways. Thus, the libertarian movement of Ron Paul, for example, is to be distinguished from Sarah Palin’s much more radically nativist and ‘homeland’ oriented followers which again differ in their rhetoric and ideologies from the fiercely antisemitic and racist groups surrounding Fox TV and their ‘infamous’ moderators, Glen Beck and Rush Limbaugh. Current global developments therefore draw on traditional antisemitic world conspiracy stereotypes and prejudices (Adorno 1973; Wiewiorka 1994; Wodak 2007b, 2011c). These developments, of course, provide even more reason to involve historians in the research of identity politics and the politics of exclusion (cf. Conze & Sommer 2004; Nipperdey & Rütip 2004).
14 For more details see Sugarman & Butler, 2011: 9ff.
15 For further elaborations and exceptions, see Sugarman & Butler 2010.
16 In pragmatics and linguistics, deixa (Greek for ‘display, demonstration or reference’) is a process whereby expressions rely utterly on context. The ‘origo’ is the context to which the reference is made – in other words, the viewpoint that must be understood in order to interpret the utterance. A word that depends on deictic clues is called a ‘deictic’ or a ‘deictic word’. Pro-forms are generally considered to be deictics, but a finer distinction is often made between grammatical person/personal pro-forms such as ‘I’, ‘you’ and ‘it’, and pro-forms that refer to places and times such as ‘now’, ‘then’, ‘here’, ‘there’. In most texts, the term ‘deictic’ implies the latter but not necessarily the former. (In philosophical logic, the former and latter are collectively called ‘indexicals.’) In the context of ‘inclusion/exclusion,’ deictic units are frequently used to construct boundaries and groups (inside–outside; us and them).
17 See Kovács 2010; Wodak 2011c.
18 See, for example, the extensive discussion on methods of measuring racist and antisemitic opinions in post-war Europe; Wodak et al. 1990; Billig 1978, 1991.
19 Here, I draw on the Discourse-Historical Approach in Critical Discourse Analysis, best summarized in Reisigl & Wodak (2001, 2009) and Wodak (2001, 2011a), which was first developed to study antisemitic rhetoric in post-war Austria (Wodak et al. 1990).
20 All these strategies are defined by numerous categories and examples in Reisigl & Wodak (2001: 31–90).
21 It would be impossible owing to space restrictions to define and illustrate all these linguistic devices in this paper.
23 See the pragma-dialectical approach of van Eemeren & Grootendorst (1992).
24 See Billig 2005.
26 See http://www.hcstrache.at/.
27 Literally a rhymed form of ‘At home instead of Islam’. German ‘Daham’ is a dialectal form of ‘daheim’ (‘at home’). In Viennese dialect, diphthongs are monophthongised. The use of very simple rhymes is part of a trademark/brand of FPÖ campaigns (see Wodak & Reisigl 2015 for an extensive analysis).
28 Literally, ‘The Occident in Christian hands.’
29 Oberlandesgericht Graz, 17.06.2009.
30 § 283 section 2 and § 188 Österreichisches Strafgesetzbuch.
31 Literally ‘They are against him, because he is for you.’ Poster of the FPÖ in the national election campaign, October 1994, see http://www.demokratiezentrum.org/bildstrategien/personen.html?index21&dimension.
32 For further political and historical information about the FPÖ as successor party to the former NSDAP, see Baier-Galanda & Neugebauer 1997.
33 See Kress & van Leeuwen (1996), and van Leeuwen (2011) for a general discussion of visual design and the salience of choice of colour.
34 Cf. Wodak & Reisigl 2015; Wodak & Köhler 2010; Wodak 2015.
35 Accessible at www.hcstrachemediaordner/g10,14110782715,0830.jpg.
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