

Discourses about migration from political elites: Identity politics by a discourse of inequality?

A discourse analysis in a critical setting of discourses about migration in the Federal Republic of Germany 1999 – 2002

Summary

I. Introduction

Since the Federal Republic of Germany recruited foreign workers from 1955 until 1973 politicians have lead public debates about migrants. Most of the accusations in the last decades are also basic elements of the discourses from 1999 to 2002. Migrants are mainly accused of refusing integration, of misusing employee benefits and of being criminal (see part II, section 1.1.1). Those interpretative paradigms are part of excluding strategies of inequality.

II. “Extremism of the center”?

Strategies of inequality can not only be found in the repertoire of right extremist parties, like the Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD), but are also frequently used by democratic parties like the SPD und the CDU. In this context research often refers to the term „extremism of the center“, which originally has been used by the US-american sociologist Walter Lipset in 1958 (see part I, chapter 6). The use of this definition in the context of discrimination by democratic parties will be critically reviewed. It constitutes the point of departure for the analysis of three political discourses about migration. First, the debate about double citizenship (1999), secondly the discourse about the claim for a German „leading-culture“ (2000) and thirdly, the debate about the control of migration (2000-2002) (see part I, chapter 5).

III. Objectives

The main focus of this work is to analyse strategies of inequality in discourses about migration (see part IV, section 1.3.2) as well as to build up a model for strategies of equality. That will be done by taking into account the actual situation of migration and integration in the Federal Republic of Germany (see part III, section 8.1). On the basis of the strategies of equality this work displays the normative perspectives of discourses (see part III, sections 7.3 and 8.6 as well as part IV, section 5.3).

IV. A new approach: “discourse analysis in a critical setting”

Critical discourse analysis has been chosen as the methodical approach that allows most adequate to integrate the historical, political, juridical and institutional contexts of the discourses about migration (see part I, chapter 3).

The studies of critical discourse analysis from Jäger (1999), Wodak et al. (1995) and Van Dijk (1991) have so far been concentrating on criticising ideology. Their emphasis lies on the strategies of inequality (see part I, section 2.3). However, this work also aims at encompassing the strategies of equality. To integrate these appropriately into a wider framework, it introduces a special combination of three perspectives of discourse analysis as “discourse analysis in a critical setting”:

- The approach of Schwab-Trapp (2001), who emphasises the role of political culture
- Critical discourse analysis after Jäger (2004), who is specialised on modern collective symbols
- The socio-linguistic method after Wodak et al. (1998) (see part I, section 3.5).

V. Main research questions

For the analysis of the discourses about migration in this work, the following questions were taken in focus:

- (1) Which are the conditions for politicians using strategies of inequality? How are those strategies included into democratic discourses? Which are the functions, those strategies serve in democratic discourses?
- (2) In contrast to that: Which are the characteristics of the structure of strategies of equality? Which are the strategic options and perspectives for the understanding between the majority of the domestic society and immigrants?
- (3) Which are the interactive impacts, that derive from those interpretative patterns of public discourses and the political culture in the Federal Republic of Germany?
(see the hypothesis in part I, sections 2.4 and 2.5)

VI. Empirical proceedings

In this work public contributions of democratic politicians of the center of the political spectrum: CDU, SPD, FDP und Bündnis '90/Die Grünen were analysed. In a pretest, 100 articles were tested on strategies of equality and inequality. These have been comprised political debates, direct contributions of politicians in the press in form of interviews and reports and resolutions. For a detailed examination of terms, argumentation structures, interpretative

paradigms as well as their social, political and juridicial contexts 60 articles were chosen. The overall average quota of strategies of inequality in the three discourses that were reviewed came up to 18%. That is one fifth (see part IV, section 3.1.2).

VII. Results

As a result, this work has made contributions to qualitative research in five dimensions:

- (1) A new method – the discourse analysis in a critical setting – has been developed to use it for a detailed examination of both, strategies of inequality and of equality.
- (2) The model of the strategies of inequality, which originally stems from the research of racism, has been differentiated.
- (3) It has been encompassed and examined how democratic parties include strategies of inequality into their democratic discourses.
- (4) As antipode to the strategies of inequality a model of strategies of equality has been developed, tested and revised on the basis of the empirical data. (see part IV, section 1.3.2). This model has further got a normative perspective through the incorporation of the perspectives of both, the society and the immigrants (see part III, section 3.3.2).
- (5) In this setting, also has been compiled and evaluated, which kind of modern collective symbols have typically been used in the political discourses about migration (see part V, section 2.3).

This work has produced considerable qualitative and quantitative proof for the thesis, that the traditional, institutional, and politico-cultural structures in Germany, not only produce the base for strategies of inequality, but also have the resources for strategies of equality. Which of these elements are activated depends on the overall strategy of the politician. If a party has been reflecting on discrimination and the consequences of migration for the society, then there is a bigger chance of not using strategies of inequality in discourses on migration. On one hand the number of strategies of inequality has been reduced in the three political discourses about migration from 1999 to 2002. On the other hand, the institutional and politico-cultural structures of opportunity are only being changed very slowly (see part V, section 2.4).