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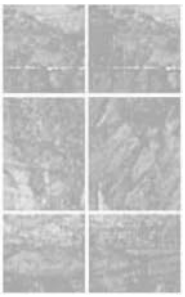

Embattled Vienna 1683/2010: right-wing populism, collective memory and the fictionalisation of politics

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ABSTRACT

The victory of a Christian coalition over Ottoman forces besieging Vienna in 1683 marked the beginning of the end of the Ottoman presence in Central and Eastern Europe and the simultaneous rise of the Habsburg Empire in this region. Memories of these events still circulate in present-day Vienna and provide an emotional reservoir for anti-Turkish sentiments. Current tendencies to fictionalise politics support the dissemination of such anti-Turkish narratives in rather unconventional and hybrid genres such as comic-style booklets. In this article, the authors investigate the interplay of collective memories and this hybrid genre within the social context of the fictionalisation of politics through the test case of the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ), one of the most successful European right-wing populist parties. By combining multimodal analysis with the discourse–historical approach in critical discourse analysis, they illustrate the ways in which visuals enable the conveying of contradictory meanings through a discursive strategy of calculated ambivalence by blurring past and present, fiction and reality.

KEYWORDS

discourse–historical approach (DHA) • fictionalisation of politics – politicisation of fiction • Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) • insinuations • multimodality • political comics • presuppositions • strategy of calculated ambivalence • Turkish migrants

1 INTRODUCTION

It was more than 300 years ago – yet the date remains salient in Viennese collective memories: the so-called Great Turkish War, the 60-day siege of the

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Habsburg capital, Vienna, in 1683 and the (alleged) role that Prince Eugene of Savoy played in liberating the city as well as in subsequent wars against the Ottoman Empire. Manifold stories and myths about the second siege (the first was in 1529) are still alive in public life, such as popular sagas (which are part of the school curriculum) and 'banal commemorations' (Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2009: 151ff), i.e. testimonials such as street names as well as stone figurines all over the city's inner districts.

More specifically, the relief of Vienna in the face of the Ottoman siege remains a symbol of 'nativism' in contemporary Austria. Such a heroic 'turning of the tide' narrative carries deeply emotive connotations for those for whom it represents a low-level but nevertheless appreciable discursive assertion of a valiant past through which the idea and imaginary of 'Vienna' as 'ours', as a symbol of the Occident are realised and sustained.[1]

It is thus not surprising that anti-immigration sentiments, which in Vienna largely overlap with anti-Turkish/anti-Islam resentment, draw on these selectively constructed narratives of the past, thus providing shared frameworks (Halbwachs, 1992): It is via such collective memories and myths that the particular 'other' – the dangerous Ottoman army or, more metonymically, 'the Turk' (*der Türke*) – is perceived. These narratives are continuously reproduced via language as well as everyday practices (Köhler and Wodak, 2011; Krzyżanowski and Wodak, 2009; Wodak and Köhler, 2010) and, recently, even via comic-style publications.

Indeed, the persistence of collective memories of the Turkish sieges in combination with the increasing *fictionalisation of politics*, i.e. 'the blurring of boundaries in politics between the real and the fictional, the informative and the entertaining' (Wodak, 2011b: 157; see below), renders comics a relevant option for political propaganda. This is illustrated by the booklet entitled *Sagas from Vienna* (*Sagen aus Wien*: FPÖ, 2010), widely known as 'the Mustafa Comic', which was published as part of its local Viennese election campaign by the right-wing populist Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) in 2010.

In this article, we analyse *Sagas from Vienna* as an example of how to approach discriminatory but fictionalised political comics via the discourse–historical approach (DHA) in critical discourse studies. Our main research questions are: how does a particular word–image combination, i.e. *Sagas from Vienna*, draw a demarcation line between US and THEM? Moreover, how does this comic-like booklet succeed in implementing a *strategy of calculated ambivalence* by blurring the boundaries between fiction and reality, thus allowing denial of any alleged discrimination and hate speech? In the course of our analysis, we will focus on the use of calculated ambivalence as a discursive strategy which aims to legitimise right-wing populist stances by blending past and present, fiction and reality, and providing a range of meanings, from quasi-innocent fiction to hate speech. We will thus illustrate how visual images lend themselves as salient resources for political propaganda.

We start by saying a few words about the genre of comics and its characteristics before briefly introducing the discourse–historical approach. In section three, we summarise some aspects of the *staging of politics* on the front stage by right-wing populist parties. In addition, we provide contextual knowledge, both historical and situational, in order to understand *Sagas from Vienna*. Then, in section four, we analyse in detail relevant extracts from the *Sagas* in order to illustrate the effects of these messages. We conclude by briefly returning to the societal debate over the comic in Austria and summarise our argument.

2 COMICS AND THE DISCOURSE–HISTORICAL APPROACH

2.1 Hybrid genres combining *words, texts* and *images*

Sagas from Vienna is not a 'pure' comic to the extent that it does not encompass a coherent panel structure (McCloud, 1994; Saraceni, 2003); however, the booklet undoubtedly draws its illocutionary force from the sequential combination of images (and words). Thus, while we explore the genre of comics and its role within the wider framework of the DHA in another publication (Forchtner and Wodak, forthcoming), some brief considerations are nevertheless necessary.

Comics blend images and words sequentially in order to narrate a story or, in the words of Eisner (2008a: xi): 'graphic narrative may be defined as the employment of words and visual images in an intelligent and disciplined sequence to explain an idea or tell a story.'[2] Focusing on images only, Duncan and Smith (2009: 3; see also McCloud, 1994) define comics as the phenomenon of 'juxtaposing images in a sequence' and the 'potential use of compositional elements' such as colour, perspective, etc. Arguably, the visual aspect is particularly salient given that an image is scanned before written text is read (Eisner, 2008a: 43, 2008b: 136). Similarly, Costello (2009: 23) notes that 'the general relation between the two [words and images] is for the image to convey the action of the words, to offer a visual narrative'.

Linguists have recently turned to this genre, focusing, e.g. on how visual and verbal modes incorporate humoristic, ironic and sarcastic meanings, but comparatively little research has been conducted on the representation of US and THEM in the comic genre.[3] Of course, there exists a vast amount of research on comics and politics in general. There has also been some research on ideology and power in comics as well as on aspects of visual racism in magazines and posters.[4] One of the rare but fascinating works on comics within critical discourse studies is Van Leeuwen and Suleiman's (2010) study on processes of 'glocalisation' in an Egyptian superhero comic. Their article investigates the translation and thus recontextualisation of an Arabic comic into English, i.e. the different ways of conveying meaning through comics in 'the Arabic world' and 'the West'. However, there is little subsequent research on how this

genre enables and makes use of what we label 'calculated ambivalence' (Engel and Wodak, 2009, 2013). That is, how are different audiences simultaneously addressed in order to convey diverging meanings in one text, thereby appealing to different audiences at the same time (see Section 2.2)?

Given the suggestive blending of images and words and the social significance of the medium, particularly for the younger generation, it is not surprising that scholars conclude that the very

> nature of comic art makes the form ideologically interesting. Comic art combines printed words and pictures in a unique way. The complex nature of this combination allows for much flexibility in the manipulation of meaning. (McAllister et al., 2001: 3; see also Barker, 1989)

For example, previously Mattelart and Dorfman (1984) pointed to the (allegedly) ideological dimension of Donald Duck. Other more recent studies include Campbell's (2009) investigation into how economic and cultural globalisation are represented in Mexican comic books. Rubenstein (1998) points to comics as sites of reproducing cultural conservatism, with regard to Mexico in the post-revolutionary period (1934–1976). Costello (2009) investigates the impact of the Cold War on US identity through the lens of comics. McKinney (2011) has pointed in detail to the colonialist fantasies reproduced in French and Belgium comics. Comics have also been used in political campaigning. Duncan and Smith (2009: 269ff) recount the example of Harry S. Truman's comic-book biography (*The Story of Harry S. Truman*), of which three million copies were distributed and which might have ensured the latter's re-election in 1948. More recently, the then Mexican President, Vicente Fox, published a comic book in 2003 in order to promote his policies (Campbell, 2009: 4).

Closer to the topic of this article are, however, right-wing comics and similar hybrid genres. A recently edited volume by Palandt (2011) provides an extensive comparative overview of such publications in Europe over the last 70 years. Within this volume, one article does in fact mention the adoption of Viennese sagas by the FPÖ (Palandt, 2011: 11–13), though without any systematic analysis. This lack of detailed analysis strikes us as surprising, given that the FPÖ, one of the two most 'successful' right-wing populist parties in Europe (apart from the *Swiss People's Party*), in respect of election results, has to date not faced more scrutiny (see below).

2.2 The discourse–historical approach (DHA)

In the following, we present three key features of the DHA – con/text, discourse, and discursive strategies – relevant to the understanding and deconstruction of the *Sagas* as well as some implications for the analysis of our data.

Most importantly, the DHA focuses, first, on audio, spoken, visual and/or written *texts* as they relate to structured knowledge (*discourses*),

are realised in specific *genres*, and must be viewed in terms of their situatedness. That is, many texts, including images, due to their ambiguities, cannot be fully understood without considering different layers of context, following a *four-level model of context,* such as the historical development of the FPÖ (the *sociopolitical/historical context)*, debates which dominated the election campaign (*the situational context)*, a *text-internal co-text* as well as *intertextual and interdiscursive relations* (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 40ff). The former two are of particular significance as they allow deconstructing *interdiscursive* and *intertextual* relations, presuppositions, implicatures and insinuations in the publication. Interdiscursivity/intertextuality denotes the linkage between discourses and texts across time and space – established via explicit or implicit references. If text elements are taken out of their original context (de-contextualisation) and inserted into another one (recontextualisation), a similar process occurs which makes the element (partly) aquire new meaning(s) (Wodak, 2011a).

Secondly, the DHA views *discourse* as 'context-dependent semiotic practices' as well as 'socially constituted and socially consitutive', 'related to a macro-topic' and pluri-perspective, i.e. linked to argumentation (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009: 89, see below). Taking such a perspective, the *Sagas from Vienna* can be understood as a site which draws on existing collective memories about the Turkish siege and current discourses on immigration and Turks in Vienna, as well as *mobilising* and *radicalising* these discourses. The *Sagas* did not however remain unopposed – the publication caused a scandal – and thus multiple perspectives and arguments by civil society groups as well as by other political parties were introduced.

Thirdly, positive self- and negative other presentation is realised via *discursive strategies* (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 45–90). We start by focusing, first, on the strategy of nomination (how events/objects/persons are referred to) and, second, predication (what characteristics are attributed to them). The visual dimension provides additional possibilities in order to label (nomination) and characterise (predication) the person, event or object in question. A paradigmatic case might be the 'naming' of a protagonist as *a Turk* because of the person's clothes and his or her stereotypically related – negative – characterisation as threat or danger (see Figures 4 and 5). A third strategy, the strategy of perspectivisation, realises the author's involvement, e.g. via deixis, quotation marks, metaphors, etc. – an involvement which can become manifest in more complex ways through the use of visuals. As Eisner (2008b: 92; see also Saraceni, 2003: 78–83) observes:

> the primary function of perspective should be to manipulate the reader's orientation for a purpose in accord with the author's narrative plan … Another use of perspective is its employment to manipulate and produce various emotional states in the reader.

Visual representation in this case provides a visual point of view through close-ups of facial expressions, stylistic lines, etc. which help to convey emotion. Fourth, the strategy of mitigation/intensification concerns the modification of utterances, e.g. through hyperbole, modal verbs and vague expressions. Facial expressions or stylistic lines are salient, e.g. in the case of a figure being depicted with many lines around her or his raised fist, indicating strong anger.

Finally, argumentation strategies concern the justification and legitimation of specific claims. Within the DHA (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 74ff), the notion of *topos* designates both formal and content-related 'conclusion rule[s] that connect[s] the argument or arguments with the conclusion, the claim'. Here, the DHA draws on Wengeler's and Kienpointer's context-specific notion of topos, defined as semiotically manifested 'figures of thought in approaching a political issue' (Wengeler, 2003: 67). Kienpointer (quoted in Wengeler, 2003: 65), similarily, views topoi 'as being typical for arguments by speakers of a speech-community'. These conclusion rules are either sound or fallacious, enabling or preventing the *more or less* undistorted exchange of standpoints through particular ways of representing events, objects or persons (for this normative distinction, see Forchtner, 2011; Forchtner and Tominc, 2012). These argumentation schemata are also affected by the visual dimension as the 'visual makes an argument in the sense of adducing a few reasons in a forceful way' (Blair, 2004: 52) and, like written text, require *shared context-knowledge* in order to understand the (implicit or explicit) arguments.

All dimensions are, in addition, affected by the 'material of graphic stuff' (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006: 225), i.e. colours. Colours denote persons, events and objects, they are able to construct particular relations and have a textual function in that they, for example, create coherence. Colours might also portray 'sound effects', loudness and the temporal unfolding of a word (e.g. Van Leeuwen and Suleiman, 2010). For instance, salient colours, such as red and yellow, are used when intonation is rising or falling, indicating danger or pain (Eisner, 2008a: 60–70). As such, colour has two affordances (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006: 232f): (a) its associations, e.g. the fact that, in Europe, red is usually linked to Social-Democratic Parties; and (b) its distinct features on a variety of scales (pp. 233–235). These include: from light (white) to dark (black) scale (*value*); *saturation* (intense saturation indicates intense emotion/feeling, less subtlety, etc.); the *purity* of a colour might indicate unambiguity, *modulation* (from fully modulated to flat colours; from bold (or simplified) to subtle (or fussy); the *differentiation* in the use of a colour (or not); *hue* (the scale from red to blue, from warmth, salience, etc. to cold and calm – although the FPÖ most certainly aims for a different meaning for blue). In other words: colours – like other visual elements – mark information as vivid, causing emotional responses and, thereby, increasing the (apparent) relevance of information.

In sum, the DHA focuses on ways in which power-dependent semiotic means are used to construct positive self- and negative other presentations (US and THEM). This also captures the ability to select specific events in the flow of a narrative as well as, in our case, increased opportunities to convey messages through an additional mode, the visual, thus opening up space for 'calculated ambivalence' (Engel and Wodak, 2009, 2013). The latter is defined as the fact that one utterance carries at least two more or less contradictory meanings, oriented towards at least two different audiences. This not only increases the audience, i.e. the electorate, but also enables the speaker to deny any responsibility: after all, 'it wasn't meant that way.' Although the blurring of fiction and reality does not necessarily create ambivalence, it certainly does widen the possibilities of authors to create and play with meanings. Finally, the power of discourse creates regimes of quasi 'normality', i.e. what is deemed 'normal', e.g. with regard to the political messages circulating during an election campaign. For example, the discourses mobilised during such campaigns are not supposed to depict violence positively and, consequently, *Sagas from Vienna* caused some public controversy. This was, however, not coincidental as the FPÖ routinely uses the *strategy of provocation* to set the agenda and dominate the news (Wodak, 2013).

3 STRUCTURAL, HISTORICAL AND SITUATIONAL CONTEXTS

3.1 The new (right-wing) face of politics: the *fictionalisation of politics*

Without being able to provide an extensive introduction to the rise of right-wing populist parties across Europe in this article (but see Wodak, forthcoming; Wodak et al., 2013), we have to emphasise that both left-wing and right-wing populist parties exist. The difference relates to the *political imaginaries* which they put forward as well as to the structures of the parties and their recruitment patterns. The specifics of right-wing *populist* parties are thus not simply their claim to represent 'the pure people' against a 'corrupt elite' (Mudde, 2004: 543), what Pelinka (2005: 92) has called the '*vertical affect*'. This is certainly true but is also an inherent part of left-wing populism. Rather, *right-wing* populism is characterised by the addition of a nativist, xenophobic and frequently also anti-Semitic dimension, the '*horizontal affect*' (see also Wodak and Richardson, 2013). This 'affect' is subsequently utilised in conflicts about *new social cleavages*, created by right-wing populists, which cut across traditional left–right distinctions and frequently relate to legitimate fears about globalisation and the failure of mainstream parties to address acute social problems.

Importantly, right-wing populist parties' success also depends on *performance strategies* in modern media democracies (Wodak, 2011a, 2011b).

This implies the extensive use of the media (press and TV, new media such as comics, homepages, websites, Facebook, Twitter and so forth). Wider trends in politics towards *personalisation* and *commodification* furthermore underpin the focus on 'charismatic' leaders. Leading populist politicians employ *front stage performance* techniques which are frequently linked to popular *celebrity culture*: they oscillate between self-presentations as *Robin Hood* (i.e. saviour of 'the man and woman in the street') and self-presentations as 'rich, famous and/or attractive' (i.e. an 'idol'). Thus, a 'softer' image has been recently created – at least on front stage. Right-wing populist politicians are well trained as media personalities, and have frequently transformed a 'thug-like' appearance into that of a mainstream politician: they exhibit youth, they are handsome, fit and well dressed. In short: they assume the habitus of serious statesmen and stateswomen. As Gingrich (2002) states, such leaders can dress and behave like 'a man/woman for all seasons', carefully preparing their performance in front of different audiences. Their rhetoric and programmatic proposals are heavily *context-dependent*. This implies a specific selection of meeting places (beer tents, pubs, stages, market places, discos, and the so-called 'tea-parties' in the US), the clothes they wear (from suits to casual leather jackets, T-shirts or folklore dress), their selection of spin doctors and accompanying 'performers' on stage, the music, posters and logos on display, and so forth (Wodak, 2011a).

These performances are embedded in networks of narratives, narratives about the past (of the country, the party, the leader, etc.) which go beyond profane interests but enable emotional bonds (Eder, 2010: 431). Constructing a scenario in which people vote for a party thus demands the construction of an entire story which links people (the leader of the party with potential voters), the contemporary situation (be it the city/country or a particular meeting place) as well as the historically existing meanings (stored in the collective memories of groups). The wider political trend towards *fictionalising politics* offers fertile ground for constructing such scenarios. This fictionalisation is exemplified by, e.g., the US soap *The West Wing*, the British *Yes Minister* or the German *Im Kanzleramt* (see Wodak, 2010, 2011b) which might suggest that laypeople increasingly consider TV soaps as sources of information about politics. This points to frustration, saturation, and dissatisfaction with conventional news and politics, which typically only present images of a ritualised front stage (or a restricted backstage consisting of 'sex and crime' or quasi celebrity culture; e.g. Marshall, 2006: 248ff). Such developments imply a rising *depoliticisation* (Hay, 2007: 37), whereby the data we consider also produce and construct a possibly more satisfactory world of politics.

In sum, right-wing populist parties are defined by a *combination of vertical affect*, which is realised performatively and in a highly professional way, as well as the *construction of common enemies*: THEY are foreigners, defined

by 'race', religion or language. THEY are élites, not only within the country but also on the European stage ('Brussels') and at a global level ('Financial Capital'). Consequently, discursive strategies of 'victim–perpetrator reversal', 'scapegoating' and the 'construction of conspiracy theories' belong to the 'tool-kit' of right-wing populist rhetoric (Wodak, 2011b).

3.2 The recent development of the Austrian Freedom Party

While the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) has a long and complex history, stretching back to the late 1940s and, indeed, the German National spectrum of Austrian pre-World War II politics, this article focuses solely on the FPÖ under the leadership of H-C Strache since 2005.[5] The overt rhetoric of scape-goating, persecution and victimhood – now referring to 'invading Muslim hordes' and immigrants – has been central to the FPÖ's strategy and is increas-ingly mimicked by the governing parties. While the FPÖ's extreme right-wing nationalist base (some of whom are former Nazis) only constitutes a small portion of the electorate, it is still catered for through innuendo and a *strategy of calculated ambivalence* about questions of war guilt, the Holocaust and the crimes of the 'Third Reich'.

The 2010 local elections in Vienna provided the situational context of the analysed booklet. Since 1945, Vienna has been governed by various Social-Democratic majorities – most of the time with an absolute majority of votes and/or seats in the local parliament. Other parties represented in the local parliament are the Austrian Freedom Party, the centre-conservative Austrian People's Party and the left-wing Greens. However, the 2010 elec-tion cannot be understood without taking the FPÖ's split in April 2005 into account when a section under the direction of Jörg Haider splintered off to form a new party, the *Bündnis Zukunft Österreich* (Association for the Future of Austria, BZÖ). Although the FPÖ (but not the BZÖ) succeeded in enter-ing the Viennese parliament in October 2005, these turbulences explain the FPÖ's 2005 result (14.83%, 5.33% less in comparison to 2001). Already dur-ing its 2005 campaign the party under H-C Strache called for a *Duel over Vienna*, giving 'you', the voter, the choice to vote either for 'us Viennese' or 'for more immigration' (*Sie haben die Wahl*, Figure 1). This 2005 billboard features, in a nutshell, the comics' main message and is thus worth pointing to here. It depicts the Social-Democratic major ('M. Häupl', in *red*, the colour of the Social-Democratic Party – while the dominating colour is blue, the FPÖ's party colour) – who apparently argues 'for more immigration' (*Für mehr Zuwanderung*) and is spatially related to Vienna's most visible mosque. In contrast, Strache acts 'for us Viennese', which is 'backed' by his close-ness to St Stephen's Cathedral, Vienna's landmark. The presentation, e.g. the equal size of the two buildings, suggests an imminent threat – but relatively few Viennese will even know the mosque, situated in Vienna's 21st district,

Figure 1. *Duel over Vienna*. Available at: http://www.hcstrache.at/downloads/folder_duellumwien.pdf (accessed 10 July 2012).

whose minaret is exactly 32 metres tall. St Stephen's main tower, in contrast, is about 137 metres tall.

Another billboard (Figure 2), presented during the 2010 Viennese election campaign, was even more controversial, arguing for '*More courage for our 'Viennese Blood'* [in pure, saturated red]. *Too much otherness is not good for anybody* [maximally dark, taking the form of a stamp]' (for an analysis, see Köhler and Wodak, 2011: 12–17). The poster, firstly, appeals for 'courage' which is apparently shown by the FPÖ implying that others outside the FPÖ are too cowardly to stand up for 'our' (nativist) Viennese interests. The poster seems to explicitly link US versus THEM to nativism, i.e. to blood and thus biologically constructed groups. The FPÖ immediately rejected such an interpretation, and defended the poster on the grounds of an existing Viennese waltz by Johann Strauss (son) which illustrates the 'Viennese way of life'. This reference to a waltz (an operetta with the same title exists as well) was apparently indicated by the use of quotation marks. However, it makes more sense to understand the reference to 'Viennese blood' in terms of a deliberate provocation of the public, thereby making the FPÖ and its topics the main agenda in news reporting (Köhler and Wodak, 2011; Wodak, 2013). After all, purity of blood has been a crucial aspect of racist standpoints since the 15th century, culminating in the National-Socialist *Nuremberg Laws* (1935). In any case, 'too much' became the *leitmotif* of many FPÖ-materials, e.g. when warning against building mosques with minarets in every federal state in Austria.

Figure 2. *Viennese Blood*. Available at: http://www.hcstrache.at/home/?id=48 (accessed 10 July 2012).

The publication of the 'Mustafa Comic', the *Sagas*, during this election campaign in 2010 was thus not an exceptional event within the campaign; rather it was just another text from the FPÖ which was intended to provoke the public and the media. Indeed, the topic of *Viennese Blood* even reoccurs in the comic analysed below which had a circulation of 550,000.[6]

The publication *Sagas of Vienna* has 56 pages and is approximately 9,000 words long. It consists of nine stories in total, ranging from two to twelve pages.[7] Eight of these stories are versions of traditional sagas while the ninth story, *The Second Turkish Siege of Vienna 1683* – in fact the first when one starts reading the publication – is a more general, multimodal narrative of the Ottoman siege. This first 'saga' is the longest (about 2,500 words), has caused the most controversy and extensively blends the history of Vienna with present-day politics. We thus solely focus on this one. The written text tells the story of the Ottoman army besieging Vienna, a Polish hero who, as a messenger, established contact between the city and the relief army, and the subsequent defeat of the enemy. As in the other stories, the written text is often rather conventional in style – at least in comparison to the visuals which tell a parallel and different story. Here, the siege (e.g. Figure 4) is partly repelled via an intervention by a hero resembling Strache (Figure 5) who overcomes obstacles such as the elitist Social-Democratic mayor (Figure 5) and 'the left' (Figure 6). The visuals also tell the story of victory of the Christian forces over the Ottomans – this time though with the motto (a FPÖ election slogan) 'Home instead of Islam!' ('*Daham statt Islam!*') – and concludes with

Figure 7 in which Strache reprimands the mayor by intertextually referring to the aforementioned FPÖ election poster (Figure 2) with the slogan 'too much otherness is not good for anybody'.

The significance of the comic was implicitly acknowledged by the Social-Democratic Party (SPÖ) and its youth organisation which, shortly before Election Day, issued a counter-comic which aimed at deconstructing Strache and his agenda. However, it most probably came too late, was too complex and only had a circulation of 60,000. On Election Day, the SPÖ lost its absolute majority, gaining 44.34 per cent (4.75% less in comparison to 2005) while the FPÖ celebrated a rise of 10.94 per cent (25.77% in total), making it the second largest party in the regional parliament.

To assess the direct or causal influence of the 'Mustafa Comic' is, of course, impossible. However, the *Sagas* did disseminate an 'immigration narrative' via a rather innovative hybrid genre, possibly contributing to strong support from young, male voters (Sora, 2010).

4 ANALYSIS: H-C STRACHE AND THE PAST VERSUS 'THE OTHER'

The booklet's cover is blue and states, in white letters, *Sagas from Vienna*, which is followed by a red and white Viennese flag. Blue and white are the colours associated with the FPÖ, while red and white represent the Austrian/Viennese flag. Thus – metonymically – US, the Austrians, the Viennese and the FPÖ, are brought together. Figure 3 shows the first substantial word–image combination in the booklet. The perspective is that of a viewer (probably) situated on top of *Kahlenberg Mountain* from which the relief army, consisting of troops of the Holy Roman Empire allied with the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, liberated Vienna in 1683. This anonymous viewer is facing H-C Strache and Prince Eugene.[8] The latter is depicted in line with a well-known work by the artist Jacob von Schuppen (1718).[9] By bringing these two actors together, an interdiscursive link between discourses about the Viennese election and discourses about the Ottoman threat, as well as battles and war in general, is established. Strache is contrasted with the opulent portrayal of Prince Eugene by wearing a commoner's clothes (in blue, the colour of his party). More importantly though, the two are, first, represented symbiotically, i.e. materially united by touching each other and speaking through one speech balloon; secondly, they frame the centre of the city, i.e. St Stephen's Cathedral, as indicated by its main tower.

This visual symbiosis between past (Prince Eugene), present (H-C Strache) and the(ir) libidinous object (represented by St Stephen's Cathedral) blends past and present in a seemingly harmonious way. This fictionalisation is further supported by using particular linguistic expressions, such as the archaic Latin formulation of 'anno' (top-right) and the content of the speech balloon. Here, the final two paragraphs are salient as they explicitly fuse past

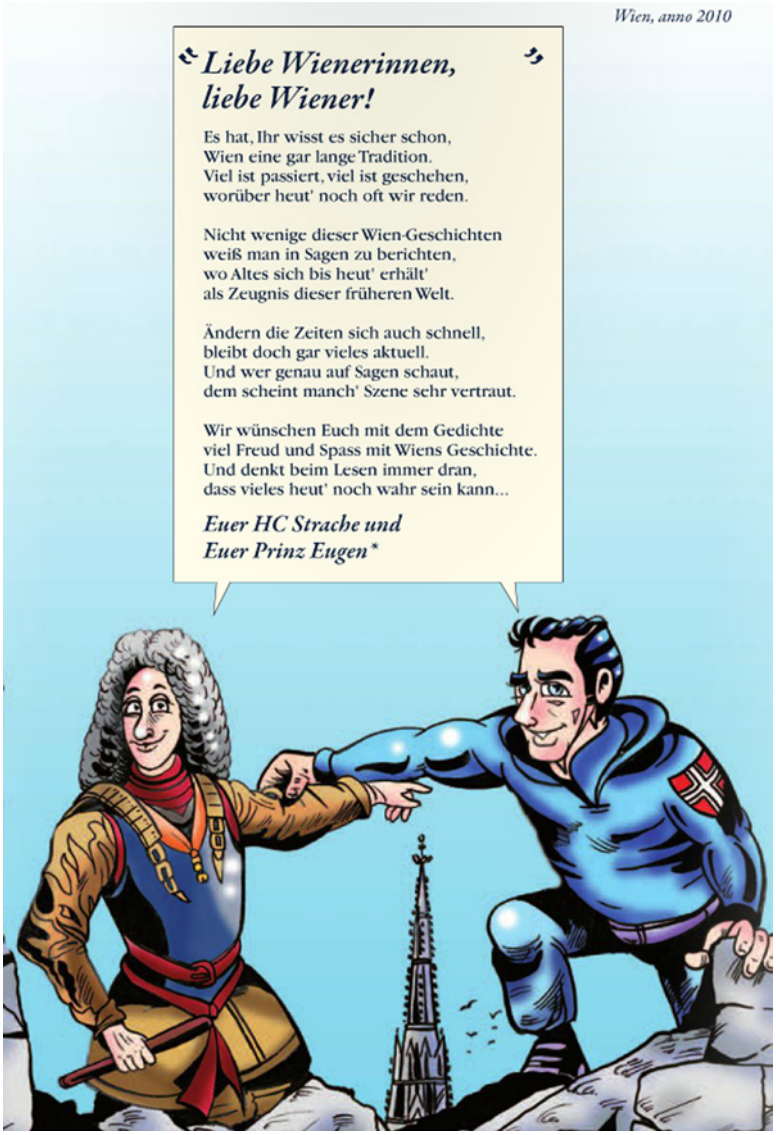

Figure 3. 'Heroes' of past and present (FPÖ, 2010: 5).

and present, insinuating that what happened once is or might be happening again.[10] For example, the use of personal deixis ('we') supports the blending of past and present by explicitly linking the current leader of the FPÖ to Prince Eugene; i.e. establishing a singular figure which contains both personae. By insisting that the sagas remain relevant to our present situation ('much might still be true today'), the FPÖ mobilises the topos of *learning lessons from the past.* The fact that readers 'know' that this is about Turkish immigrants rests solely on collective memories of the siege of Vienna 1683, the particular 'mne-

monic socialisation' (Zerubavel, 1996: 285) experienced by those growing up in the city, which is presupposed and easily inferred. Thus, this fictionalisation of political propaganda justifies the argumentative move from data (the symbiosis of Prince Eugene and H-C Strache) to the claim that Strache will also succeed in 'defending Vienna against another, current Turkish siege'. This argument is substantiated by a conclusion rule based on shared narratives which are part of Viennese collective memories (and school books), i.e. that Prince Eugene fought successfully against 'the Turks'.

After this introduction to the booklet, the first and main story deals with the siege of Vienna in 1683. Figure 4, the second double-page spread of this chapter, depicts Kara Mustafa, the then military leader of the Ottoman Empire, holding a sword and pointing to the city saying: 'if it doesn't work this time, my successors will have to join the EU … ' – another blending of past and present while also insinuating the – to date unsuccessful – attempts of Turkey to join the EU.

Figure 4. 'The Turk' – a persistent danger (FPÖ, 2010: 8–9).

Kara Mustafa is depicted as unhealthy or even ill (use of the colour green) and is ridiculed through reference to the stereotypical Turkish pronunciation of German words, exaggerating the use of *Umlaut* 'ü' instead of vowels pronounced in a more German way ('*Wünn's*' instead of '*Wenn's*'; '*düsmül*' instead of '*diesmal*'; '*müne*' instead of '*meine*'; '*Nachfülger*' instead of '*Nachfolger*'; '*zür*' instead of '*zur*'; '*EÜ*' instead of '*EU*'). This emphasises and presents the character as 'a typical Turk' who is incapable of speaking/learning proper German.

The sword is also salient in this context: while this weapon is arguably adequate when referring to the 17th century, the constant blending of past and present (see above and below), however, creates a sense of danger that is hardly justified today. Such a reading is supported by the metonymic 'Viennese reply' (represented by St Stephen's Cathedral) which implies that Turkey 'neither today nor in a couple of hundred years' will ever belong to Europe. The Viennese dialect further serves to demarcate US from THEM (see De Cillia and Wodak, 2006). This *visualised* argument suggests that any Turkish EU-membership is dangerous and must be fiercely resisted; a conclusion based on the premise that an Ottoman/Turkish threat to US existed – and what was the case once is still relevant today (*topos of history*, see Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 80). Here again, the fictionalisation of politics conveys a rather complex argument via semiotic means which gain their force by being embedded in an epic narrative.

We now turn to the most controversial part of the *Sagas from Vienna* (Figure 5). Focusing on the top two panels first, the reader encounters H-C

Figure 5. Violence (FPÖ, 2010: 10–11).

Strache and a boy; the former is holding a sword – illustrating the means apparently needed to oppose past *and* present danger. In addition, his gesture is characteristic of a leader, pointing the way for his followers. The blurring of past and present through means of fictionalisation, however, does not remain on an implicit argumentative level but turns into an explicit appeal for violence: in a hardly translatable Viennese idiom, Strache promises the boy a reward: 'if you manage to hit Mustafa, you receive a [typical Viennese]

sausage.' The boy enthusiastically agrees, successfully hits Kara Mustafa with his slingshot and subsequently demands a '*Burenhäutl*'. This leads to the retreat of 'the Turk' who, by claiming that if someone dared to do the same within his group, 'he would immediately be stoned! Like adulteresses!', explicitly illustrates rather 'barbaric norms' for 'Turks' and Turkish culture, both past and present.

The FPÖ defended itself against accusations of hate incitement by claiming that H-C Strache was referring to Kara Mustafa, the historical figure and military leader of the Ottoman army, (*Falter,* 2010a) which would thus make the aggressive position acceptable. However, by just using the label 'Mustafa', we can identify a paradigmatic case of calculated ambivalence in that 'Mustafa' operates as a stereotypical and generic Turkish name. Hence, the apparent focus on a particular Turk ('the Mustafa'/'*dem Mustafa*') enables a blending of past and present and legitimises violence against all Turks, as the definite article '*dem*'/'the' can also refer to all Mustafas, i.e. to 'all Turks'. There is yet another less obvious aspect worth pointing to: Kara Mustafa uses the term '*traut*' (having the courage to), which serves as an intertextual link to the party's wider strategy of positive self-representation by presenting itself as courageous (see Figure 2). Moreover, another implied and implicit reading becomes apparent: the insinuation of the 'David versus Goliath' narrative of the Old Testament. Here, the small boy incorporates David who courageously defeats the giant Goliath, i.e. Mustafa (this was explicitly suggested by the FPÖ, see *Kurier*, 2010), by successfully using a slingshot just like in the Old Testament. This intertextual reference can also be interpreted as the construction of US, the FPÖ together with 'the people', as the underdog versus THEM, i.e. Muslim migrants and the 'Social-Democratic establishment' (see below).

Figure 5 also includes a representation of the current Social-Democratic Major Häupl, which indicates that the *Sagas* are also directed against the political opponent, the left. A basic demarcation line is drawn by opposing the ordinary clothes of H-C Strache and the boy (both featuring the Viennese emblem) with the mayor of Vienna who wears magenta or 'fat cat' clothes. The latter is depicted as an unreliable and cowardly opportunist who thinks that the defenders are 'stupid' and does not bother about 'minarets, muezzin and forced veiling'. He has already prepared a feast in h is cellar and bought 'Turkish clothes' and 'hookahs'. Thus, he lacks courage and claims that 'I am after all a cosmopolitan and not a racist'.

While opposition to 'minarets, muezzin and forced veiling' might be understood as part of a secular argument, it here serves to create a straw-man fallacy in order to recycle election slogans, such as 'Home instead of Islam'. Resembling comic-style *caption text boxes* which represent the narrator or a background voice, these can be seen as 'answers' to Häupl's thoughts.

Yet, it is not only the Social-Democrats via the current mayor but also those to the left of the SPÖ (presumably other left-wing Viennese linked to the *Greens*) which are 'othered'. In Figure 6, Strache is characterised as a commoner which demarcates him from both the elitist mayor's with his opulent outfit as well as the left. In his call to arms ('Let's go boys! Freedom, human rights and our homeland is at stake!!'), the weapon again indicates urgency, courage and danger. In contrast, the left is visually nominated via associating it with rats (!)

Figure 6 'The hero' and 'the left' (FPÖ, 2010: 12).

and characterised as phlegmatic, dirty, and depraved, as smoking joints and as being thoroughly unhealthy. Resembling homeless and stranded, i.e. almost like beggars, they have no homeland and thus exclude themselves from the in-group: 'We are lefties! We need the flag only for taking a shit, hahahah!'

Finally, Figure 7 presents us with a 'metaphorical scenario' (Musolff, 2006), the 'post-battle idyll' rooted in Viennese tradition. Not only is the scene situated in a *Heuriger*, a traditional Viennese tavern in which small-scale wine farmers sell home-grown wine and traditional food, it furthermore establishes an intertextual relationship to the party's election battle cry (Strauss's son playing the violin to the tune of *Viennese blood, Viennese blood, too much otherness is not good for anybody … Viennese blood …*; see Figure 2). Here, we encounter another instance of fictionalisation of politics via blending of past and present, as is visible in the exchange between the two opponents H-C Strache and Häupl. The latter is portrayed as unhealthy, alcoholic and decadent (with beads of sweat and rosy cheeks), while Strache states that 'the people' will remember Häupl's insincerity.

Figure 7. Happy Ending and Viennese Blood (FPÖ, 2010: 16).

5 CONCLUSIONS

The comic-like publication introduced above caused a considerable public debate and resulted in almost 1,000 complaints to the police (*Sedition*, §283), although these were rejected by the courts in January 2011. The courts did not regard the comic as committing or encouraging sedition (or hate incitement), i.e. propagating a 'hostile stance towards an official religion, a religious association, members of a race, [or] a people'. Arguably, the strategy of calculated ambivalence was key to this outcome as it enabled the party to publicly claim that 'everybody who reads the comic, knows that it is not the Turk in general who is meant' (FPÖ party secretary Herbert Kickl, quoted in *Falter*, 2010b). Similarly, Strache claimed that his party fulfilled an 'educational mandate' (in contrast to 'fun-free political competitors', *Kurier*, 2010) and compared the slingshot scene to the throwing of *menhirs* in *Asterix* (*Die Presse*, 2010). In this way, the FPÖ succeeded in downplaying and relativising hate-incitement accusations by fallacious analogies and by claiming that this comic was per se

fictional, as the title *Sagas of Vienna* explicitly suggested; although, as illustrated above, past and present as well as fiction and reality were constantly intertwined.

Of course, blending past and present does not necessarily fictionalise nor create ambivalence. However, in this case, calculated ambivalence was created by manifold linguistic, pragmatic and multimodal devices: by using quotation marks, thus distancing oneself from nativist claims; by intertextual indirect references throughout the *Sagas* to nativist claims; by blending the personas of Prince Eugene and H-C Strache and by separating them again, when necessary. By constructing a clear US and THEM axis throughout the *Sagas* while simultaneously wearing historical clothes but retaining their present names; and, finally, by even employing scenarios of the Old Testament as fallacious analogies. All these means allow for multiple readings and denial of intended discriminatory meanings. Although we have deconstructed likely readings, studying the actual reception of the *Sagas* was, three years after the election campaign, methodically impossible. However, given the increasing use of comics and related hybrid genres by far-right populists and radicals (Forchtner and Wodak, forthcoming; Palandt, 2011), studying relevant audience responses should be a priority in future research.

In our analysis, we have cast some light on these instances of calculated ambivalence through the fictionalisation of contemporary politics by investigating the innovative use of comics in political propaganda. By combining the discourse–historical approach in critical discourse analysis with insights from comic research, we have been able to illustrate that political arguments are skilfully deployed on both a visual and a written textual level while blending past and present and appealing to chauvinistic identity politics. Most importantly, we suggest that these arguments rely on group-specific collective memories, i.e. shared narratives of the past which can continuously be insinuated or even explicitly addressed. Many examples of the fallacy of hasty generalisation of collectives, such as 'the Turks' and 'the left wing', are also apparent. The former are depicted as violent others and, consequently, learning the lessons from the past, this demands and justifies a harsh response today (topos of history) while 'the left wing' is depicted as disconnected from ordinary people through 'fat cat' and opportunistic behaviour. In both cases, the contemporary fictionalisation of politics makes it possible for collective memories, i.e. shared narratives, to provide a background against which an innovative form, the genre of comics, is utilised; and, in turn, this provides a platform for a right-wing populist party to implement its political agenda.

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NOTES

1. For an assessment of the representation of the Ottoman siege and its (contemporary) political use, see Feichtinger and Heiss, 2012, 2013.
2. For an extensive history of the genre, see Duncan and Smith (2009: 20-84) and Sabin (1996).
3. See Saraceni (2003), Mizushima and Stapleton (2006), Costello (2009), Eerden (2009), Shinohara and Matsunaka (2009), Tsakona (2009) for recent theoretical and methodological research on comics.
4. See Van Leeuwen and Jaworski (2002), Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), Richardson and Wodak (2009a, 2009b).
5. Due to space restrictions, we have to refer readers to summaries of the history of the FPÖ until 2005 in Bailer-Galanda and Neugebauer (1993), Krzyżanowski and Wodak (2009), Reisigl and Wodak (2000) and Richardson and Wodak (2009a, 2009b).
6. This massive effort followed a similar attempt to reach young voters deployed during the 2009 elections to the European Parliament (for information about this graphic novel, *The Blue Planet*, see Forchtner and Wodak, forthcoming).
7. It is of course difficult to provide the exact number of words as the text could not be copied out of the digitally available file. However, the numbers are fairly accurate and indicate the substantial length of the publication.
8. It is interesting to note that Prince Eugene only played a minor role in this battle but became the chief commander of the Habsburg Empire's forces over subsequent decades of fighting the Ottomans.
9. For those readers unfamiliar with Prince Eugene, the FPÖ provides a short summary of his life and the battle over Vienna in 1683 on page four of the booklet.
10. 'Although times change quite rapidly, much does indeed remain relevant. And whoever examines *Sagas* in detail, will recognise some scenes as quite familiar. We wish you with this poem much joy and fun with Vienna's history. And keep in mind while reading, that much might still be true today … Your HC Strache and Your Prince Eugene'.

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