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The Proudly Australian Populist

Discourse Analysis of Pauline Hanson's Language

Abstract

The resurgence of populism across the world has favoured the formation of right-wing populist parties in Australia and energised Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party. The party has enjoyed two iterations of electoral success in the Australian federation, in the 1990s and from 2016. At present, Hanson is the leader of a party with two seats in the federal Senate and supporting the governing Liberal Party in Western Australia. At first glance, she may be seen as a typical xenophobic populist, yet her figure and her message present specific peculiarities which give her surprising popularity with Australian voters.
This paper analyses a corpus of some of the most controversial speeches delivered by Pauline Hanson during her political career, in a timespan ranging from 1996 to 2019. A Critical Discourse Analysis framework is employed to uncover the ideological discourse construed by the populist leader. She portrays herself as an ordinary Australian who acts in the name of the people and gives voice to the people. Her discourse entails the populist division between "the pure people" and "the corrupt elite," imbued with racism, particularly towards Australia's Indigenous population and a State perceived as favouring it, but also towards the Asian and Islamic communities.

Keywords: *populism, critical discourse analysis, Australia, immigration*

In a moment of great political upheaval, the consequences of globalisation, financial crisis, the feeling of uncertainty about the future, the fear of immigration and terrorism have favoured a growing consensus for right-wing populism. Nationalist populist parties express the growing disillusionment with politics and a distrust of the elites while claiming to represent *the true people*, in contrast with usurpers threatening the identity and integrity of the nation (see Wodak 2015; Inglehart and Norris 2016; Demata 2018). This paper aims to explore the so-called new right-wing populism. In particular, the study investigates the political discourse of Pauline Hanson, viewed as an instance of Australian right-wing populism. The analysis aims at unveiling the peculiar strategies exploited by Hanson to express some typical populist motifs, namely, the construction of the leader as a representative of the people and the definition of public enemies.

1. Right-wing populism

Populism is undoubtedly one of the most widely used and abused terms in contemporary political debate, and it is hardly ever accompanied by an explanation. Despite being overused, the controversial nature of the phenomenon and the daily use of the term by the media make it challenging to define it. Nevertheless, many may be able to associate with this term various contemporary events and names of politicians, such as Brexit, Marine Le Pen, Matteo Salvini, Donald Trump, Jair Bolsonaro, or Nicolas Maduro.

Several definitions have been suggested in the frame of discursive approaches to populism. In the light of Cas Mudde's (2004) argument and propositions, we subscribe to the view that populism essentially revolves around two elements: individualism and the Manichean dualism that contrasts "the pure people," characterised as hard-working, simple, honest and productive, to "the corrupt elite," parasite and expression of the economic power. From a discourse-theoretical perspective, De Cleen (2019) defines populism as a claim to represent "the people," construed as a large powerless group, and "the elite," conceived as a small, illegitimately powerful group that neglects the people's legitimate demands, undermining its sovereignty. Mudde also identifies populism as a "thin-centered ideology" (2004, 543), which constitutes the matrix of discourse, and can be used from both the right and the left. Moreover, especially considering the contemporary mediatisation of politics, Moffitt (2016) contends that populism must not be considered as an entity, but as a political style that is performed and enacted across different political and cultural contexts. Populism can, therefore, comprise certain core elements, such as an appeal to the people, anti-politics, anti-elitism, anti-establishment, belligerent ethos, and plain language, which foster a sense of closeness with the disenchanted audiences. Populism usually exploits, indeed, crises of democratic representation, promoting vague forms of direct democracy (Block and Negrine 2017).

The key element of populism is the conception of "the people" as a homogeneous entity held together by a moral glue. In the populist view, however, supporting a moral world does not necessarily mean personally having an ethical behaviour, but rather adhere to *common sense*, a thought which is shared by the ordinary people, namely those who have moral understanding, who care for their family and for concrete, essential things. Populism is used to describe various political situations which pursue different goals, and this makes it the extreme boundary of representative democracy. Nevertheless, in all its declinations, populism may be considered as a celebration of "the people." Populism depicts the people as a unified whole which, by virtue of its numerosity, comes to represent the democratic will of the nation. Nevertheless, populism also confers the leader authority to fight the supposed enemies of the nation, and, especially

right-wing populism, may support discriminatory and intolerant attitudes towards individual rights and minorities (Demata 2017).

For the purpose of this paper, it will be useful to narrow the spectrum and distinguishing between, on the one hand, right-wing populism (e.g. Trump in the USA, Bolsonaro in Brazil, *Vox* in Spain) and, on the other, left-wing populism (e.g. *Podemos* in Spain, Bernie Sanders in the USA, Chávez in Venezuela), with the latter aiming at generating a *change of civilization* and restoring democracy instead of the mere *change of government*:

> Right-wing populism claims that it will bring back popular sovereignty and restore democracy. […] Left populism on the contrary wants to recover democracy to deepen and extend it. (Mouffe 2018, 23-24)

Right and left-wing populism share common features which could be simplified in the ideal of the construction of an identitary "us," appeal to the people, anti-establishment feeling, personalization of politics, simplified language. The difference between the various types of populisms would lie in the specific conceptualisation of "the people" and the identification of the "them."

1.1 Leaders, us and the other

Whether right- or left-oriented, populism often seems to rely on a charismatic leader. Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser even argue that populism is "politics for ordinary people by extraordinary leaders who construct ordinary profiles" (2017, 78). Populism is the embodiment of the people's will by a leader who disputes the existing leadership. Populist leaders are thus recognised not because they belong to "the people," but because they share a conceptual commonality (or closeness) of language and attitude with the people, and their core is a "moral" vision of society and politics. In this context, good and evil are more powerful than political divisions, which brings us back to the concept of "thin ideology" which sees populism to be neither right nor left, though populists can be either left or right, or even centrist or environmentalist (Beeson 2019). Thus, populism takes on a right or left connotation depending on the political leader who adopts it.

Leaders are considered, and construe themselves, as the real representatives of the people, bearers and defenders of its values. Consequently, the emergence of figures of charismatic leaders, or seen as such, has been favoured by the gradual emancipation of citizens from the authority of professional politicians. People look for someone who can identify with their interests rather than representing them. As Mudde argues, people

want to be heard in the case of fundamental decisions, but first and foremost, they want *leadership*. They want politicians who know (rather than "listen to") the people, and who make their wishes come true. (2004, 558)

This explains why charismatic leaders do not tend to represent the established political elites but to pose as outsiders with the role of spokespersons of their supporters. It is against this backdrop that we can define populism as the construction of the people's reasons by a leader who disputes the existing leadership, to undermine it and take its place. Thus, "the trademark of populism would be just the special emphasis on a political logic, which, as such, is a necessary ingredient of politics *tout court*" (Laclau 2005, 18).

Leaders' tasks, therefore, entail encouraging personal identification with their followers. This is achieved through simplification and polarisation: "we are *the People*," constructed as a single, homogenous group (simplification), situated against the enemy *Other* (polarisation), in an "us *versus* them" logic (Panizza 2017, 409-410).

Right-wing populist leaders, in particular, tend to adopt nativist approaches: the construction of an "us," the idea of community or "heartland" (Taggard 2000; Mudde 2004, 561) against "them" as an enemy to fight, a tendency to defend the rights of the native-born population against those of the immigrant subjects. As previously stated, the difference between the various populisms would then lie in the identification of "them": corrupt elites, financial power, illegal immigrants, or the dangerous outsiders. Especially right-wing populist leaders speak to the gut feelings of the people and are in constant search of an enemy, as hinging on an enemy is fundamental for whoever sees the "other," those different from "us," only as a threat and never as an opportunity. Some of the issues preferred by these populists are thus represented by immigration, taxes, crime, and nationalism.

Populists routinely enact a conspicuous exhibition of closeness to ordinary citizens. This self-presentation can take different shapes, and can be enacted through the use of casual or colloquial language, or by adopting an informal dress code. By appealing to the people, speaking like one of the people and looking like one of the people, populists wish to embody the people and stress the sovereignty of the people and popular will (Jagers and Walgrave 2007).

1.2 Australian populism and Pauline Hanson

While the world was being "swamped" by the populist wave, Australia already had its populist actors on the stage. Although Australia has experienced years of democracy, which has always been considered a distinctive feature of the nation, voters have gradually abandoned major

parties, allowing minor parties, in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, to reach their highest levels since World War II (Grant, More and Lynch 2019).

In Australia, the rise of populist sentiment is more to be ascribed to cultural anxiety than economic insecurity. In such a diverse, progressive and multicultural country, populist supporters are those who feel 'left behind' by society, as their world is evolving out of their control, as in the case of immigration (Wood, Daley and Chivers 2018). They desire a world more similar to the one they used to know, and in which their children would not risk living a worse life than their parents:

> Minor party voters are more likely to believe life in Australia is worse compared to 50 years ago. They wish that Australia could be more like it was in the past, and they have little faith that the next generation will live better lives than their parents. (Wood, Daley and Chivers 2018, 403-404)

Recent political developments like the current presidency of the USA and Britain's Brexit vote have provided the world with an insight into the power of populism. While such events have received much media and academic attention, still less known is the fact that Australia also has its fiery contender for the title of Antipodean Trump. The resurgence of populism across the world has indeed favoured the creation of right-wing populist parties in Australia and energised Pauline Hanson's *One Nation Party* (Grant, More and Lynch 2019).

One Nation emerged as a political force in 1997, a year after Pauline Hanson was first elected to the Federal Parliament. Hanson's election proved to be successful in terms of votes gathered rather than seats won, and this was viewed as a threat to political democracy by public intellectuals, people involved in politics, and social scientists. *One Nation* right-wing populism reflected, indeed, the failure of democracy which saw the elites of the traditional labour and business parties "undercut their ties to their traditional working-class and middle-class bases." (Lynch 2019, 43). A right-populist manifestation, *One Nation* claimed to give voice to those who wanted to preserve their homes and their jobs and saw foreigners as a threat to Australian employment. What is at stake here is not so much the fear of the other, as the fear of a social and economic downfall (Lynch 2019, 48). The fear of losing one's status increases with the loss of trust in a government neglecting the needs of the virtuous tax-payers, "us," the true Australians, whose money is instead used to assist those considered as unworthy, "the other." When Hanson first appeared on the political scene in 1996 (Kingston 2001), the undeserving others were identified with the Aboriginals who, she argued, were the beneficiaries of extensive

government subsidies at the expense of genuine Australians, the people she claimed to speak for. In her maiden speech,[1] she stated:

> Along with millions of Australians, I am fed up to the back teeth, with the inequalities that are being promoted by the government and paid for by the tax-payer under the assumption that Aboriginals are the most disadvantaged people in Australia. (Hanson, 10 September 1996)

The attitude of putting the government as the focus of blame makes it possible for the target of racism to change according to circumstances. References to Aboriginals, for instance, have in the following years given way to references to Islam, Muslims, and Asians. Hanson accused the Labor government of discriminating against the British in favour of "Asians" and, allowing "too many" migrants at a time of high unemployment. Although, in this criticism, *One Nation* did not mention race, they proposed policies which would effectively exclude Asians (Deangelis 1998).

In 1998, while Hanson lost her seat in the House of Representatives, her right-wing *One Nation Party* secured 11 out of 89 seats in the Queensland State election, and 22.68 per cent of the primary vote (Kingston 2001). However, the party was unable to take advantage of this electoral success and, over the decades, both the party and Pauline Hanson herself were overwhelmed by scandals. In 2015, *One Nation* changed its name to *Pauline Hanson's One Nation* (henceforth PHON), and in the 2016 federal election gained parliamentary representation in the Australian Senate, making a significant impact on Australian politics and society. The party's official statement "Principles and Objectives" which announces "to speak for the voiceless and the powerless against the established forces of the Australian party system" (Senator Pauline Hanson 2017), together with the name of Pauline Hanson, was well put forward as to make her leadership clear, and thus align PHON with the most well-known right-wing populists. The re-emergence of PHON coincided with the noticeable rise in attacks on Muslims and other ethno-religious minorities which, together with the perennial war on terror and polemics against the rights of asylum seekers, led to a dramatic increase in Islamophobia and racism (Wood, Daley and Chivers 2018). Among other factors which contributed to the rise of right-wing populism, it

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[1] A maiden speech is the first formal speech made by an elected politician in the parliaments of some countries. It is an important personal moment and a significant event in a parliamentary career as it gives the speaker the opportunity of discussing their political programme, goals and motivations. Traditionally, a maiden speech is brief, uncontroversial and, should be heard uninterrupted.

is necessary to mention the unpopular spending cuts imposed by Abbott and Turnbull Liberal governments (2013-2018).

Moreover, these movements gained the support of regional areas and rural populations of small farmers who felt forgotten by Labour governments, while mines were being closed. Lastly, many far-right political parties running for the elections directed their votes to PHON (Lynch 2019). In the meanwhile, neither Hanson, nor her rhetoric, or populist sentiments have disappeared. When, in 1996, Hanson appeared on the Australian political scene, hardly anyone had ever heard of her. Then, in less than a year, she came out of relative obscurity to become a "phenomenon" (Putnis 1997; Klingston 2000): "not for who she is or what she says, but because so many are listening to her, and agreeing with her" (Tracey Curro, quoted in Morris 2006, 232). Hanson's maiden speech to the Parliament attracted an unsuspected number of people who started sharing her view that Australia was in "danger of being swamped by Asians" and that Aboriginals enjoyed too many benefits "over other Australians."

It was because of derogatory comments in the *Queensland Times* on 6 January 1996 about Aboriginal privileges that, shortly before the election, Pauline Hanson was disendorsed by the *Liberal Party* which she had joined in 1995 and for which she was standing as a candidate for the federal seat of Division of Oxley in Queensland (Kingston 2001). Notwithstanding the disendorsement, Hanson won the election and took her seat as an independent, as she was the only choice for dissatisfied labour voters, as well as all those voters attracted to her strident views. After delivering her famous pugnacious maiden speech on 10 September, 1996, Hanson's support and popularity grew at such a significant rate that, in April 1997, she founded *One Nation Party* with associates David Ettridge and David Oldfield.[2] Nonetheless, she failed to win re-election to Parliament in 1998 and, from that moment, she started experiencing a long period of electoral reverse of fortune. Haunted by legal problems, in 2002, she was forced to resign from *One Nation*. It took her nearly twenty years and nine failed State and Federal elections to gain back her position. In the meanwhile, Hanson did her best not to be forgotten, which included a constant presence in Australian public life and extensive media appearances on numerous popular shows, like the television competition *Dancing with the Stars*, which she almost won (Jose 2019; Sengul 2020).

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[2] David Ettridge, an Australian businessman, and David Oldfield, a former Australian politician, co-founded One Nation party with Pauline Hanson, and later became her senior staffer and advisor. Oldfield lately unleashed on his former friend Hanson, saying that neither she wrote her own speeches, nor her thoughts had ever been original (Oldfield 2019).

In 2016, against all the odds and predictions, Hanson was back on the political stage, elected to the Australian Federal Senate, representing Queensland, ready to "bring back Australian values" (*Pauline Hanson's One Nation* 2018). Though not alone anymore, as this time she was elected together with three other senators of her party, *One Nation*'s populism remains a one-woman show, practically relying on Hanson's personality and appeal.

The reasons why Pauline Hanson and her 'Hansonism' are back are manifold and, undoubtedly, the more profound political motivations are not the focus of this paper (see Goot 2005). However, it seems relevant to mention that she has attracted all those who believed she could voice their fears and disenchantment with major parties. Her supporters were, and are, those who have a retrospective view of Australia and Australian values. Hanson and her electorate are those who hold onto a reassuring view of their country when jobs and opportunities were abundant, immigration was Anglo-Celtic (thus not representing a threat to the white Australian lifestyle), and security was guaranteed (Deangelis 1998).

Hanson's success is to be found in her determination and plain speaking. Though not a skilled and polished speaker, she 'has the guts' to say what other people only dare to think or whisper among trusted friends or family. This 'flaming red-haired' former 'fish-and-chips lady,' apparently unsophisticated, almost uneducated (she left school at the age of fifteen), with two failed marriages, describes herself as "an ordinary Australian who cares about the future of my children, and my fellow Australians" (*One Nation* 2016).

She speaks her mind, but she is not presumptuous, and she is ready to admit her mistakes. Her infamous and memorable "Please explain?" question has become lexicalised in Australia. In October 1997, the Australian edition of *60 Minutes*[3] broadcast her interview with journalist Tracey Curro, in a special report titled "The Hanson Phenomenon." To the interviewer who provocatively asked her whether she was xenophobic, Hanson answered with the metalinguistic question "Please explain?" Some viewers laughed at the sight of a xenophobe who did not know the meaning of the word *xenophobia* and ridiculed Hanson's ignorance. Nevertheless, many also rejoiced in her response, as it challenged the rules and language of (middle-class) participation in the public sphere (Morris 2006, 230). Eighteen years later, after her election, a visibly emotional Pauline Hanson cleared that point:

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[3] *60 Minutes* is America's most popular prime time television programme broadcast on the CBS television network since 1968; the show has become one of the most successful programmes in broadcast history (Stein 2001).

> That's stupid to say, you know, fear of foreigners. Not so. I don't hate Asians. I don't hate Muslims. I don't, you know, hate's a very strong word. I'm quite open-minded with a lot of things. (Hanson in *Young and Reynolds,* 29 August 2019)

Worthy of the most media-savvy political strategist, she turned this legendary statement to her advantage, including it in her YouTube and Facebook pages "Pauline Hanson's Please Explain" (Lloyd 2018).

At this point, the question of whether Senator Hanson can be considered President Donald Trump's Australian counterpart naturally arises. Interestingly, at the time Trump made his debut on the political arena, Hanson was not new to the scene. She was thus firmly convinced that Trump took inspiration from her in as much as he was talking about the same issues in which she had been actively engaged for decades (Stahl and Spiegel 2016). Undeniably, there are various similarities between the two politicians, among which there is their political communication style which sees them as political actors "essentially displaying proximity of the people" (Jagers and Walgrave 2007, 319). It is for the people that both leaders claim to speak; the slogan on Trump's website "America is back. I am your voice" finds its equivalent in PHON official statement "Principles and Objectives," present on her *One Nation* website, which promises to "speak for the voiceless and the powerless" (*Pauline Hanson's One Nation* 2018).

Again, what makes Senator Hanson and President Trump so similar is that neither of them is worried to sound incorrect in their speeches, especially when they fuel fears about immigration. Both leaders have identified immigrants as the foreign 'enemy' to be used as a scapegoat for unemployment, loss of national identities and culture (Lee 2006). Furthermore, the identity of the 'powerless' for whom they promise to speak is defined in nativist terms (Hogan and Haltinner 2015) by the exclusion of 'the others' (Wodak and Forchtner 2017). These anti-culturalism, anti-globalisation positions are deeply rooted in the idea of a "heartland" (Taggart 2000).

It is, however, important to point out that, while both leaders are (or claim to be) anti-elitist, Trump is a right "Millionaire/Billionaire Populist," while Hanson, being a representative of the middle-class, proposes a view of populism of/for ordinary people who belong to the threatened and forgotten groups, and which Lynch (2019) calls "bottom-up" populism.

2. Data and methodology

The present investigation analyses a selection of official speeches delivered by Pauline Hanson throughout her political career. The corpus selected for the analysis includes the two maiden speeches delivered by the politician on 10 September 1996 and, twenty years later, on 14

September 2016, together with other 22 speeches she gave to the Australian Senate from 24 November 2016 to 4 December 2019. Speeches were selected based on their topic, focusing on some of the most controversial and most debated issues addressed by Hanson, which also contributed to the construction of the Senator's personality and the definition of 'Hansonism.' The selected speeches were categorised based on the specific catalogue topic attached to them in the House of Representatives website. The corpus collected thus comprises two maiden speeches, 13 speeches classified as National Security (including issues of terrorism and the so-called 'Burqa ban') and Immigration, and 9 speeches catalogued as Education, Marriage and Family Law. Texts were retrieved among those published on the official website of the Parliament of Australia Hansard section, searched through the function "ParlInfo Search."[4]

Table 1 displays the dates of the speeches and provides a general title for each of them. The topics selected are among the most debated and reported by the press, among the key areas of policy that are of concern to Hanson and *One Nation* voters. Hanson is best known for speaking about immigration but, in twenty years, and specifically after her unexpected comeback, she has also been passionate about a wide range of issues concerning Australians. She is indeed also active on other issues such as the plight of farmers afflicted by the drought in regional Australia, citizenship, economic trends, health issues and various controversies related to the validity of the election of Senators in the 2016 election. With her new political commitment, Hanson also demonstrated she could not be defined any more as a 'one-issue politician.'

Together with the 22 selected speeches, the two maiden speeches are essential for the study of Hanson's political discourse and rhetoric as they show, apart from the differences accumulated over twenty years of political effort – although outside the institutions – also several interesting similarities.

Maiden Speeches	Tokens	Types	Standardised TT ratio
Hanson 10 September 1996: Maiden Speech to the House of Representatives	2,533	907	46.00
Hanson 14 September 2016: Maiden Speech to the Senate	4,123	1,304	45.65
Total Maiden Speeches	**Tokens**	**Types**	**Standardised TT ratio**
2	6,656	1,785	45.77

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[4] https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/search.w3p. Last Visited January 30, 2020.

National Security and Immigration	Tokens	Types	Standardised TT ratio	Education, Marriage and Family Law	Tokens	Types	Standardised TT ratio
Hanson 24 November 2016: Racial Discrimination Law Amendment	1,481	455	35.70	Hanson 21 June 2017: Education Amendment Bill	2,560	580	33.10
Hanson 28 March 2017: Problems of Islamic immigration	1,002	390	39.00	Hanson 22 June 2017: Education Amendment Bill	512	207	-
Hanson 09 August 2017: Immigration	1,314	484	39.80	Hanson 04 September 2017: Family Court – Family Law act	1,390	500	39.40
Hanson 17 August 2017: National Security – Burqa	895	304	-	Hanson 13 September 2017: Marriage Law	1,794	486	31.10
Hanson 17 August 2017: National Security	3,134	893	41.30	Hanson 16 October 2017: Voting Age	683	271	-
Hanson 22 August 2018: Immigration	1,327	507	40.50	Hanson 17 October 2017: Student Visas	1,197	409	36.10
Hanson 6 September 2017: National Security	1,572	551	36.70	Hanson 28 November 2017: Marriage Law – Amendment	2,064	493	31.40
Hanson 14 September 2017: Criminal Code Amendment	2,825	655	34.55	Hanson 29 November 2017: Marriage Amendment	731	244	-
Hanson 19 October 2017: Immigration – Motion	2,926	831	41.95	Hanson 29 November 2017: Marriage Amendment	433	181	-
Hanson 20 July 2019: Counter Terrorism Temporary Exclusion Orders	1,922	549	38.20				
Hanson 29 July 2019: Plebiscite Future migration Level	2,262	744	42.35				
Hanson 09 September 2019: Immigration Detention	269	130	-				
Hanson 04 December 2019: Migration Amendment Repairing Medical Transfers	740	270	-				
Total Other Speeches	**Tokens**	**Types**	**Standardised TT ratio**				
22	33,042	3,486	37.60				
Total All Speeches	**Tokens**	**Types**	**Standardised TT ratio**				
24	39,698	4,118	39.35				

Tab.1: Corpus composition

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA; see e.g. Wodak 2009) provides us with a useful framework for the study of political speeches, as it aims to critically investigate how social inequality,

domination, and power abuse are produced and reproduced and how power relations are legitimised in language use (Wodak 2001, 2). CDA views any discursive event at the same time as "a piece of text, an instance of discursive practice, and an instance of social practice" (Fairclough 1992, 4). Discursive practices stand in a dialectical relationship with the context in which they are embedded, i.e. situations, institutional frames, and social structures. Discourses are thus shaped by situational, institutional, and social settings, while at the same contributing to shape social practices. Ideologies are organised around a polarisation opposing an in-group to an out-group. This opposition can thus be identified in talk and text, enacted through a set of resources, such as pronouns like *us* and *them*, possessives, demonstratives (Van Dijk 2006). The thin definition of populism (Mudde 2000) and its interpretation as a political communication style (Moffit 2016; Block and Negrine 2017) appear to be particularly suited for the present investigation.

The study relies on the support of the Discourse-Historical Approach developed by Ruth Wodak and her colleagues (e.g. Reisigl and Wodak 2001; 2015). This is an interdisciplinary methodology based on CDA, which provides a set of analytical tools useful in the analysis of ideology in populist discourse. This approach has been applied to investigate and unmask the discursive representations of minority out-groups in racist and anti-Semitic discourses and, more recently, also populist discourses. In their analysis of racist discourse, Reisigl and Wodak (2001; 2015) identify the approach adopted in the construction of social actors, objects and events, through strategies of nomination (the linguistic construction of the persons involved), predication (the positive or negative characteristics attributed to "them"), argumentation (the justification of attributions), perspectivation (positioning the speaker's point of view), and intensification or mitigation (modifying the epistemic status of a proposition).

Hanson's language shows instances of some recurring tropes in populist language, namely the pretence to speak in the name of the people and enact the popular will, the defence of the ordinary Australians and the identification of public enemies. In line with Reisigl and Wodak's (2001) framework, this study examines Hanson's speeches focusing on her peculiar deployment of populist discourse, focusing on those discursive strategies which enact a positive presentation of "us" and negative presentation of the "other" and the rhetorical devices deployed. More specifically, the study analyses strategies of nomination, predication and argumentation, focusing on the discursive construction of the identity of the leader and its people, through the representation of the nation and the construction of its others, all to endorse specific policies.

3. Analysis

The following sections will comment on excerpts from Pauline Hanson's speeches, focusing on those presenting some of the persuasive strategies and motifs she tends to exploit. The paragraphs present different speeches as discrete units, yet these are clearly intertwined, even in a few lines. In the quoted examples, it has been chosen to emphasise significant terms and expressions under scrutiny using italics.

3.1 One of the people as the voice of the people

As already seen in the previous sections, there are different kinds of populism as well as different studies on populism. However, all studies converge on a shared definition which sees a "celebration of the people" (Demata 2018). It is, therefore, the people who should exercise direct political power, supporting populist leaders, who would speak and act on their behalf. Pauline Hanson has always shaped her image and her discourse to present herself as "the voice of the people" across her electorate because, as stated on the PHON (Pauline Hanson's One Nation April 2019) website, she has "the guts to say what you are thinking." Since her first maiden speech in 1996, she has made this clear, as shown in (1):

(1)   For far too long, *ordinary Australians have been kept out of any debates* by the major parties. *I and most Australians want* our immigration policy radically reviewed and that of multiculturalism abolished. (Hanson 10 September 1996)

In all of her Senate speeches, as well as in her interviews and official statements, Hanson reaffirms her role as a spokeswoman of 'mainstream Australia.' On many occasions, Hanson speaks as if she were directly reporting the position of the Australian population, by conveying the people's feelings and beliefs, through verbs such as *say, believe, feel, be* (examples (2) to (5)):

(2)   People *say* they want equality. (Hanson 28 November 2017)

(3)   Most Australians *believe* multiculturalism has been good for Australia, but the right to express cultural identity comes with a responsibility to accept Australia's liberal democracy, and to read, write and speak English. (Hanson 22 August 2018)

(4)   So *people feel* that they are totally suppressed by this whole debate, this whole argument. (Hanson 14 September 2017)

(5)   Australians *are* increasingly worried about immigration from Islamic countries. (Hanson 28 March 2017)

The will of the people is in many cases expressed through structures, such as *Australians want*, *people want*, *they want* (examples (6)-(8)), signalling strong desire on the part of the people:

(6)   What Australians are really *saying* is that they *want* lower levels of immigration because 60 per cent of our population growth now comes from immigration. (Hanson 19 October 2017)

(7)   Australians *want* to focus on the issues I have raised. (Hanson 06 September 2017)

(8)   That's what the Australian people *want* from us. (Hanson 20 July 2019)

While reporting the will of the people, she often reminds her audience that she herself is part of that group whose instances she is voicing. She makes use of a 'my people and I' technique, which reinforces the relevance of her role as a representative chosen by the people. She is part of the ordinary 'mainstream Australia,' not of the elite who betrays and ignores the people's needs, as illustrated in (9), (10) and (11):

(9)   Let me also add that *I, like many other Australians, believe th*at the burqa and niqab are a form of oppression and control of women. *I want these* Islamic full-face coverings and other full-face coverings *banned* in all places where Commonwealth law applies. (Hanson 06 September 2017)

(10)   I would like to put on the record *how grateful One Nation voters and I are* for the tireless work of the Australian Defence Force and coalition partners, who have decimated groups like ISIS. (Hanson 20 July 2019)

(11)   I can say what I want to say here, but not if I go outside this chamber and say it outside, like many Australians. We cannot have an opinion. We cannot say anything anymore. (Hanson 24 November 2016)

Another technique she uses to state she is speaking in the name of the people is a 'renewal of her oath' to her people. This purpose is achieved by repeating and highlighting her role as well as that of her party as standing up and representing the people of Australia, the 'mainstream Australia,' the 'ordinary Australian' just like her, as in (12) and (13):

(12)   Well, I can tell you that *One Nation is a party that is standing up for the Australian people* about jobs and about people paying their taxes […] I am here to represent the Australian people, first and foremost, and to worry about everyone in this country. (Hanson 17 October 2017)

(13)   What I would like to ask on behalf of the Australian people. (Hanson 17 August 2017)

Hanson says provocatively about her opponents "if you were honest with people, if you were up-front with people," as in (14), thus implying that, on the contrary, she is standing up front, reaffirming her commitment to her voters, the forgotten powerless Anglo-Celtics of whom she is positioning herself as a defender (Moffitt 2014):

(14)   You lie to people, you are not up-front with people, you are hypocrites. (Hanson 17 October 2017)

Hanson makes use of several traditional rhetorical strategies typical of political propaganda. In particular, she directs her appeal to groups

> held together already by common ties, ties of nationality, religion, race, sex, vocation. Thus propagandists campaigning for or against a program will appeal to us as Catholics, Protestants, or Jews […] as farmers or as schoolteachers; as housewives or as miners. With the aid of all the other propaganda devices, all of the artifices of flattery are used to harness the fears and hatreds, prejudices and biases, convictions and ideals common to a group. Thus is emotion made to push and pull us as members of a group onto a Band Wagon. (Lee and Lee 1939, 105)

Nevertheless, it needs to be stated that, in all argumentative practice, the audience affects the choices made by the orator. Therefore, her argumentative moves are adapted to respond to the views and preferences of her audience (Van Eemeren 2010, 112).

Hanson's political rhetoric stresses her ordinariness and reasonableness through a 'plain-folks' technique. She thus integrates herself into a group to then win the support of its members, principally on her highly controversial views on immigration. Her figure is thus constructed through declarations of "ordinary Australian-ness" (Rapley 1998), as in (15):

(15)   I come here not as a polished politician, but a woman who has had her fair share of life's knocks... mother of four children, a sole parent and businesswoman running a fish and chip shop. (Hanson 10 September 1996)

In her speech, Hanson assimilates herself with special interest groups, namely hard-working (white) Australians, for the most part of European origin. By excluding certain ethnic groups from her speeches, she is thus stirring up anti-multicultural sentiment for her political interest (Zheng 2000).

The trope of giving voice to the people is also accomplished through the numerous instances of sentences, including the expression "to have one's say." These are clear examples of *One Nation*'s

mission of giving back political power to the people through direct and plebiscitary mechanisms, such as referenda (Moffitt 2014, 308) in which people can make their voice heard, as in (16), (17) and (18):

(16) I suggest we have a *plebiscite* and *let the people have a say* at the next election on whether they want full-face coverings in this country. (Hanson 14 November 2017)

(17) *We cannot shut people down* from having an opinion and *having a say* in this country. If they don't want to do something, *they have the right* not to, because that is their business and they *have a right to say* that. (Hanson 28 November 2017)

(18) I think that people have a right to be able to speak openly. Like I said, the people will have their say. (Hanson 13 July 2017)

In claiming to be the voice of the voiceless, Hanson often defends her peers, described as the ordinary hard-working people who see their rights are being usurped, as shown in (19):

(19) But I feel for the *struggling people of this nation* and the younger generations that are coming through with no hope of a job or a long-term position — they're underemployed […] But we've just opened up our borders, and *I feel for the people*. As I said, people in these cities actually have to get in their cars and drive an hour plus, or maybe two hours, to get to work. Or if they want to catch a train, if there is a train, then they're stuck on the train for ages. Then our infrastructure, whether it be trains, buses or whatever, we can't provide that as well. It's just that everything is impacting. (Hanson 19 October 2017)

Hanson's construction of her identity and values creates the image of an un-political and un-sophisticated woman. She portrays herself as one of the people, who pursues her political mission to defend the future of her fellow citizens. She also represents herself as an as anti-elite leader, opposite from the affluent politicians who attended an Ivy League school. She praises her role as a hard-working woman who raised her kids alone while also contributing to her community. She also exploits her past as a previous fish-and-chips shop owner to become an archetype of an ordinary Aussie (Maly and The Editors of Diggit Magazine 2019).

Together with the construction of "us" and the "other," Hanson skillfully builds an image of herself which highlights her belonging to the in-group of ordinary Australians for whom she is speaking. Through her discourse, she carefully "moulded her image to appear as 'the voice of the people'" (Maly 2016) as well as the archetypal ordinary Australian belonging to the same group as her supporters.

3.2 Us and them

When certain social actors are the object of attacks from a hegemonic group, their negative features are highlighted in order to marginalise them as the "other." The out-group is ascribed lexical attributes and actions which define it as outside the moral and social norms of the hypothetical 'majority' of the people (Reisigl and Wodak 2001; 2015).

Van Dijk (1998; 2006) outlines several linguistic and discursive dimensions through which the ideological system of domination is linguistically enacted. He characterises ideology as mainly an opposition between "us" and "them." Positive aspects about out-group members are largely de-emphasised or altogether ignored, while in-group members are globally presented with positive features. This is often enacted through disclaimers which save the face of the subject, making a negative other representation. Expressions such as "I have nothing against blacks/Muslims/ immigrants, but…" aim to form a positive self-presentation, also ensuring that the second part of the utterance is not interpreted as racist.

A typical element of populism is that the people are considered as a homogeneous category (Taggart 2000; Mudde 2004), sharing the same interests and features. Moreover, the isolated internal groups that do not share the people's 'good' characteristics form an enemy within the people itself. Therefore, not only do populists emphasise the gap between the people and the elites, but they also consider minority values and behaviours to be irreconcilable with the people's general interest (Jagers and Walgrave 2007).

It should not be forgotten that, when she first appeared on the political scene, in 1996, Hanson identified Aboriginals as the greatest menace to the "Australian Mainstream." She had already been known for her offensive comments during the fight against privileged assistance granted by the government to the Aboriginals, which she considered unjustified and unacceptable. This caused her expulsion from the *Liberal Party*. Yet, once elected, in her maiden speech she continued speaking explicitly and ignoring political correctness: she left speechless the few representatives who were left in the room claiming she was "fed up to the back teeth" (Hanson 10 September 1996).

Hanson hurled her invective against the Aboriginal enemy, focusing on the fact that the privileges granted to that alien subject stole resources from the true Australians, as in (20):

(20)   This nation is being divided into black and white, and the present system encourages this. I am fed up with being told, 'This is our land.' Well, *where the hell do I go? I was born here*, and so were my parents and children. I will work beside anyone and they will be my equal but I draw the line when told I must pay and continue paying for

something that happened over 200 years ago. *Like most Australians, I worked for my land; no-one gave it to me.* (Hanson 10 September 1996)

Together with Aboriginals, Hanson contextually identified another enemy, this time coming from outside: Asians. This foreign population also had the strength of invading the Australian territory and menacing the Australian way of life (21):

(21) I and most Australians want our immigration policy radically reviewed and that of multiculturalism *abolished*. I believe we are in *danger* of *being swamped* by Asians. […] They have their own culture and religion, form ghettos and do not assimilate. (Hanson 10 September 1996)

The words in italics, namely *abolished*, *danger*, *swamped*, convey a strong sense of anxiety, constructing an enemy to be afraid of. The solution urged by Hanson was to abolish multiculturalism, she claimed, because of the impossibility for these people to assimilate to the Australian culture. In delivering her maiden speech to the Senate twenty years later, in 2016, Hanson finds yet another enemy, as she warns:

(22) Now we are in *danger* of being *swamped* by Muslims, who bear a culture and ideology that is *incompatible* with our own. (Hanson 14 September 2016)

In both cases, Australians are framed as at risk to lose their country forever and be strangers in their own land.

The binary opposition between the in-group and the out-group is often achieved by the consistent use of pronouns of self-presentation, identification, and legitimation *we* and *our*. First-person plural references are employed to establish a shared identity, suggesting co-operation and shared goals and to potentially legitimate truth claims (e.g. Van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999; Van Dijk 2006). Some key strategies may be employed by social actors to justify their actions. They might exploit emotion appeals, relying primarily on negative emotions, such as fear and anger (Cap 2017). They might refer to hypothetical future consequences, depicted as negative for future generations if immediate action is not taken. They may mention rational arguments, voices of expertise. They may also present actions as beneficial for unprotected members of the community (Reyes 2011). Hanson is particularly able to combine such strategies in her speeches, as shown in examples (23) to (26):

(23) It is absolutely pathetic, seeing the way children write or that they cannot write. *We used to have* a decent standard of handwriting called 'running writing.' (Hanson 21 June 2016)

(24)   Despite the fact *living standards are dropping*, we continue with our high level of immigration consequently increasing our population through naturalised citizenship. […] We have too many people coming into this country, and *it's only going to get worse*. (Hanson 19 October 2017)

(25)   *Where do we want to go with this country?* (Hanson 14 Spetember 2017)

(26)   We need to ban or greatly reduce immigration from Islamic countries until we have the debate about Islam that Australians are demanding, until we better understand the problems we now have and until we know how to fix the problems. (Hanson 28 March 2017)

As Ndhlovu (2018) interestingly suggests, we should consider that the first-person pronouns reported in the examples above (23 to 26) appear to be used to convey the message that *One Nation*'s policy is the expression of the party's voters and its policies are enacted in their best interest. Embracing Ndhlovu's suggestions, we could posit that Hanson skillfully uses the pronouns with both an inclusive and exclusive meaning, where the latter are also "segregating in the sense that there is a category of people who sit on the other end of the spectrum and in this case, it is the *Labour* party and its supporters" (Ndhlovu 2018, 321). The 'us' she refers to is thus based on the exclusion of the progressive and welcoming sectors of the population, apart from the established migrant communities.

The sense of inclusiveness and exclusiveness is thus also created using the 'threat trope'. In Hanson's speech we can, interestingly, identify three strands of threat, which have been mainly linked to immigration, but, in her case, may well apply to the enemy, "them," as identified by *One Nation* populism: threats to the economy, threats to security, threats to culture (Hogan and Haltinner 2015; Storm 2018). In each case, the threat coincides with the idea of the enemy, which, as we have seen, is central to populist discourse. As far as Hanson's discourse and political strategy, we could say that the possibility of having more than one type of threat to appeal to, seems appropriate to the *liquid* nature of Pauline Hanson's idea of the enemy.

What is interesting to point out is the difference emerging between Trump's description of the immigrant enemy and that of Pauline Hanson. Trump's emphasis on border control and his construction of the identity of the other in relation to the national borders is connected to bordering practices and the process of alienisation. He stressed the idea that "the absence of borders pre-empts the very existence of a nation" (Demata 2017, 287). As the examples have so far shown, Hanson's immigrant threat is never addressed as *illegal* or *alien* as in Trump's case

(see also Napolitano 2020), but immigrants are described, instead, as usurpers of benefits, identity, culture and wellbeing belonging to the mainstream Australians.

Hanson has become famous both for her racist positions, especially for her anti-Muslim immigration sentiments, and for her provocative actions. In August 2017, she went to Parliament wearing a burqa to mock and express her disdain for Muslims, the Islamic faith, its cultural and symbolic values (Ndhlovu 2018, 323-326), as in (27) and (28):

> (27) Australians are worried by the burqa and what it means. […] The burqa is only seen in communities which want to remain separate from the rest of Australia. (Hanson 06 July 2017)

> (28) Full-face coverings like a niqab or a burqa take away a valuable source of information from counterterrorism experts. Full-face coverings deny us all the right to be as safe as we can be in public places. (Hanson 17 August 2017)

Nevertheless, her enemies are not limited to Muslims, Asians, and Aboriginals. Probably not content with the controversies that she is used to raising, Senator Hanson attracted the angriest criticism with her comments about the latest 'enemy from within,' students with disabilities, especially children with autism. The *One Nation* Senator declared from the Senate floor that children with conditions like autism should be removed from 'mainstream' classes. Yet again, a new enemy, a new threat (29):

> (29) I hear so many times from parents and teachers whose time is taken up with children, whether they have a *disability* or whether they are *autistic*, who are taking up the teacher's time in the classroom. These kids have a right to an education, by all means, but, if there are a number of them, *these children should go into a special classroom* and be looked after and given that special attention. (Hanson 21 June 2017)

Though harshly criticised by disability advocates and politicians, Hanson refused to apologise reiterating what she had declared in the Senate, as in (30):

> (30) We cannot afford to hold our kids back. We have the rest of the world and other kids in other countries who are going leaps and bounds ahead of us. (Hanson 21 June 2017)

It is imperative to reflect on how much, in this issue, Pauline Hanson responded to her electorate's will. Nevertheless, Hanson later argued that her words had been misinterpreted, and she proved her audience had understood her good intentions, as she received support from teachers and parents: teachers did not have the specific training to deal with autistic children

in the classroom and, in general, not enough resources were devoted to children with special needs (Hutchens 2017).

4. Conclusions

The contemporary global surge of right-wing populism, embodied by Donald Trump's US election victory and Britain's Brexit vote, has energised minor parties with right-wing populist agendas. In Australia, PHON party is the biggest beneficiary of the growing disenchantment with traditional politics. Whatever the opinion one might have about Pauline Hanson, she was able to enact a re-branding of *One Nation* Party, to the extent that the party was ultimately identified with her name and person. In this respect, she thus even succeeded in outdoing Trump, who, she believes, found in her inspiration.

Hanson has long been a controversial figure, since her first entry into the Parliament in 1996, to her re-entering in 2016 and has become well-known for her anti-Asian, anti-Muslim and anti-indigenous Australians political views. Her bigoted and racist positions are often seen as anachronistic and contrary to the traditional Australian values of respect, inclusivity, tolerance, and acceptance of cultural and religious diversity. Hanson's speeches, policy proposals and statements undoubtedly capture her extreme positions.

One Nation, like other populist parties, relies on a charismatic figure, tending towards an extreme personalisation of the party leader who speaks for, represents, and embodies the hopes, desires, and voice of "the people." Populist political figures refer to "the people" and justify their actions by appealing to and identifying with the pure people, considered as a monolithic group without internal differences, opposed to the "other," who is attached negative features (Van Dijk 2006, 126). In the case of Australian right-wing populism, the "other" is not only represented by the incoming immigrant, but also by a local alien, not identified as part of the nation core, but instead exploiting and weakening it, namely the Aboriginal people and the Islamic settled immigrants. Hanson's appeal was based on ethno-exclusivism and 'mainstream-exclusivism,' defending the Australian identity and opposing minorities. Therefore, it was pivotal for Hanson to appear as one of the "us" against the "elite," the outsiders and the "local alien" represented by Aboriginal people. Hanson was thus able to incarnate the 'voice of the people,' a typical feature of populist discourse.

Senator Hanson dares to publicly say what is thought by other people: by other politicians, who tend to use softer terms, by citizens who support her and maybe also by those who do not vote for her. She ignores political correctness but appeals to the gut instincts of the people, hence

choosing a direct, no-frills language. In February 2001, appealing to Australia to stop the boats of migrants, Hanson bluntly declared:

> I've been asked: "What's your view about the boat people?" I said: "You go out, you meet them, you fill them up with fuel, you put them up with food, you give them medical supplies, and you say: 'Go that way!'"

Her language seemed to anticipate the discourse leading to the Operation Sovereign Borders (2013), which addresses the arrivals of refugees and asylum seekers boats. With the same intent of acting in the name of Australians, the harsh restrictive measure aimed at turning back immigrant boats and was condensed in the campaign slogan "No way, they will not make Australia home."

Although this is not just a prerogative of populism, what feeds populists is the fight against the enemy, although the nature of that enemy does not need to remain fixed in time. Still, differently from Trump, Hanson's enemies and 'ethno-enemies' seem to be even more diverse, to the point that we could instead talk about 'the enemy of the day.'

Since her first appearance on the political scene, Hanson's ideals and rhetoric have stirred up considerable controversy, but even her fiercest critics admit that Hanson has opened a Pandora's box, profoundly altering the perception that Australians had of their problems. For this reason, whether Pauline Hanson should fail to be re-elected at the end of the next election, the echo of her words will resonate for long.

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