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*Defining Europe against the
Shadows of Its Past: Moral
Discourse and the 'Sanctions' against
Austria*

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DEFINING EUROPE AGAINST ITS PAST

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FRANCE, GERMANY, AND THE SANCTIONS AGAINST AUSTRIA

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On 3 October 1999, parliamentary elections in Austria ended 13 years of "great coalition" between conservatives (ÖVP) and social democrats (SPÖ) in the alpine republic¹. The election was won by the Austrian Social Democrats (SPÖ) with 33,15% of the votes, followed by the conservative Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) and the extreme-right² Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) of Jörg Haider, both with 26,91%. The following difficult negotiations lasted up to January 2000, and it was not before 4 February 2000 that a "black-blue" coalition between the ÖVP and the FPÖ was sworn in³.

In an unprecedented act, the other 14 EU Member States decided to react with bilateral sanctions as they felt they had to "continue to defend the essential values that underpin the European construction and which are also the reference framework for the way the European Union behaves in its external relations." (Portuguese Secretary of State for European Affairs, Francisco Seixas de Costa, speaking for the Council Presidency, quoted in Agence Europe, 03.02.2000).

These sanctions were prepared on a conference in Stockholm that remembered the Holocaust of the European Jews and brought together a high rank of western politicians, amongst them leaders of all of the EU member-states⁴. Under the impression of the conference, the 14 decided to include in their sanctions the end of bilateral political contacts with the Austrian government, including Austrian ambassadors that now had to be received at "technical" level only. Furthermore, no support should be given for Austrian candidates on positions in international organizations.

In the following weeks, the sanctions caused a highly embarrassing situation for the functioning of the political system of the European Union (EU). For instance, at the meeting of the Council of ministers on 11 February in Lisbon, the Belgian and French ministers left the room when their Austrian counterpart entered⁵. At the European Council in Feira in June 2000, bringing together the head of states and governments of the 15, the long and difficult

¹ After a first period of "great coalition" from 1945 to 1966. An account of all Austrian governments since 1945: <http://www.austria.gv.at/>

² The political definition of Jörg Haider and his party changes between "national-liberalism", "extreme right", "populism" and "corporatist movement". This results not least in the different *national* perceptions of the Haider-party throughout Europe, as this article will show. For the rest of the article, I am not so much interested in labelling the FPÖ or Haider, but in comparing the different national labels given to them. Literature on the "Haider phenomenon": Bailer-Galanda / Neugebauer 1997; Czernin 2000; Mudde 2000; Luther 2000; Morrow 2000; Wodak / Pelinka 2002; Pelinka / Wodak (ed.) 2003

³ Jörg Haider, though being head of the party, decided to stay at the head of his province of Carinthia. Later in spring 2000, he resigned from the head of the party. For an exact chronology and a comprehensive account of the events, see Hummer / Pelinka 2002: 114-123.

⁴ The important question whether the sanctions were bilateral decisions of the fourteen governments, commonly announced via the council presidency (Portugal) or whether they constituted a formal EU act is abundantly discussed in Hummer / Pelinka 2002: 70-84. See also Merlingen, Mudde, Sedelmeier 2001, FN 1.

⁵ Le Monde 14.02.2000: "L'Europe accueille fraîchement une ministre autrichienne"

agenda was thrown over and paralysed by the Austrian affaire⁶. Finally, it was a highly symbolic act that allowed the sanctions to be ended in September 2000. After a "report of three wise men" found no concrete danger for Austrian democracy, the sanctions could be lifted, the 14 kept their face, whilst still accepting that the Austrian government stayed in power.

Whereas in France and Belgium, the two most fervent supporters of the sanctions, one could explain the sanctions with a domestic political interest lying beneath (right-wing parties similar to the FPÖ exerted considerable electoral pressure on the French and Belgian governments at the time), the case is more difficult for the other member states (see Merlingen, Mudde, Sedelmeier 2001:62). An "ideological" explanation, favouring the "left-wing conspiracy" thesis of a common action of the majority of socialist European governments (ibid., 61), could explain the case of Germany's red-green government. Still, it seems hard to imagine why a pragmatic politician like Germany's chancellor Gerhard Schröder should neglect public opinion for purely ideological reasons: 80% of the Germans were against the sanctions (12.04.2004, Le Figaro), a majority that was voluntarily exploited by the conservative opposition, especially by Mr. Schröder's Bavarian rival Edmund Stoiber. The ideological explanation has an even harder time to account for the Spanish case of José Maria Aznar's conservative PP-government that was nevertheless a staunch supporter of the sanctions⁷.

Is on the other side a purely ideational approach, taking into account the existence of common European norms, even identity, stark enough to explain why so ruseful politicians as Mr. Chirac, Schröder, Jospin, Aznar, Blair (GB) or Rasmussen (DK) would give up their close symbiotic relationship with their domestic opinion polls and follow their normative conscience, thus creating a troubled situation that – to the impression of many – turned the EU into a "fool's garden"⁸?

The remainder of this article makes three sections to understand how the seemingly "cheap normative talk" developed its own life, limiting the space for political action of the fourteen nearly against their will. In a first section (I) it is to be shown how – by means of "rhetorical action" (Schimmelfennig 1997, 2000, 2003) – politicians like the German chancellor were entrapped and had to actively defend a common decision that complicated

⁶ The Austrian chancellor Schüssel tried to link his approval of a compromise on taxation of incomes to an end of the sanctions. As this attempt was not successful, the compromise on taxation failed.

⁷ Pelinka p. 27 in Pelinka / Hummer 2002 denies that the sanctions "can be brought in any left-right scheme at all" (my translation).

⁸ Remember the diplomatic struggle that brought Mexican president Zedillo on the official "EU family-photo" at the Lisbon summit in March 2000, thus changing it into a "group photograph" were the ostracised Austrian chancellor Schüssel could take part without being re-integrated into the "family" (F.A.Z. 23.03.2000)?

their domestic situation considerably. Sections II and III use discourse analysis to show how this rhetorical "action" is shaped in a Franco-German context. Section II analyses the public political pressure exerted in two leading newspapers (*Le Monde* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung*) and the vain "counter-attacks" of another leading newspaper (*Frankfurter Allgemeine*). Section III underlines that only the reference to a common traumatic past (of fascism and German occupation) allows this "ideological" political pressure of section II to become relevant for the whole public debate.

Besides the case study, this article makes a theoretical contribution⁹. The importance of "discourse analysis" in understanding the political impact of "rhetorical action" is shown via the deconstructing and re-tracing of the Franco-German discourse on the sanctions against Austria. Understanding the structural impact of the discursive field¹⁰ created through rhetorical action allows to better grasp the role of discursive approaches in theorizing the European Union. Thus, this article helps to further analyse the dialectic relationship between structure (discourse) and action (orator) (Diez 1999). Finally, this paper suggests that at least in the Franco-German case we find already something like a European public debate.

I. Entrapped by "rhetorical action": the French president the German chancellor and the common past

After the Portuguese Council presidency announced on 31 January 2000 on behalf of the other thirteen member states the sanctions against Austria, *Le Monde*¹¹ reacts on 2 February with a dossier of six articles on the sanctions. While these articles mainly quote leading politicians and refrain from comments, it's here that we can study the interplay of discourse and rhetorical action. Quotations of French politicians that are mentioned in the newspaper are quite explicit: Jacques Chirac, via his speaker Catherine Colonna, states: "Parce qu'il est des principes sur lesquels on ne peut transiger, le président de la République avait proposé samedi matin plusieurs mesures concrètes..." (*Le Monde* 02.02.)¹². Deputy minister for European affairs, Pierre Moscovici (PS) supports his boss when speaking of "l'importance de bien marquer que l'Europe ne pouvait tolérer que ses valeurs soient transgressées" (*ibid.*)¹³.

⁹ See Waever 2003:213 on "The future" of discourse analysis in European Integration studies.

¹⁰ I chose "discursive field" as a term that encompasses at the same time a *spatial* and a *thematic* notion. Thus I enlarge Thomas Diez' definition of "discursive web": "It is the discursive web surrounding each articulation that makes the latter possible, on the one hand (otherwise, it would be meaningless), while the web itself, on the other hand, relies on its reproduction through these articulations.", Diez 1999: 603.

¹¹ As *Le Monde* is a newspaper that appears in the evening, the edition of 2 February is available as from 1 February, 13.00 in Paris.

¹² "Because there are principles that cannot be negotiated, the President of the Republic proposed, on Saturday morning, several concrete measures" (my translations in all of the remaining article)

¹³ "...the importance to clearly mark out that Europe could not tolerate that its values were transgressed."

It is interesting to see how these citations are embedded in *Le Monde* in a way that France, Europe, *Le Monde* and French officials are part of *one hegemonic* discourse: The article with the quotations of Chirac and Moscovici titles: "La France se félicite du consensus obtenu avec ses partenaires" (*Le Monde* 02.02.)¹⁴. This seems to be a definitive statement, and France, *toute la France*, is the actor! This impression is further enhanced on *Le Monde*'s front page of 2 February: "L'Union refuse toute relation politique avec un gouvernement autrichien intégrant l'extrême droite. En s'ingérant dans les affaires intérieures d'un État membre, les Quatorze affirment les valeurs communes de l'Europe"¹⁵. The first sentence of this heading suggests that it is the Union (!) that acts as an unitary actor. Secondly, the exaggeration of "refuses any political relation" implies a clear-cut separation between Europe and the extreme right (*L'Union* and *extrême droite* are also at the two ends of the sentence). Finally, there is no doubt as to the characterisation of Haider's party: it is not mentioned explicitly, but replaced by the term "extreme right", thus creating a "frame" that leaves not much space for the "image" (the FPÖ). The second sentence of the heading sets the frontiers of this quasi-hegemonic discourse: The Union affirms its common values, "out" of these values, "no Europe".

These headings, together with the weight of the "rhetorical action" of French officials, make it difficult to legitimise any alternative discourse on the Austrian situation. It is no wonder that within the French discursive space, we do not find any such alternative. Instead, *Le Figaro* is on the same line as *Le Monde*. On 1 February, he takes up exactly the same quotation of President Chirac as *Le Monde*. On 2 February, Prime Minister Jospin is quoted, assuring that "the common pressure is absolutely necessary to break up the coalition project in Vienna" (my translation, *Le Figaro* 02.02.). This official discourse is further affirmed by a quotation of French minister of defence Alain Richard: "...l'Union a un devoir de fidélité vis-à-vis des premiers pères de l'Europe pour faire prévaloir les valeurs face aux tentations politiques momentanées." (*Le Figaro* 02.02.)¹⁶.

On the German side, the public debate is more sceptic and less convinced of the usefulness of the sanctions. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine* – together with a majority of the public opinion – is opposed to the sanctions, and contains itself on 31 January, when the discourse is still "open" in Germany, with an article on the Austrian indignation about the sanctions. On 1 February, the journal fixes its line in a comment titled "Hysterisch". It states:

¹⁴ "France felicitates itself on the consensus reached with its partners"

¹⁵ "The Union refuses any political relationship with an Austrian government that includes the extreme right. In intervening in the domestic affairs of a Member state, the fourteen insist on the common values of Europe"

¹⁶ "The Union has a duty of fidelity towards the first fathers of Europe, making sure that values prevail in the face of present political temptations."

"Wenn sich Interesse und Betroffenheit in einem Anfall von hysterischem Strafbedürfnis äußern, dann scheinen die Maßstäbe doch einigermaßen verloren zu gehen. Es gibt Länder in der EU, in denen seit Jahren Kommunisten an der Regierung sitzen, ohne dass ein Aufschrei der Empörung durch die Gemeinschaft ginge oder die Quarantäne ausgerufen würde." (F.A.Z. 01.02.)¹⁷

Clearly, the newspaper tries to play the ideological card and brings in the French case¹⁸. The newspaper's focus is the German discursive space, where it counters the leftist attitude of its big rival, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.

In fact, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* supports the sanctions. Arguing from a European perspective it states that the fears of the fellow Europeans are not purely "symbolic". The newspaper is sure: "Die Kritik wurzelt tiefer und die Sorge ist echt" (SZ 28.01.)¹⁹. Via a report on the situation of the Austrian Greens, the newspaper does not hesitate to compare Haider's party to a fascist movement: "Die Grünen fassen zusammen: 'Haider ist ein Faschist, und die FPÖ eine faschistische Partei'." (SZ 02.02.)²⁰.

Under these conditions of two alternative discourses, it is not surprising that German officials also take a more nuanced approach. The chancellor is quoted in a pragmatic way: "Schröder ne veut 'rien avoir à faire' avec Haider, malgré son 'amitié pour un pays par ailleurs sympathique'." (Le Figaro 02.02.)²¹. Even the conservative leader Wolfgang Schäuble takes a careful approach: "Plus prudent, son adversaire démocrate-chrétien, Wolfgang Schäuble, refuse de 's'ingérer dans les négociations gouvernementales d'un parti ami'. Il est 'certain' que les conservateurs autrichiens 's'opposeront aux tendances extrémistes'." (Le Figaro 02.02.)²²

When on 7 February 2004, the Bavarian CSU of Mr. Stoiber and large parts of the CDU decide to blame the sanctions and to support the Austrian government, it is typically in the *French* debate that the careful positions of official German government representatives are best understood and analysed. In an interview on 18 April, foreign minister Joschka Fischer (Greens) is asked how long he will be able to oppose a large majority of the public opinion under the pressure of the CDU/CSU discourse. His answer: "The constitution obliges us to defend German interests". German interest, to the understanding of foreign minister Fischer, is not to leave or split the coalition of the fourteen Europeans. He continues: "We will not

¹⁷ "When interest and shock are raised in an attack of hysterical 'need to penalize', it seems that all benchmarks are lost. For years, there are countries in the EU with communists in the government, without causing an outcry of disgust in the community, without the proclamation of quarantine."

¹⁸ In 2000, Prime minister Jospin governs with a "gauche plurielle" (pluralist left) that encompasses the French Communist Party (PCF).

¹⁹ "The critique is deep rooted, the sorrows are real"

²⁰ The Greens conclude: 'Haider is a fascist, and the FPÖ is a fascist party'."

²¹ "Schröder doesn't want 'to have to do anything' with Haider, despite his 'friendship for a country after all sympathetic'."

²² "More careful, his Christian-democrat opponent, Wolfgang Schäuble, refuses to 'intervene in the governmental negotiations of a friendly party'. He is 'sure' that the Austrian conservatives 'will oppose extremist tendencies'."

commit the mistake of turning Haider into a German problem." (The interview in *Le Monde*, 18.04.). This position is identical with the one of chancellor Schröder. He justifies his European position, that is contrary to the German public opinion, in *Le Figaro*: "Nous n'allons pas risquer de couper l'Allemagne des valeurs communes à l'Europe et à la communauté occidentale." (*Le Figaro* 12.04.)²³.

We will see in part III why it is so important for *Germany* not to be compared to Austria, whereas for example the Scandinavian member states can take a more critical approach to the sanctions without being supposed of ideological closeness to Haider. For the moment, we should focus on the discursive level on that the actors intervene. The Bavarian minister president Stoiber turns to his regional and to the domestic German audience and can take up the discourse that is expressed in the *F.A.Z.*, critical towards the sanctions, without fearing isolation. On the other side, the chancellor and his foreign minister have to keep in mind the European dimension of their rhetorical action. Section III will show why the leading politicians of a powerful member state like Germany cannot actively shape the discourse (like their French counterparts) but only give lukewarm support to the "community of values". Instead, their main aim seems to keep Germany "in Europe", even "in the west".

This section has shown how in the one case (France) "rhetorical action" of official weight is embedded in a quasi-hegemonic discourse and thus mutually re-enforcing. In the other case (Germany) a divided discourse allows politicians that act in the national discursive space to choose their side (Stoiber). Politicians that are exposed to the hegemonic French discourse – that dominates in a first time the European scene – have to act more carefully. Entrapped in this complex situation of several overlapping and mutually influencing European discursive spaces, they are lacking the potential to actively shape the discourse.

The observation of this "complex situation" in section II accounts for what is much more a "europeanisation" of discursive spaces, than just national politicians intervening in foreign newspapers.

II. A "European Community of Values" – or not?

Clearly, the debate that emerges around the "sanctions" against Austria is no longer contained in national borders. Whereas national discursive traditions (or discursive *genealogy*: Foucault [1972] (1998): 39) account for a large part of the respective debates, there is unmistakably a European dimension. Analysing this European dimension will help to better understand the nature of a system of discursive spaces. We are not in the presence of definitively fixed discursive structures, representing something like a "crystal grid" (Diez

²³ "We will not risk to cut Germany from the common values of Europe and of the Western community."

1999:607 taking up the "hard-core structuralist" position of Frédéric de Saussure's theory of language²⁴). Rather, we see that the discourses that shape the debate are much more fluid and "translatable" (Diez 1999: 607, 610) – they can change borders and start to influence the debate in neighbouring "discursive spaces". With the actors transgressing frontiers, it is also their discourses that even more easily can be read, quoted, taken up, further translated etc. in the different national media and discourses.

Arguably, this is a rather new phenomenon in the European case, and the "actors"²⁵ – politicians, intellectuals, but also the newspapers – are surprised about the influence of these floating discourses, but finally have to take them into account.

This section will show in a first move how two leading newspapers shape the "pro-sanction-discourse", than how another leading newspaper tries to concurrence or counter this discourse, but finally has to accept its existence and relevance.

II.1 The discursive shaping of a European Community of Values – The case of *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *Le Monde*

The debate that emerges in the analyzed French and German newspapers mainly appears in four frames. The sanctions are linked to: (1) The actual meaning of the fascist past (of Germany, of Europe) for nowadays politics, (2) the specific knowledge about Austria (of the newspaper, of the audiences), (3) the "European project" defended by the newspapers (federal, ideational, Europe of nation-states) (4) the political affinities of the newspapers (in a very broad sense: rather left, rather right). Table 1 shows that one (*Le Monde*) of the four newspapers take up a "pro-sanction"-position for each of the four frames. A second one (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*) takes on a "pro-sanction" position in three of the four cases. It is these two newspapers that shape the discourse presented as "hegemonic in France" in part I.

²⁴ Ferdinand de Saussure [1907-1911] (1990): *Cours de linguistique générale*

²⁵ As the focus of my analysis lies on *discourses* as an "output" of the actors, these "actors" can intervene under various forms: politicians, intellectuals (anyone having a "voice" in the discourse) but also a newspaper or a party if it has a clear "position" on a debate.

Frames	Pro-sanction	Anti-sanction
(1) Meaning of the fascist past for actual politics	<i>Fascism a European phenomenon, NS is its worst form, EU = learning from the past</i> Le Monde SZ	<i>NS as a German phenomenon, not to be used in political debate nowadays (not do discriminate Germany (F.A.Z.) / not to discriminate the "right" (F.A.Z. / Le Figaro)</i> F.A.Z. Le Figaro
(2) knowledge about Austria	<i>Defending "universal values", no need for closer look</i> Le Monde Le Figaro	<i>Cultural closeness, language ⇒ more specific knowledge</i> SZ F.A.Z.
(3) European project of the newspaper	<i>Ideational project of "political Europe", (con-)federal</i> Le Monde SZ	<i>"Europe of the regions / of nations"</i> F.A.Z. Le Figaro
(4) Political affinity	<i>Liberal left</i> Le Monde SZ	<i>Conservative</i> Le Figaro F.A.Z.

Both "pro-sanction" newspapers take an intransigent stance towards any tentative that tries to mediate between the democratic will of 26% of Austrian electorate and the perception of the fourteen EU member-states. To realize this end, the two newspapers use very much the frame of the "fascist past". If Haider, his movement, the Austrian government, and even Austria as a whole are perceived in a (proto-)fascist frame, than anyone fostering mediation between Austria and the rest of the EU risks to enter this frame. When the "fascist past" is Europe's other, then anyone within this frame is automatically disqualified.

Therefore, it is important for the supporters of this discourse to embed and anchor the "fascist" frame in the discourse. Part I has shown an indirect framing of Süddeutsche Zeitung in this sense. But this journal is much more explicit and wants to make use of the Austrian case for a whole political agenda. A lead article on 8 February gives the line:

"Eine Anklageschrift gegen die Regierung in Wien reicht nicht aus. Jetzt muss das Verfahren eröffnet werden. Die Geisteshaltung der FPÖ kann nur mit beharrlicher

Argumentation enttarnt werden. Die Mitglieder, die Finanzierung, die Amtsträger der FPÖ – all das verdient intensive Beobachtung. Europa hat in den vergangenen Monaten beachtliche Schritte zu mehr Integration getan. Nachvollzogen hat die Öffentlichkeit die neue Qualität der EU noch nicht. Die Politik gegenüber Österreich bietet nun die Chance, den alten Dämon Rechtsextremismus im Herzen Europas zu besiegen und den Bürgern gleichzeitig Stärke und Qualität des neuen Europas zu erklären."²⁶

This important comment sounds like a partisan programme. In fact, in the following weeks, the SZ realises this programme, showing "members, financial structures, office bearers" of the FPÖ. On 6 April, a long article shows the case of a medical "expert" close to the FPÖ that gives advice to Austrian courts on the "exact" age of refugees and asylum seekers. The article makes the case that he and his institute have "concrete links to the racial pseudo-science of the nazis". On 22 August and 26 September, further important articles take up the framing of the FPÖ as xenophobic and authoritarian, each time through concrete examples that show cases, names and traditions.

As the concrete actions of the new Austrian government do not match²⁷ with the "foreseeable" action that should follow from the stories told by the SZ, there is a second meta-discourse that argues on an emotional level and uses literary feature-articles to show the "spirit" of Haider, the FPÖ, the government and – at times – "Austria" (this amalgam is a discursive strategy in itself: to argue on a literal level – and not with concrete facts – , using a *pars pro toto* instead of too precise wordings, facilitates the translation of discourses about the fascist past to discourses about the complicated present):

On 2 March, the theatre director Martin Kusej writes "Die Hölle vom Wörthersee". He states his fears and inner battles: "Die Partei wird überall sein! ... fesch sind sie, und modern, die Lodenfaschisten, und gnadenlos, denn sie wissen genau, wo man den Hobel anlegen muss, der alle gleich hobelt"²⁸ Still, he does not want to leave Austria: "Es geht nicht. Wie an Pflöcken hängt mein Körper an dieser braunen Erde"²⁹. Finally, he cannot even join the resistance movement against the new government: "Neue Politik machen erst einmal die Anderen. Die, die sich Bärte über ihre Nazi-Schmisse wachsen lassen."³⁰ While not presenting any "hard facts" or concrete accusation, this article uses several metaphors to

²⁶ "A charge against the government in Vienna is not enough. The trial has to be opened now. The spirit of the FPÖ can only be exposed through patient argumentation. The members, the financing, the office bearers of the FPÖ – all that merits intensive observation. In the last months, Europe has done important steps towards more integration. The public has not yet realized the new quality of the EU. The politics against Austria contain a chance to overcome the old demon of the extreme right in the heart of Europe and to explain at the same time power and quality of the new Europe to its citizens."

²⁷ Of course, the SZ and sanction-supporters would argue: because of international awareness, the Austrian government didn't dare to show its "real face".

²⁸ "The hell of Wörthersee [a lake in Carinthia, the home-province of Haider]": "The party will be everywhere! ... beautiful they are, and modern, the loden fascists, and without pity, because they know very well where the plane has to be put, that is planning everybody equal."

²⁹ "It is not possible. Like to pegs, my body is attached to this brown ground."

³⁰ "New Politics is above all done by the others. Those, that let beards grow over their Nazi-gashes."

enounce the Nazi past (Loden-Fascist, brown earth, Nazi-gash) and thus re-enforces the discourse of the pro-sanction side.

Even more concrete, an article on 4 March analyses the Austrian past and the Austrian way of "Vergangenheitsbewältigung" ("coming to terms with the past"): Not only single actors are the problem of Austria, but a "Melange aus reaktionärem Katholizismus und unaufgearbeiteten nationalsozialistischen Mentalitätsbeständen"³¹

The article goes on:

"Die Faschisten sind grundsätzlich die anderen, so lautet ein österreichischer Selbstentschuldungsmechanismus beim Thema Haider, der bis in die Kreise der Sozialdemokratie reicht: 'Wir sind kein Naziland.' Der Linkspopulist und ehemalige sozialdemokratische Bürgermeister Wiens, Helmut Zilk, sagt es den Österreichboykotteuren als tapferer Patriot ins Gesicht: 'Diese totale Verurteilung, Ausgrenzung, Überheblichkeit – das ist faschistoid.' Da ist der Weg nicht mehr weit zum Sprachmaterial und zu den Denkfiguren von Haider selbst, zur paranoiden Verkehrung von Tätern und Opfern."³²

The extension of the frame "fascist past" on the whole country and the whole "mentality" makes it difficult for opponents of the sanctions to find a legitimate standpoint. Rather, they would have to counter the debate on another level.

On the French side, *Le Monde* – as shown in part I – is fully supporting the sanctions. The qualification of Haider and his movement as "extreme right" in nearly all the articles is the textual expression of this position. Nevertheless, to give salience to its position, *Le Monde* uses strategies comparable to *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. It is not only by presenting Haider as extreme right that the *Le Monde* discourse becomes hegemonic, but by framing Haider as the re-incarnation of the fascist past that possible alternative discourses are disqualified.

To this end, the newspaper uses literary features and brings in the voices of "intellectuals" that are supposed to have special weight. On 18 February, André Glucksmann writes: "Haider is not Hitler", but takes his whole article to show the "precise points" where Haider has transgressed the line that "Europe" separates from its past. By this, Haider is of course moving closer to the past and therefore to "Hitler". Haider "cultivates the pre-Hitler prejudices – xenophobia, racism, biologism, cult of the leader" with "amazing innocence", thus refusing the "lessons of the past".

This is of course not "Europe", that "constantly remembers" this past and the "lessons" learnt from it. With even more authority, this point is taken up by Georges-Arthur

³¹ "melange of reactionary Catholicism and not reappraised parts of national-socialist mentality"

³² "Fascists are always the others, that is an Austrian mechanism of self-excuse in the Haider-debate. It can even be found in social-democratic circles: 'We are not a Nazi-country.' The left populist and former social-democrat mayor of Vienna, Helmut Zilk, shouts it in the faces of the boycotters of Austria, as a courageous patriot that he is: 'This total condemnation, ostracism, arrogance – that is fascist.' This is not far away from the language and the metaphors of Haider himself, from the paranoid reversal of perpetrators and victims."

Goldschmidt on 28 February. The author has this authority, because he himself had to flee the nazis as a young boy, finding refuge in France. He writes in his article "De la pureté à la barbarie" that "forgetting" the past like Haider has one result: "Blanc comme la neige on repart"³³ – after being "cleaned" from the lessons of the past, the pre-war experience can re-start. Ultimately, the "cleansing" of the past brings along the "cleansing" of those remembering the past. They would be "eliminated". Elimination is the very nature of national socialism and also the final end of the "sportive neo-nazism" of Haider, leading into "barbarism".

Such a characterisation of the spirit and thoughts of the FPÖ and its leader cannot be changed easily. When *Le Monde* states – with reference to Haider – "L'extermination est le contenu ultime et fondamental de l'inconsicent néonazi"³⁴, this frame can not only hardly be attenuated, but even fosters action to prevent a "néonazi" state.

And rightly, we find in *Le Monde* articles that appeal in a barely veiled way to "resist". Alexandre Adler³⁵ writes on 24 February "Le projet européen de Jörg Haider"³⁶. He fears: "La bagarre reprend là où on l'avait laissée à la fin des année 30..." but is confident:

"Et puis, n'ayons pas peur de la boxe: rappelons-nous qu'à la troisième manche le grand Ray Sugar Robinson a quand même expédié au tapis, pour la plus grande fureur de Hitler, ce bel aryen parfait qu'était Max Schmeling. Allons, il se trouvera bien un nouveau héros républicain et européen, peut-être bien un de ces Français que le Führer qualifiait à juste titre de négriifiés ([...]), pour rectifier le portrait de Jörg Haider..."³⁷

Finally, in a long report of Bernard-Henri Levy, who is coming back from a huge demonstration against the FPÖ in Vienna, the author speaks of occupying "la salle des séances du Parlement Européen à la façon du tiers-état emmené par Mirabeau"³⁸.

The ambiance that is created in these articles makes allusions to the Revolution in 1789 and to the civil war ambiance of the late 1930s in many European countries. If the sanctions against Austria are linked in such a way to a Europe that is presented as a (especially French) project of "political enlightenment", against the Ancien Régime and European fascism (of course, "clericalism" is also mentioned in *Le Monde*), than it is difficult to oppose the sanctions.

³³ "From purity to barbarism": "White like snow, we re-start"

³⁴ "Extermination is the ultimate and fundamental content of the neo-nazi unconscious"

³⁵ Historian, studied at the École Normale Supérieure of Rue d'Ulm, publisher of *Courrier Internationale*, one of the most esteemed French press publications: Its weekly format consists of a press review with French reprints of articles of the world's most renowned press organs.

³⁶ "Jörg Haider's European project"

³⁷ "The battle re-starts were we left it at the end of the thirties..." - "And then, let's not be frightened of boxing: let's remember that, after all, the great Ray Sugar Robinson, in the third round, sent this beautiful perfect Aryan that was Max Schmeling, to the floor, to the greatest furiousness of Hitler. Come on, we may surely find a new Republican and European hero, perhaps one of these Frenchmen that the Führer rightly qualified as negronized ([...]), to reify the portray of Jörg Haider..."

³⁸ "...to occupy the session hall of the European Parliament, in the way of the Third Estate, led by Mirabeau"

To stand up against this framing means to be exposed to accusations of philo-fascism, or at least to be suspected of "appeasement".

II.2. Trying to "deconstruct" a hegemonic discourse – The case of Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

The coalition of Le Monde and Süddeutsche Zeitung brings this discourse to Germany and the F.A.Z. has a hard time to stick to its alternative understanding of the situation. Obviously, neither "philo-fascism", nor "appeasement" are acceptable labels, and the newspaper has to find a third strategy to counter the accusations.

It tries to show the "ideological" character of the sanctions by "deconstructing" the discourse of the pro-sanctionists. Amazingly, the newspaper does rarely counter its German concurrent Süddeutsche Zeitung directly, but turns more and more to the discourse of the "European left" in its broad, "French" understanding. Three strategies are used to make readers aware of the functioning of the pro-sanction discourse:

On 8 February, an article comments on Jörg Haider's appearance in a German TV talkshow ("Talk in Berlin"). It claims:

"Man könnte auch von dem Versuch einer ideologischen Gründung Europas sprechen, das nicht mehr christlich und auch nicht mehr antikommunistisch verstanden werden kann und jetzt – in einem sehr weiten, nicht klassisch linken Sinne – 'antifaschistisch' definiert werden soll. Haider erscheint als Verkörperung desjenigen, was Europa nach dem Willen seiner politischen Klasse nicht sein soll."³⁹

Only three days later, the "founding myth" is again deconstructed:

"Der interessantere Aspekt ist der ideologische. Er hat zu tun mit dem Versuch einer Neudefinition der europäischen Linken und mit ihrem erst vage erkennbaren Projekt der Schaffung einer europäischen Identität jenseits von christlichem Abendland und Antikommunismus. Die Linke, [...] eignet sich jetzt Europa an. Der Holocaust und das 'Nie wieder' werden dabei zur Chiffre des Gründungsmythos einer europäischen Nation, in der es nur noch 'Innenpolitik' gibt. [...] Wenn die Linke in diesem Sinne versucht, Europa zur moralischen Großmacht zu erheben, dann füllt sie damit auch ein ideologisches Vakuum bei sich selbst. [...] Die Linke ist in der Wirklichkeit angekommen." (F.A.Z. 11.02.)⁴⁰

Besides naming explicitly – thus deconstructing – the "ideological" reasoning of the European left, the F.A.Z. uses two more strategies to de-legitimise the leading discourse: It

³⁹ "One could also speak of the attempt to establish an ideological foundation of Europe, that can no longer be understood in a Christian way, nor in an anti-communist sense and that now – in a very broad, not classical left sense – is to be defined in an "antifascist" way. Haider seems to represent all that Europe, in the will of its political class, shall not stand for."

⁴⁰ "The more interesting aspect is an ideological one. It has to do with the attempt of a re-definition of the European left and with the only vaguely discernable project of creating a European identity beyond Christian *Abendland* [Western Europe] and anti-communism. The left [...] is integrating Europe. The holocaust and the "never again" become ciphers of the founding myths of a European nation, where only 'domestic politics' exists. [...] If the Left in this sense tries to establish Europe as a moral great power, than this fills also an ideological vacuum of the Left itself. [...] The Left has arrived in reality."

continues to show the "inconsistency" of the EU-reaction. On 1 February (see above), it was claimed that the participation of communists in European governments didn't lead to the same reaction as a participation of the extreme right⁴¹. On 2 February, the Italian experience with Gianfranco Fini, "who was called a neo-fascist", is mentioned.

In a third strategy, the Frankfurter Allgemeine goes even further and gives the "European left" a voice in the lines of its newspaper. It is here that a truly European dimension can be observed. Whereas the F.A.Z. hopes that this strategy (the "left ideologues" speaking for themselves) would lead to a de-legitimisation of the "pro-sanction" discourse (if framed in the "right" way), this proceeding brings the (not only left) European discourses to the F.A.Z.-readers, and also to the German public sphere.

Already on 2 February, leftwing Italian La Repubblica is cited: Establishing the sanctions

"war für uns die glückliche Entdeckung jenes verborgenen Gewissens, das vielen verloren schien. Es sieht so aus, als entstehe gerade das politische Europa. [...] Erstmals definiert Europa mit einem konkreten Akt seine eigene politische Identität – und verleiht dieser Identität einen klaren übernationalen Wert."⁴²

On 12 February (after shaming the "ideological" strategy on 8 and 11 February, see above), Italian publisher Paolo Flores d'Arcais⁴³ writes in the F.A.Z. He states: "Worte sind schon Taten" and goes on that

"...die Grundnorm [...] auf der die Rechtmäßigkeit aller juridischen Ordnungen, also der Staaten Europa beruht, der Sieg über den Nazifaschismus ist. Das heißt, die Niederlage des Nazifaschismus, den ihm die alliierten Heere und der Widerstand bereitet haben. Das ist die fundamentale DNA der europäischen Demokratien vom Kriegsende bis heute."

Even if he condemns the Stalinist Gulag, he finds:

"Hingegen ist auf der Ebene historischer Legitimierung der gegenwärtigen europäischen Demokratien nur der Antifaschismus Erbgut und Grundnorm, weil die Kommunisten fester Bestandteil der militärischen Allianz (und der Resistenza) waren, die die Demokratien aufgebaut hat, in welchen wir leben."⁴⁴

This observation seems to prevail at least in the French, Belgian and Italian discourse. The F.A.Z. keeps its opposition (it cannot break the discursive genealogy it has just created by

⁴¹ See A. Pelinka in Hummer / Pelinka 2002:35 on the different strategies of "relativisation" of NS: On the left, NS = facsism, on the right: NS = totalitarianism.

⁴² Establishing the sanctions "was for us the fortunate discovering of this hidden conscience that many thought lost. It looks as if political Europe is currently coming into being. [...] For the first time, Europe defines its own political identity in a concrete act – and thus gives to this identity a clearly supranational value."

⁴³ Publisher of "MicroMega", is considered a "theoretical leader" of the Italian left.

⁴⁴ "Words are deeds" – "...the fundamental norm [...], on which the legitimacy of all juridical orders, that is of the states of Europe, is funded, is the victory over nazi fascism. This means the defeat of nazi fascism, that was brought to him by the allied armies and the resistance. That is the fundamental DNA of the European democracies, from the end of war up to nowadays." ... "On the other side, on the level of historical legitimisation of the current European democracies, only anti-fascism constitutes their DNA and fundamental norm, because the communists were a solid part of the military alliance (and of *resistenza*), that build up the democracies in which we are living."

its de-legitimising strategy), but has to admit that in other European countries, and especially in France, there is another perception of Haider. Consequently, the paper goes on to publish French voices and to investigate this point. On 26 February, we find an interview with French sociologist Emmanuel Todd⁴⁵. He argues:

"Die deutsche Frage ist wieder offen"⁴⁶ and makes very clear why it is not only the European "left" that supports the sanctions. This explains also, why the German conservatives and the F.A.Z. are not supported by their western European allies. Todd continues:

"Es ist ein Schock. Das Land, das der Welt Hitler beschert hat, erlaubt es sich, der Welt eine Regierung mit rechtsextremen Ministern zu präsentieren. Dieses Ereignis stellt für mich alles, was ich bisher über die Souveränität der Nationen gesagt habe, in Frage."⁴⁷

The fact that these different perceptions of Haider have to be taken into account, even in the German debate, and that they matter for the domestic political debate, is the European moment. It becomes salient because it is at the same time a *domestic political* and a *European* issue, and the combination of the two issues is a pre-condition for the existence of a European public debate.

The F.A.Z. now continues to act on the European level and brings, on 6 March, a translation of French philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy's reportage that was published in *Le Monde* on 2 March. Quite surprising (or not), all parts that are claiming "Pan-Germanism" or "fear" of Germany, as well as the parts claiming "résistance" (occupying the European Parliament) are left out⁴⁸. More important, the F.A.Z. introduces Lévy's article and concludes: "...Lévy's Text [wird] selbst zum Dokument einer Wahrnehmung, von der sich die französische Politik in Europa – und gegenüber Österreich – offenbar leiten lässt."⁴⁹ – The F.A.Z. has undoubtedly become aware of the specific French perception of the Haider-affaire and understands at least that it is not only an "ideological" left that supports the sanctions. As the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* wrote at the very beginning of the story (28.01.): "Die Kritik wurzelt tiefer und die Sorge ist echt."⁵⁰

Having re-framed its discourse, the F.A.Z. goes on to realize the implications of this re-framing for its political analysis. Co-editor of the paper Berthold Kohler publishes a lead

⁴⁵ Expert of demographic election studies at Institut national d'Études Démographiques. Studied at Institut d'Études Politiques, holds a PhD in history of Cambridge University.

⁴⁶ "The German question is open again"

⁴⁷ "It is a shock. The country that gave Hitler to the world allows itself to present a government to the world that includes extreme right ministers. This event puts everything I said to far on the sovereignty of nations into question."

⁴⁸ My investigation on this point so far brought no answer from *Le Monde*, F.A.Z. or Lévy himself.

⁴⁹ "...Lévy's text itself becomes the document of a perception that obviously seems to guide French politics in Europe and against Austria."

⁵⁰ "The critique is more deeply rooted and the worries are real."

comment on 14 April. While still opposing the sanctions, he admits (against his former conviction), that the German government acted in the right way – precisely because of the "fear" of Germany that lurks behind the pro-sanction discourses and that the F.A.Z. understood only recently. Accordingly, he starts with his fundamental message:

"Es widerspricht jedem Rechts- und Europaverständnis, ein demokratisch bewährtes Land wie Österreich, das aus der Geschichte des Kontinents nicht wegzudenken ist, aus der europäischen Wertegemeinschaft, als die sich die EU versteht, auszugrenzen – ohne dass es gegen europäisches Recht oder auch nur gegen seinen Geist verstoßen hätte."⁵¹

The F.A.Z.-editor also keeps the conviction that there is a "European left" engineering a European ideology (the former, in the F.A.Z. widely spread discourse cannot be completely overthrown but has to evolve): The sanctions can be explained through the "neolinke Gründungs-ideologie für das künftige Europa"⁵², even if he sees that José Maria Aznar and Jacques Chirac are not really staunch leftist ideologues.

Now he goes on with the new turn in the discourse. He admits the existence and salience of the argument "fears of the past". Even if he "personally" takes it for wrong, its European weight is so important that he concedes that the German government had not much room for manoeuvre:

"Die groteske Überreaktion auf Haider lässt erahnen, welche Argumente, welche historischen Analogien heraufbeschworen worden wären, wenn der 'germanische Block' gegen den Rest der EU gestanden hätte. Die Härte, mit der Österreich bestraft wird, legt den Verdacht nahe, dass dieses Gespenst noch immer die Nachtruhe des einen oder anderen Europäers stört."⁵³

In the conclusion of his article, he takes up once again his initial and main message (as to avoid an all-too-clear break-up with the former anti-sanction discourse):

"Zweifellos muss die europäische Wertegemeinschaft sich gegen rechten wie linken Extremismus zur Wehr setzen. Wenn sie ihren eigenen Grundsätzen treu und wenn sie attraktiv bleiben will, muss sie jedoch eine politische Meinungsvielfalt zulassen, die der Vielgestaltigkeit des Kontinents entspricht. Wenn die EU nicht schweren Zeiten entgegengehen will, muss sie die Sanktionen gegen Österreich aufheben."⁵⁴

It is the "knowledge of Austria" – frame that is used to plead for "a special" Austrian situation that a "Europe of diversity" must accept.

⁵¹ "It is against all understanding of law and Europe to exclude a democratically reliable country like Austria, that could not be left out of the history of the continent, from the community of values that the EU wants to be – without Austria having hurt European law or only the spirit of this law."

⁵² "...the neo-left founding ideology for the future Europe"

⁵³ "The grotesque over-reaction on Haider gives an idea of the arguments and the historical analogies that would have come up if the 'Germanic block' had stood against the rest of the EU. The hard punishment of Austria makes us suspicious that this spectre is still haunting the nightly calm of this or that European."

⁵⁴ "Without doubt, the European community of values has to resist as well right, as left extremism. But if it wants to stick to its principles and if it wants to stay attractive, it has to accept a diversity of political opinions that represents the diversity of the continent. If the EU does not want to face hard times, it has to lift the sanctions against Austria."

This part has shown three strategies used by the anti-sanction F.A.Z. to counter the pro-sanction discourse. As a strategy of the pro-sanction discourse is to disqualify and delegitimise any alternative discourse, the conservative paper tries to de-construct the pro-sanction discourse (to show its "hidden agenda"), to mention explicitly the self-understanding of the pro-sanctionists (by quoting explicit statements that speak "for itself") and to show the inconsistency of the behaviour of the EU fourteen.

This strategy becomes part of a raising European debate and the F.A.Z. first finds out and then has to accept and take into account that there is "more" behind the pro-sanction discourse than just a partisan argument. It is the link to a specific, traumatic past that seems deeply embedded in western European societies that gives salience to this discourse, thus leaving ideological party-lines and becoming part of the *national* discourse of these countries⁵⁵.

A last part focuses on the use that is made of this "traumatic past" especially in the French discourse and evokes German reactions to it.

III. Giving salience to a partisan argument: France, "Pan-"Germany and the traumatic Past

The amalgam between Haider, Austria, Germany and Pan-Germanism appears in a first time in *Le Figaro* and *Le Monde* under the form of historical analyses of the FPÖ and Austria⁵⁶. They insist upon two points: (1) the close link between Austrian and German history, that persisted even after World War II. (2) the spiritual and de-facto links between the NSDAP (the Nazi party) and the post-war FPÖ that continue up to nowadays.

On 8 February, André Fontaine writes "L'identité brouillée de l'Autriche"⁵⁷. This article starts as a large and well-informed portray of Austrian and European history, leading from Charles V.'s (1519-1556) empire via the "Holy Roman Empire of German nations" to the Austrian double monarchy, the first World War and the Hitler period. The article mentions that Austria asked, from the end of World War I, for re-unification with Germany. The refusal of this claim by the allies led to the *großdeutsche* ("greater-German") tradition in Austria. Finally, the missed *Entnazifizierung* ("de-nazification") after 1945 and the myth of Austria as Hitler's "first victim" are mentioned.

⁵⁵ The discussions that are going on at the same time in the European Parliament are quite revealing on this point. The conservative EPP is divided exactly on these lines. Its French, Belgian, Italian and Spanish members want to exclude the Austrian MEPs, the German members and some Scandinavians want on the contrary "solidarity" with Austria.

⁵⁶ This shows again: Fear of Germany is not a partisan argument, but has its place in the conservative *and* the liberal-left newspaper

⁵⁷ "Austria's confuse identity"

Whereas this article clearly links the "fascist-past" frame to the intertwined history of both Austria *and* Germany (thus turning Haider into a "German problem"), the last paragraph of the article goes even further. After having concluded that the German-Austrian history, the specific problems of Austrian politics (*Proporz*, encrusted power-relations...) and a general western ennui as represented in Francis Fukuyama's "End of history"⁵⁸ result in a general feeling of a high need of (system) change in Austria, the article finishes with a rhetoric question:

"Si telle était le cas [general support for radical change], ne faudrait-il pas redouter l'effet d'entraînement que ce phénomène pourrait avoir ailleurs, et pour commencer en Allemagne, où l'affreuse affaire Kohl laisse l'électorat de droite désespéré?"⁵⁹ – Again, and in a more dangerous way as in the first part of the article, it is insinuated that Haider, in "reality", is a German problem. This view of the problem is further enhanced in four long, fundamental articles published between 7 February and 15 May.

Le Figaro makes this point even before Le Monde. He brings, on 4 February, an interview with Arthur Pächt. Mr. Pächt is head of the Franco-Austrian parliamentary group. Besides, and more important, his rhetorical action has special "weight": He is born in Austria, from where he had to leave one year after *Anschluss*. His parents, not able to leave Austria, were killed by the nazis⁶⁰. He is deputy of the French *département* Var. This important "voice" in the discourse fears:

"Aujourd'hui, le danger vient aussi de la Bavière, où l'*Anschluss* a laissé de mauvais souvenirs. La faillite de la CDU en Allemagne pourrait avoir de sérieuses répercussions en Bavière, où les thèses nationalistes trouvent toujours un certain écho."⁶¹

Again, there is no clear evidence of what makes Arthur Pächt fear, if it is not his traumatic past experience, but the insinuation works.

It is taken up and further enhanced in an article written by the General secretary of the Franco-German youth committee, Michel Cullin, published in Le Monde on 17 February. The debate's climax is reached with Alexandre Adler's article on 24 February (see above). In the remainder of his article, Adler sees Haider already in Berlin: "...cette longue marche de Haider vers Berlin (sic!) est à présent entamée."⁶² He sees a large coalition, encompassing the

⁵⁸ Francis Fukuyama (1992): The end of history and the last man.

⁵⁹ "If this was the case [general support for radical change], shouldn't one fear the kick-off effect that this phenomenon could have elsewhere, and to start with in Germany, where the terrible Kohl scandal has left the voters of the right stunned?"

⁶⁰ To underpin the actor's "rhetorical weight", Le Figaro presents these sad facts when introducing Mr. Pächt.

⁶¹ "Today, the danger is also coming from Bavaria, where the *Anschluss* has left some bad souvenirs. The failing of the CDU in Germany could have serious reverberations in Bavaria, where nationalist hypotheses always find a certain echo."

⁶² "The long march of Haider towards Berlin is currently on the way"

"holy alpine trinity Haider-Blocher-Stoiber", the Vlaams Blok and some remaining Vichy intellectuals, forming a coalition "qui ne demande qu'à s'élargir progressivement vers Anvers, Dresde et Berlin"⁶³.

This is of course the old "Germanic" block of the time when French and Germans were hereditary enemies. It goes back (at least) to the second Empire and the 1870s Franco-German war⁶⁴. In this view, it is not that important if Haider is "really" a fascist or even a nazi. Suffice to say that he represents the "bad" Germany. Accordingly, Adler sees on the other side a "third force" in Germany, "représentée par le catholicisme municipal rhénan, tourné vers la France...". He goes on: "Cette Allemagne des cités libérale, catholique, protestante et, à l'époque, juive, eut brièvement le moyen de se faire entendre en mars 1848 à Francfort, mais il fallut attendre 1945 pour que, dans un espace rétréci, sans Prusse ni Autriche, elle triomphe vraiment avec les catholiques rhénans Adenauer et Kohl, les protestants hanséates Brandt et Schmidt."⁶⁵

Thus, it is rather the "holy alliance" and the Restoration that are the spiritual fathers of Haider, but that are also – in a way – at the origin of the German catastrophe of 1933-1945. It is in a discursive amalgam that all these diverse forces can be brought together, and it is also in this approximation that enables discourses to shift from Haider to Stoiber, to be translated from Austria to Germany, from past traumatic experience to present political decisions.

The corresponding European project that defines itself *against* these "forces of evil" is one of enlightened liberalism, tamed (*Rhenish*) capitalism and anti-totalitarianism.:

"...la force qui est sommée de remonter sur le ring pour ce battre enfin sans esquivé, mais, cette fois-ci à l'échelle de toute l'Europe continentale, c'est tout simplement la coalition vaincue de Weimar, ce rassemblement de sociaux-démocrates, de catholiques rhénans, d'industriels libéraux et d'intellectuels bourgeois alliés à la France républicaine, précurseurs de Keynes..."⁶⁶

This is clearly not an orthodox understanding of a leftist coalition that would include communists:

"Il n'y a pas d'autre solution cette fois-ci que de se montrer les plus forts – et d'abord sur le plan intellectuel et moral, ce qui exclut de sous-traiter ce combat [...] à une extrême

⁶³ "...asking for nothing else than to enlarge itself progressively towards Antwerp, Dresden and Berlin."

⁶⁴ See on this subject: Michael Jeismann (1992): *Das Vaterland der Feinde*.

⁶⁵ "The third point of the Germanic triangle, that is also constituting its third force, [...] is represented by the urban Catholicism of the Rhineland, turned towards France..." "...This Germany of the liberal cities, catholic, protestant, and, at the time, Jewish, very shortly had the occasion to raise its voice in March 1848 in Frankfurt, but we had to wait for 1945 to see, in a more limited space, without Prussia, nor Austria, its triumph with the Rhenish Catholics Adenauer and Kohl, with the hanseatic Protestants Brandt and Schmidt."

⁶⁶ "...the force that is asked to re-enter the ring to fight at least without sidestepping, but, this time, at the level of the whole continental Europe, this force is quite simply the defeated coalition of Weimar, this accumulation of social-democrats, Rhenish Catholics, liberal industrialists and *bourgeois* intellectuals, allied to republican France, precursors of Keynes..."

gauche inepte, qui n'a jamais dans son histoire compris ce qu'était vraiment le fascisme européen..."⁶⁷.

Following these lines, it becomes understandable why Jacques Chirac and José Maria Aznar are supporting the sanctions against Austria, even if they are not part of the European left. The narratives evoked in the discourse of the sanction supporters are so all-encompassing and so commonly understood, that they can cover a broad field of different interests: They can bring together as well ideological or partisan interests (*Le Monde*), as strategic reasoning (Jacques Chirac). This broadness makes that there is no room left for alternative discourses that argue on the same level – what accounts for the compliance of Mr. Aznar or Schröder.

In the following weeks, the *topos* of "fear of Germany" plays a less explicit role in the French media. Nevertheless, it stays present throughout the debate, but now in a slightly mediated form: France seeks reassurance that Germany is not "like this". To do so, it turns to German politicians, media and intellectuals. This is another European side of the debate – whilst there are still national stereotypes about the neighbour that are widely used in the debate, there are also possibilities to investigate and discuss directly with the former "other".

On 1 March, Bavarian minister-president Edmund Stoiber is interviewed by *Le Monde*. He is asked directly about the consequences of "...un débat sur la manière de traiter l'extrême droite, entre la méthode française de l'exclusion et celle, allemande, de l'intégration, dont vous êtes le chef de file."⁶⁸ When Stoiber confirms his way of dealing with the extreme right by "integration", he is asked: "Le prix de cette stratégie n'est-il pas de voir émerger une droite dure anti-européenne et germanique dont vous prendriez la tête?"⁶⁹

This debate is not cheap talk. It brings two fairly different political strategies to the point, and it is here that a common understanding (this does not mean: a common accord or solution, let alone compromise on political questions) evolves in the discourse.

The same phenomenon can be observed on 18. April, when foreign minister Joschka Fischer gives an interview in *Le Monde*. He again is asked about Stoiber's far-right projects. When Fischer claims a political union for Europe to prevent political extremism, he is asked: "Comment espérer atteindre une Union politique quand les Länder allemands, emmenés par le ministre-président de Bavière, Edmund Stoiber, demandent une régionalisation de la politique

⁶⁷ "This time, there is no other solution than proving that we are stronger – and first of all on an intellectual and moral level, what excludes the solution to leave this combat [...] to an extreme left inapt, that in its whole history has never understood what the European fascism really was..."

⁶⁸ "...a debate about how to treat the extreme right, between the French method of exclusion and the German one, with you [Stoiber] at its head, of integration"

⁶⁹ "Isn't the price of this strategy to see the establishment of a right with firm anti-European and Germanic character; a movement with yourself [Stoiber] at its head?"

européenne?"⁷⁰ In his answer, Fischer denies that "régionalisation" corresponds to less solidarity and hides an ultraliberal rightwing project. Instead, he insists that subsidiarity and de-centralisation are legitimate claims raised by the federal states, leading at times to a more democratic European Union.

A month later, after the above-mentioned clarifications, but also after it becomes more and more obvious that the sanctions against Austria are in a deadlock situation, *Le Monde* comes back to Stoiber (18.05.2000). Those fearing an alliance of rightwing and extreme right forces under the leadership of Mr. Stoiber were wrong, states the article. It goes even further and finds: Stoiber "a lancé une opération de charme vis-à-vis des médias français, s'apercevant qu'il finissait par être assimilé à Jörg Haider, ce qui nuisait à l'image de sa région."⁷¹ But even under the impression of this Bavarian charme, *Le Monde* keeps an emergency exit that could allow to step back on earlier positions vis-à-vis Mr. Stoiber:

"À condition que la droite démocratique accepte de faire preuve de pédagogie sur le dossier [code de nationalité], sans céder à des tentations électoralistes comme en 1999, l'extrême droite et ses idées devraient restées bannies et marginales en Allemagne."⁷²

This is, of course, a discursive strategy. *Le Monde* does not recall the position it held earlier on Austria, Germany and Mr. Stoiber. The paper has observed an evolution, but it is always possible that the old demon of Pan-Germanic nationalism comes back...

The adaptation of the newspaper's position on Mr. Stoiber is only part of a larger strategy that prepares a reshaping of the pro-sanction discourse. After it becomes clear that the sanctions will (sooner or later) end without changing the situation in Austria, a discursive exit-strategy has to be found. Therefore, we find an article in *Le Monde* on 4 Mai, taking up a position of the German "Die Zeit". It claims: "Die Zeit et les mesures contre l'Autriche: L'hebdomadaire allemand demande la levée des sanctions prises par l'Union Européenne contre Vienne en affirmant que celles-ci ont déjà atteint leur but!"⁷³ The three core-arguments could also help *Le Monde* to get out of its rhetoric deadlock. The sanctions have attained their goal – and *Le Monde* does not explain that this goal has slightly changed: It is no longer to break up the government coalition of Vienna, but to start a debate in Austria: "L'isolement

⁷⁰ "How can you hope to attain a political Union when the German *Länder*, led by the Bavarian minister president Edmund Stoiber, ask for a regionalisation of European politics?"

⁷¹ Stoiber "has started a charm offensive towards the French media, as he understood that he would finish by being assimilated to Jörg Haider, what would harm his region."

⁷² "Under the condition that the democratic right accepts to take a pedagogical approach to the subject [citizenship and code of nationality], without bifurcating towards electoralist temptations like in 1999, the extreme right and its ideas should stay banned and marginal in Germany."

⁷³ "Die Zeit and the measures against Austria: The German weekly claims the lifting of the sanctions taken by the European Union against Vienna. It affirms that the sanctions have already attained their goal!"

extérieur de l'Autriche et la protestation culturelle interne ont ranimé le climat politique de cette République qui n'était pas connu pour sa tendance au débat."⁷⁴

When the sanctions finally come to an end, *Le Monde* has evolved its discourse to a point that it can start its "auto-critique". On 14 September, it writes

"Sans doute les Quatorze ont-ils pêché par méconnaissance des réalités autrichiennes. Sans doute la France notamment a-t-elle eu tort de se laisser entraîner par Jörg Haider dans l'outrance et la surenchère passionnelles. Sans doute était-il erroné de considérer qu'un parti d'extrême droite germanophone était forcément une réincarnation de la menace nazie, même si Jörg Haider fait tout pour nourrir ce soupçon."⁷⁵

Again, as at the very beginning of the sanctions, *Le Monde* confounds its own discourse with the "official" French position. It is much more the articles of *Le Monde* than any official proclamation that turned Haider into "the Nazi menace". But this framing of the Austrian politician became salient because it was not only *Le Monde*'s partisans that saw him this way:

In appealing to distinct, nationally shaped, collective representations of the past, the confusion between present and past became possible. The journal itself admits this role of the past. In a further article that helps to re-anchor the French discourse in the changed reality (= the end of the sanctions), the journal claims that it is the different perception of the past that allows for communist ministers in France:

"...chez nous le PCF est le 'parti de fusillés' qui ont payé le prix du sang pour la libération de la France", *whereas in Austria*, "...le soldat soviétique n'a jamais été un libérateur, mais un moujik en uniforme qui violait impunément les femmes et trafiquait des montres volées. Et l'oncle mort dans l'enfer de Stalingrad vaut bien, dans l'incalculable addition des douleurs humaines, l'ex-voisine gazée à Auschwitz."⁷⁶

But even if the author admits these different perceptions of the past and – for the first time in this debate in *Le Monde* – sees an Austrian post-war identity that was constructed *against* Germany, he keeps the emergency exit open: "Il faut espérer que l'installation au pouvoir de la droite populiste, qui aura du mal à juguler ses pulsions anti-européennes, ne contrariera pas cette évolution."⁷⁷ (The evolution towards a democratic Austrian – e.g. not German – identity)

There is no causal or formal logic in this reasoning – it is the logic of discourses we can observe. Once they are published, they continue to live their own lives, can re-appear and

⁷⁴ "The external isolation of Austria and the internal cultural protestation have animated the political climate of this Republic that so far was not known for its tendencies to debate."

⁷⁵ "Without doubt, the Fourteen have sinned out of misunderstanding of the Austrian realities. Without doubt, especially France was wrong when it was torn by Jörg Haider into the exaggeration of passionnal oversupply. Without doubt, it was wrong to consider a German speaking party of the extreme right necessarily as the re-incarnation of the Nazi menace, even if Jörg Haider did everything to arouse this suspicion."

⁷⁶ "...here [in France], the PCF [French Communist Party] is the 'party of the executed' that has paid the price of blood for the liberation of France", whereas in Austria, "...the soviet soldier never has been a liberator, but a *moujik* in uniform, violating women unpunished and trafficking stolen watches. And the uncle that died in the hell of Stalingrad equates, in the incalculable addition of human pain, the ex-neighbour gazed in Auschwitz."

⁷⁷ "We must hope that the installation in power of the populist right, that will have problems to contain its anti-European passions, will not counter this evolution."

become salient at precise moments. Especially when they contain a traumatic experience – like in the French case the souvenir of the German occupation – that is linked to the official narrative that legitimises a polity, appealing to these discourses guarantees attention – and therefore influence – in the public debate.

III.1. Some German reactions: comprehension, not confrontation

German reactions to French fears are once again partly depending on the political position of the authors. While the SZ tries to translate French fears, the F.A.Z. prefers an offensive discussion of the French theses.

On 4 February, the F.A.Z. finds: "Ratlosigkeit vor dem Phänomen Haider – In Frankreich weiß man nur wenig über Österreich"⁷⁸. The F.A.Z. recalls that on two successive days, Le Monde shows on its page one cartoon a Haider in nazi-uniform, and a concentration camp with the inscription *Arbeit macht frei*. At this early stage, the F.A.Z. has not yet understood the deep impact that these traumatic reminiscences have on the French understanding of the situation. As we have seen (II.2), it is only later that the German newspaper admits the existence and salience – independent from its justification or not – of this discursive strand.

As the Süddeutsche is politically closer to the French line and supports the sanctions, it has fewer problems of understanding the French fears. It even promotes and translates French analyses in the German discursive space. On 23 February, an article plays the role of "change agent". The author is a German professor and publisher living in Paris, Karl-Heinz Bohrer⁷⁹. He writes "Die französische Herausforderung – In Paris kann man die abwiegelnde Reaktion der deutschen Konservativen auf Haider nicht fassen"⁸⁰ and starts from the deep differences between French and German conservatives when it comes to Haider. As the undeniable definition of Haider as "extreme right" has become part of the official French discourse and is accepted by a large majority, the German author fears for a general estrangement of the two societies. He starts by de-legitimising the F.A.Z.-strategy that consisted in framing the French discourse as un-informed and "intellectual"⁸¹:

⁷⁸ "Perplexity in facing the Haider phenomenon – Little knowledge in France on Austria"

⁷⁹ Professor (ret.) of German literature in Bielefeld, guest professor in Stanford 1998, Gadamer-professor in Heidelberg 2001. Studied history, philosophy, German literature und sociology. Publishes the "Merkur", "German journal for European thought", lives in Paris.

⁸⁰ "The French challenge – Paris cannot believe the appeasing reactions of German conservatives in the face of Haider."

⁸¹ Meaning "far away from reality" or led by intellectuals always ready to raise moral claims, but of few concrete impact on French politics.

"Im Präsidenten und im Intellektuellen drückt sich vielmehr eine allgemeine französische Härte aus, die – im Unterschied zum deutschen Desinteresse an breiter Information – die umfangreiche Analyse der innenpolitischen österreichischen Verhältnisse betreibt."⁸²

The French analysis is based on clear-cut definitions and – in its French context – of undeniable inner logic. Therefore, attenuation of the cleavages as favoured by German conservatives, would be dangerous:

"Gegenüber dieser festen Position, die den Haider-Liberalismus als faschistoiden Korporatismus bezeichnet, ist deutsche Abwiegung oder gar Polemik im eigenen Interesse objektiv deplaziert."⁸³

It is precisely the danger of "turning Haider into a German problem" that would be raised when the German conservatives continue to support the anti-sanctions camp:

"Deshalb nämlich, weil ein Verständnis zwischen den beiden konservativen Parteien der beiden Nachfolgestaaten des Dritten Reiches in Frankreich als Spitze gegen den Westen verstanden würde und folgerichtig gehandelt würde: Ein 30 Jahre lang gebautes Vertrauen wäre über Nacht weggewischt. Man muss also wissen, was man will: innenpolitische Harmonie mit dem bayerischen Ministerpräsidenten oder außenpolitische Solidarität mit der französischen Republik. Beides zusammen geht zur Zeit nicht."⁸⁴

Accordingly, he goes on, the relation of the French political establishment towards Germany is already changing, and there are questions on the CSU and its chef Stoiber, who "is counted, in French political science, amongst one and the same ideological family as Haider."

Consequently, the problem is the indifference of the German conservatives, neglecting the French understanding of the anti-totalitarian compromise that was at the beginning of the Franco-German reconciliation. The problem is the German right,

"in ihrer offensichtlichen Ahnungslosigkeit über das, was man mit Fug und Recht als 'extreme Rechte' bezeichnet. Aus Paris nimmt sich das so aus: Es sei bezeichnend, dass man auf Haiders Banalisierung des Nazismus hereinfällt und dann auch nicht mehr merkt, dass dieser Banalisierung die banale Erscheinung des Neonazismus selbst entspricht."⁸⁵

Using these clear-cut categories and on the basis of his knowledge and understanding of the French discourse, the author concludes on this fundamental statement that he translates to his German audience: It should be clear,

⁸² "The President and the intellectual express a very firm, commonly accepted French position that carries out an extensive analysis of the Austrian domestic affairs – in difference to a German disinterest in broader information."

⁸³ "Faced with this firm position, that understands Haider-liberalism as a fascist corporatism, German appeasement or even polemics is objectively misplaced, in our own interest."

⁸⁴ "Because a compromise between the two conservative parties of the two successor-states of the Third Reich would be understood by France as a point against the West, and it would be avenged: A confidence that was built over 30 years would vanish overnight. One has to know what one wants: domestic harmony with the Bavarian minister president, or external solidarity with the French Republic. Both things together are impossible at the moment."

⁸⁵ "in its obvious ignorance on what is rightly called 'extreme right'. From Paris, this looks so: It is revealing if one is fooled by Haider's trivialisation of Nazism and subsequently does not understand that this trivialisation corresponds to the banal appearance of neo-nazism as such."

"dass es sich bei der französischen Kompromisslosigkeit nicht um Profilierungstheater, sondern um die Basiselemente der französischen Nachkriegsrepublik handelt."⁸⁶

If the German conservatives were taking the side of the Austrian conservatives and the blue-black government in Vienna, this would be equivalent for France with

"einer Allianz der beiden Deutschländer mit faschistischer Vergangenheit. Die Ernsthaftigkeit der französischen Haltung als ein Prinzip überhaupt nicht wahrzunehmen und zu verwechseln mit machtpolitischer Finesse oder Hysterie, ist der Irrtum, der wiederum aus der verharmlosenden Erklärung der österreichischen Rechten herrührt."⁸⁷

Only three days after this vivid account of the French understanding of the situation in the SZ, the F.A.Z. for her part publishes the interview (see above) with Emmanuel Todd. In the remainder of the interview, the French intellectual explains to a German audience why he is "shocked" and raises exactly the points mentioned by Karl-Heinz Bohrer. The argument of a "fear of Germany" cannot be explained clearer than in these words:

"Mit Haider verhält Österreich sich so unverantwortlich, wie Deutschland vor siebzig Jahren. [...] Die neue Regierung in Wien ist ein Affront – ein Akt des Rassismus gegenüber allen Ländern, die von Hitler besetzt worden waren. Ich fürchte vor allem einen Einfluss auf Deutschland. Für mich steht fest: Die deutschen Nationen haben wegen ihrer Geschichte nicht das Recht, rechtsextreme Regierungen zu bilden. In dieser Situation haben die Europäer die Pflicht, ihre absolute Missbilligung zu bekunden."⁸⁸

After these important contributions, it is not possible any longer in Germany to neglect the different understandings in France and Germany of the situation. Moreover, it is clear that French fears are more than just partisan or strategic arguments, they testify also of a deeply rooted, nationally shaped, collective narrative of the past that finds itself at the origin of great parts of the post-war French self-understanding.

The reactions in the German discursive space – taking these fears serious and admitting their importance in the French context – is in a way similar to the reaction of the German government presented in part I. Whereas the Scandinavian governments can claim their doubts about the sanctions without being suspect to Haider-friendliness⁸⁹, this is a no-go area for Germans. Because Germany cannot share the French collective experience of occupation, it must accept the importance of this narrative in the French case, without understanding it in a first time. But because Germany has not only not made the French experience, but was

⁸⁶ "...that French refusal of compromise is not political 'theatre' to gain profile, but a core element of the French post-war Republic."

⁸⁷ "...an alliance of the two Germanys with a fascist past. To neglect the seriousness of this French standpoint as a principle, and to confuse it with power-political *finesse* or hysterical reactions, is the error that itself stems from the trivializing explanation of the Austrian right."

⁸⁸ "Concerning Haider, Austria acts as irresponsible as Germany 70 years ago. [...] The new government in Vienna is an affront – a racist act against all those countries that were occupied by Hitler. I fear especially the impact on Germany. For me it's clear: The German nations do not have the right, because of their history, to form extreme right governments. In this situation, the Europeans are obliged to testify their absolute disapproval."

⁸⁹ Although Swedish prime minister Göran Persson visits Austria on 28 April, he refrains from meeting any member of the government.

literally on the other side – as the perpetrators – it is automatically disqualified when opposing the pro-sanction discourse on the level of this common French – and European - experience, finding itself in the same camp as Jörg Haider and his FPÖ. This is the way in which Europe is founding itself against the shadows of its past, and this explains for the different perceptions of "brown" and "red" totalitarianism.

IV. Conclusion

Studying the European "sanctions" against the Austrian government in 2000, this article tried to understand the relations between rhetorical action, discursive structures and the shaping of a self-understanding.

In a first part, two rhetorical reactions on the sanctions against Austria were compared: (1) on the one side, we saw the French officials whose public statements gained high relevance. This happened on the one side by their highly normative, not negotiable claims. But these claims became salient within a discursive environment that fostered a nearly hegemonic discourse where France, its President, *Le Monde* and the public sphere became one actor. (2) On the other side, we saw the German chancellor entrapped in a two-level logic. Whereas he had to face stiff domestic resistance – with little to win even if the sanctions were to last – he could not step back from his European standpoint, as this would have disqualified him in the European game, bringing him close to Haider and making the Austrian a "German problem". Consequently, his reactions to the sanctions were mostly of a more pragmatic nature, or even arguing with genuine German "interest".

A second part focused on the structural character of the discourse and analysed the strategies used to create this hegemonic discourse. In bringing ahead an amalgam of Haider, FPÖ, Austria and fascism or even neo-nazism, the supporters of the sanctions could disqualify any alternative discourse. Opponents of the sanctions thus risked themselves the accusation of proto-fascism.

The strategies used by the *F.A.Z.* to establish an alternative discourse were also revealing: as there was no space for a compromise position, its "third way" itself tried to de-legitimise the pro-sanction discourse. Nevertheless, it becomes clear that the German paper has underestimated one point that is particularly important to the French understanding of the situation, and that gives salience and power to the pro-sanction discourse over party-lines.

This point was raised in the third section, where the meaning of the traumatic past for the Haider-debate is investigated. I found hints to explain the logic that allows for such a powerful translation from past to present. Of course, this is no causal logic, but what I call a "discursive" logic:

Discourses assimilate past experiences (more precisely: narratives on past experiences) to current situations. Once they can be "translated" (Diez 1999) (meaning that they are "close" enough to be adapted to a new situation) from past to present experience, from one discursive space to another, they gain salience in a public debate. This works particularly well when narratives of the past evoke traumatic psychological experience that has universal meaning for the members of a group. When these psychological markers are moreover embedded in the official narrative that gives legitimacy to a polity (like in the case of the French Republic), high attention and salience in the public debate can be assumed when evoking these narratives. This is what the German F.A.Z., but also the chancellor and even Mr. Stoiber, have to learn and to accept in the debate on the sanctions against Austria in 2000, and this is also the way in which the EU is shaped in a discursive way.

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