The increasing precariousness of the employment society: driving force for a new right wing populism?

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The text deals with the relations between the precariousness of employment relations and right-wing populist orientations. On the basis of qualitative empirical material it sketches a right-wing populist system of axioms that – if it is consolidated – can also structure labour experiences. The article explains that these orientations can exist in all zones of the "employment society". In connection with this, it discusses the explanatory potential of different theoretical approaches.

Key words: Precariousness, right wing populism, integration, employment society, everyday consciousness, political orientation, subjective interpretations

Employment societies of the Western European "atlantic" or "co-operative" capitalisms have been undergoing transformation. They face a phenomenon well-known to the more market-driven "un-coordinated" Anglo-Saxon forms of capitalism: the increase in insecure, unprotected modes of employment which do not guarantee long-term wellbeing. Social scientists like Robert Castel (2005: 54ff.) speak of the "return of insecurity" in rich Western societies. Although "these societies enjoy the protection of security systems" the fear of "insecurity is omnipresent" (ibid.: 8). This increasing insecurity is provoked by fault lines in the labour market. The link between wage earning employment and strong social rights is being eroded. Due to a flexible work-

ing régime and the weakening of collective regulation, current "financial market capitalism" (Windolf 2005) represents the recommodification of labour (Castel 2000; Hyman 2001; Dörre et al. 2005). This is taking place in different countries at different times; "institutional filters" of national capitalisms influence it, but cannot stop it. Post-Fordist employment societies are divided into three "zones". The "zone of disaffiliation", relatively small in Germany, contains the long-term unemployed. The regularly, full-time employed belong to the "zone of integration". Above 60 % of all German employees are located in this zone (Brinkmann et al. 2006). In between is a growing "zone of precariousness", with heterogeneous employment modes like temporary work, fixed-term contract work, forced part-time work, little jobs, badly paid jobs, state-subsidised jobs ("one-euro-jobs") and unpaid practical trainees. These jobs do not provide long term security, and are precarious.

This hypothesis has been developed by Robert Castel in "Transformation of the Social Question", based on French society, He probed the influence of precariousness on political attitudes. The "return of insecurity" is a driving force for a "Poujadist reaction", a model of right-wing populism based on rivalry between those faced with exclusion from the labour market, fuelled by resentment: "It is a reaction of groups located at the lower end of the social ladder who are in a situation of deprivation and who are competing with other equally or even more deprived members of society... They search for reasons to understand their situation and pretend to be superior with the help of xenophobia and racist discrimination" (Castel 2005: 73f.).

Castel has provoked debate. In our recent study we applied these hypotheses to Germany, and saw the effects of precariousness on the quality of integration. We identified modes of dealing with precariousness politically, and possible transitions towards right-wing populist orientations. Current right-wing populism manifests itself in the every-day-consciousness of employees. Precariousness furnishes the "raw material", enabling political reaction to be synthesised into right-wing populist orientations.

Contrary to conventional questionnaire-based research, identifying continuities and developments of right-wing extremist potentials using approved questioning strategies, we assumed complex interrelated processes, for which

appropriate empirical indicators are still to be developed. Contemporary right-wing populism is a politically virulent anti-democratic and anti-egalitarian current. It is not anti-modernistic. Often, right-wing populism succeeds in a globalised world in re-discussing the social question as a national one, compromising traditional political élites, seen as being unable to do a good job. Right-wing populist formations refer to modes of perceptions, values and interests which recently would have been considered as the "welfare state-consciousness" of social democratic employees with trade union membership. Such transformations can occur with crucial deficits of representation within the political system. Populist currents have their origins in the crisis of the political system (Priester 2005). Populist formations result from the erosion of other political options. They may not transform into proper political parties, but can evolve within established parties or trade unions. It is difficult to identify such currents from a scientific perspective.

Right-wing populist orientations have to be treated as a multidimensional construct (Hall 1986) that combines idea systems and pseudo scientific political philosophies with explicit political judgements and interpretations, also with implicit attitudes and schemes of action and interpretation. Traditional questionnaire research rasps one dimension, linked with explicit political statements detected by using a questionnaire. The underlying sense is not identifiable through survey methods. Pierre Bourdieu differentiates three modes of constitution of political opinions and orientations: "class ethos", "systematic political conception" and "second degree decisions". Social ethos has a subconsciously rooted spontaneous relationship with politics. The "systematic political conception" is a system of "explicit political principles" which stands for a mode of "political axiomatic". Finally, "second degree decisions" stand for the adaptation of political positions to the concept of a political party or other politically relevant organisations. The last two modes make each political judgement explicit. When "producing" a political judgement, every individual refers to all three modes. Social ethos compensates for inadequacies of the political axiomatic (Bourdieu 1988: 655-89). All three modes influence the everyday consciousness. The orientating function of spontaneous opinions, emotions and stereotypes becomes more important, the less coherent the political axiomatic of everyday consciousness.

There is relative autonomy between work consciousness and political orientations: no direct causal connection between actual work experiences, and politically relevant perceptions. Basic elements of political consciousness develop in socialisation which often lacks concrete work experiences (Baethge et al. 1989; Dörre 1992). Political consciousness is neither determined nor structured by work experiences (Offe 1984). Earlier studies showed the autonomy of solidly rooted political orientations, questioned and influenced only in particular situations, making explanations obsolete. Neither unemployment nor precariousness culminate automatically in xenophobic or aggressively nationalistic orientations.

Employment is not irrelevant in explaining new right-wing populism. More recent studies (Flecker/Hentges 2004: 119 ff., Flecker 2004, Flecker/ Krenn 2004) show a "populist gap", resulting from the ignorance of employment related problems by the political system. Populist potential has been identified by Robert Castel within the "zone of integration" among groups and individuals who can lose something, who aim to defend the privilege of "normal employment". Bourdieu sees potential for right-wing populist orientation among groups who consider precariousness and social exclusion as social neighbours aiming at distinction. The common denominator is distance from a simplistic winner-loser semantic. Connections between work experiences, synthesising interpretations and right-wing populist orientations are more difficult to understand.

We have analyzed connections between experiences of precariousness and right-wing populist orientations, with an explorative study, using 100 semi-structured interviews with employees from different sectors, and unemployed persons. We also undertook 30 expert interviews with managers, works councils and trade unionists..

1. Precariousness and social (dis-)integration – typical outcomes

Our study shows, in accordance with other recent examinations (Baethge et al. 2005; Schultheis/Schulz 2005), the development of a "zone of precariouness" in Germany. This is obvious in the experiences and subjective employ-

ment orientations of our interviewees. We distinguish between nine different types of employment-related (dis-)integration.

Table 1:   **Employment-related potentials of (dis-)integration – a typology**

Zone of Integration
1. Secure integration ("The safe ones")
2. Atypical integration ("The unconventionals" or "self-managers")
3. Insecure integration ("The destabilised")
4. Endangered integration ("Those in fear of social falling")
Zone of Precariousness
5. Precarious employment as a chance / temporary integration ("The hopeful ones")
6. Precarious employment as an involuntary arrangement ("The realistic ones")
7. Bearable precariousness ("The content ones")
Zone of Disaffiliation
8. Surmountable exclusion ("Those trying hard")
9. Controlled exclusion / pseudo-integration ("The quasi-excluded")

We focus on the (dis-)integration paradox of post-Fordist societies. Processes and fears of precariousness can be observed in the "zone of integration", due to real facts such as collective redundancies or the closure of plants (type 4), or fear of social falling resulting from insecurity in deteriorating working conditions, such as the informal undermining of collective bargaining standards. The paradox means that attempts at reintegration into the "normal" labour market take place in the "zone of precariousness", based on "secondary integration potential". Integration results neither from a permanent employment with a decent salary (labour force perspective), nor from identification with the concrete activity, providing neither personal satisfaction nor social recognition (work activity perspective). It results from the hope of a job in the "zone of integration" (type 5 and 8), or compounding with precariousness and partial exclusion, made bearable by the revalorization of gender specific (type 7) or ethnically based (type 9) mechanisms of integration.

Integration has different meanings and functions, depending on the situation. Precariousness does not automatically mean total poverty and social iso-

lation. Precarious employees find themselves in a particularly "fluid state" (Kraemer/Speidel 2004: 119ff.). Social climbing to the "zone of integration" seems realistic; they mobilise their resources and energies to become a permanent employee, working to prevent social decline. Precarious workers lack phases of rest and partial security. They are the first to be threatened with dismissal. Most have to do more boring jobs. They are the stopgaps, the "general servants" whose material and qualification resources become less applicable, the longer employment insecurity lasts.

The exhausting "fluid state" makes precarious employees vulnerable. The old promise of welfare state-capitalism, that "normal employment" constitutes the basis for participation in rising wealth, has become obsolete. Integration in the "zone of precariousness" means something different to precarious employees compared with "normal employees". As precarious employees often work together with "normal employees", they are a constant warning symbol. Permanent employees who first see temporary workers as a welcome "flexibility buffer" may fear that they will become replaceable. Their job is done by employees with financial and social conditions which would never be accepted by core workers. Although temporary or fixed-term contract workers are a small minority in big companies, they discipline core workers, even members of a trade union. In firms with highly qualified knowledge workers, freelancers have a similar effect: short working weeks, combined with long daily working hours, pressurise colleagues with permanent status to work equally long daily hours. In construction, Polish temporary employees force permanent employees to accept salary and working time conditions undermining collective bargaining standards (type 3). Core and flexible employees are connected, making permanent, full-time employment worth defending.

Increasing insecure employment encourages the "destabilisation of the stabilised" (Castel 2000: 357). By disciplining and withdrawing resistance from employees, insecure employment encourages the "stabilisation of instability". Precariousness is not marginal, but has a disintegrative effect. It constitutes a power and control system, which creates pressure on formally integrated units. Differentiation between "modernity winners and losers" does not apply.

2. Transitions towards right-wing populist orientations – eight central topics

We looked at individual interpretations of problems in public discourse. The questions in an open form concerned: general political interest, globalisation, welfare state reforms, EU-enlargement, EU-candidature of Turkey, green-card debate, attitude towards the political system, party preferences, perceptions of right-wing populist parties in Europe, attitudes towards trade unions and employee representation, national identity, cultural differences and problems of integration of immigrants.

Interview analysis looked at hints indicating xenophobic, racist, authoritarian, anti-democratic or anti-egalitarian attitudes. Among approximately 30 persons interviewed, we identified eight topics, which operate as "subjective bridges" towards right-wing populism. These topics are:

Table 2:   Indicators of right-wing populist "everyday-philosophies"

(1) "Immigration destroys the German culture and has to be stopped"
(2) "Immigration destroys the German culture and has to be stopped"
(3) "When saving, then we have to save money with regard to the parasites of the welfare state"
(4) "German history must not be a burden any longer"
(5) "We would like to be proud of Germany, but we can't"
(6) "Politicians are gangsters; the entire system has to be changed"
(7) "A bit less democracy can do no harm"
(8) "Right-wing extremist parties are too extreme, but are talking about the right issues"

(1) "Immigration destroys the German culture and has to be stopped"

The rejection of further immigration is the lowest common denominator of a modern right-wing populist philosophy. Usually the rejection of immigration correlates with the emphasis of "not being hostile towards foreigners", of "not being a racist". Individuals add that they have contact with foreigners. Interviewees in all three zones feel that further immigration, mainly in big cities, might lead to the disappearance of "German culture", characteristics such as continuity or assiduity, and the fact that the Germans rebuilt their country after the Second World War. "One is proud to be part of it, to have

contributed." Cultural "mixture" endangers not only virtues which enabled Germany's economic rise, but also the individual identity which relies on the power of national culture. Immigration appears to be an attack on one's own national identity. Immigrants are then seen as "useless", "undesired" and "not willing to work" who could "enter" Germany through "foreigner and asylum law".

(2) "Foreigners take away employment from the Germans"

In addition to rejection of foreigners, we had arguments from an economic perspective. Foreigners are competitors on the labour market. Eeconomic rejection refers to immigrants who are perceived as real competitors. The fear of losing a job leads to the claim that we should "first take into consideration the interests of our country". The relationship between foreigners and non-foreigners is a fight over distribution with winners and losers. The consequences are obvious: The enlargement of the EU is rejected, with EU-membership of Turkey; processes of economic globalisation are primarily perceived as a threat, the introduction of the green-card as the attempt to compensate for "what the industry (through lacking qualification) has messed up".

(3) "When savings, we have to save money with regard to the parasites of the welfare state"

Protecting decreasing wealth against illegitimate claims is seen in the context of labour market competition; also with regard to the welfare state and welfare state reforms. If savings have to be made they must not be with regard to the performers, but with those who take advantage of the welfare state. The construction of an "in-group" willing to work and an "out-group" of parasites refers not only to foreigners. It also refers to "lazy unemployed", homeless, beggars or German recipients of social assistance. The rejection of "social parasites" goes with a damaged sense of justice, especially if those unwilling to perform are wealthy. The chances of improving justice through the privileged parts are slight. Instead the focus is put on weaker groups. While fight-

ing against "social parasites", it is legitimate to refer to right-wing populist parties.

(4) "German history must not be a burden any longer"

Many interviewees feel disadvantaged in their own country, in the "zone of integration" as well the "zone of precariousness". Freelancers in the IT industry, as well as saleswomen in retail trade, have a common opinion: Germans disadvantage their own population. Young Turkish unemployed understand that Germans aim to be the leaders in their country. Germans are disadvantaged by the historical burden that prevents Germans from making claims towards non-Germans in an open manner. An IT expert working as a freelancer leaves no doubt: "Due to the history of Germany, one has to be careful not to become too extreme with the words 'national', 'identity', 'Germany' etc. (...). But, for a long time, one might have the feeling that the political sphere has higher demands of Germans than of foreigners". Overcoming this historical burden is a precondition for coping with the lack of respect from foreigners. Those who acknowledge their "German identity", and are proud of being German, will no longer be seen as Nazis. Only then can Germans ask foreigners to adapt to the culture of the majority (German culture) without self-stigmatisation.

(5) "We would like to be proud of Germany, but we can't"

Overcoming history is a precondition for constructing a national identity with a self-stabilising function. Where we find transitions towards right-wing populist orientations, national identity is important. One would like to be proud to be German. National identity is constructed in different ways. Some associate national identity with economic power, others with a familiar environment, habits or cultural specifics. Others are proud "to be willing to help", "as Germans to help all the others". This identity construct has nothing in common with a traditional "blood-and-soil"-nationalism. These constructs become problematic if they are pronounced together with aims which refer to non-Germans in an aggressive manner. National pride implies priority for "German interests". Even the positive recognition of helping others is formu-

lated as: "We should not forget ourselves as Germans. Above all, we are important". Particularly in the eyes of interviewees from eastern Germany, national identity is a symbol for the right to a decent life. They consider their national pride blocked. . They would like to be proud of their German identity, but they can't.

(6) "Politicians are gangsters; the entire system has to be changed"

The politicians are scapegoats. Among well-bred employees judgements are differentiated. Most heavily criticised are the inability to find adequate solutions and arrogance within politics. The lower the position in the hierarchy, the harsher the judgements. Those threatened with social decline and precarious employees consider the entire "system" as corrupt. Politicians are seen as an over-paid, corrupt caste, ignoring legitimate claims of "the population". The politicians are a group where money should be saved. The political class is compared with "social parasites" and foreigners not willing to adapt to the German culture. Some interviewees even see some politicians as "gangsters".

(7) "A bit less democracy can do no harm"

Doubts on the integrity of the political class merge into a critique of the political system. This critique seems moderate. A production worker speaks about "politicians in Germany" as "rather lazy". This is due "to our political system, where we have constant elections". Democratic procedures are seen as inefficient and expensive. This critique can have an openly authoritarian character, with a call for harsher prosecution of foreigners, their expulsion from Germany or the vigorous fight against criminality. Criminality is *the* topic where politics should prove its credibility. An extreme position is that those who have become criminal should be put into a labour camp: "Working them to death so that in the evening they are unable to do anything. This is how the Americans treat their criminals". Such authoritarian orientations do not lead to an open claim for a different political system beyond party-democracy. For some the possibility of such a development seems realistic. Some interviewees see the possibility that history could be repeated. "There are hard times" and also "Hitler benefited from high unemployment" can be

heard, with other historical references. Employees from eastern Germany compare their current situation and the situation before the fall of the Berlin Wall: "If the unemployment situation doesn't improve we will have a situation like in the past. We know this kind of situation from our experiences in the GDR".

(8) "Right-wing extremist parties are too extreme, but are talking about the right issues"

It is in this context that the opinions about right-wing extremist parties have to be seen. No one within our sample openly admits being a partisan of a right-wing populist or extremist formation. The employees are politically "average people". The majority vote for the CDU and SPD, some of them abstain from voting. The interviewed employees associate a positive function with right-wing populist or extremist formations. The lowest common denominator between the interviewees is that although such parties are too extreme, and without influence, they can raise awareness of the right topics. Most employees acknowledge that rightist formations identify relevant questions and problems. The rejection of such formations is because they represent extremist groups. There is not much confidence that these formations are capable of initiating real changes. Employees feel that unemployment, immigration and the destruction of "German identity" can only be stopped by fundamental changes. Their rejection of right-wing populist or extremist formations is based upon very weak foundations, and it seems obvious that some vote for the NPD (party of the extreme right in Germany) or other extremist right-wing parties.

3. Marketisation of work and right-wing populist orientation

Transitions towards right-wing populist orientations cannot only be found among particular social spheres. Topics with right-wing populist potential appear in the answers of integrated as well as of precarious or disaffiliated individuals; they are formulated across the entire typology of employment-related (dis-)integration. This is important: neither unemployment nor pre-

cariousness are exclusive explanatory factors. The same is true on fears of social decline and precariousness in the "zone of integration".

3.1 Employment and unemployment within the right-wing populist axiomatic

All the topics above cannot be explained just by referring to the work experiences of the interviewees, who express views, attitudes and judgements which are persistent in situation-specific influences and experiences. One supports the prevention of immigration because s/he is living in a region with only very few foreigners. The perception that foreigners take jobs away from Germans is expressed by interviewees who consider their own job safe. The exclusion of "social parasites" is formulated by those who live in good economic circumstances, and who do not compete for welfare state resources. Neither social position in the labour market nor work experiences are direct driving forces behind the right-wing populist axiomatic. These "bridges" towards right-wing populism have their origin more in what Bourdieu identified as "systematic political conception". These conceptions are relatively consistent schemes of interpretation, with which individuals perceive and decode their daily experiences at work and elsewhere.

Within the right-wing populist axiomatic, opinions and attitudes concerning work and unemployment play an important role. The fact that dealing with competition in the labour market leads to particular nationalistic, ethnical, racist and sexist classifications must neither be scandalised, nor treated as something pathological. The opposition of liberal universalism and national, ethnical or gender specific particularism is inherent in the world wide capitalist economy. Processes of economic globalisation corresponding with market-liberal universalistic ideas go hand in hand with particular frames, whose function consists in legitimating placement of labour forces in certain positions in the hierarchy of employment society. From the perspective of the working population, this ideological ambiguity indicates a structural contradiction within the production regime of a capitalist market economy: "on the one hand working and living conditions are held in constant mobility and destabilised in order to guarantee competition in the labour market and to con-

stantly gather new labour forces from the 'industrial reserve army'...; on the other hand labour forces are stabilised during long periods in order to 'educate' them for work and to 'render them loyal' to the enterprise" (Balibar 1990: 256).

This structural contradiction achieves a new dynamic under a flexible and market-centred production regime (Dörre 2002). The strengthening of market-oriented modes of governance and control of employment means that originally legitimate forms of labour division become more obsolete and finally replaced. Castel's zone model marks the broad character of this new labour division. The fight for inclusion in this new regime is only at first sight an "individualistic" matter. Individuals compete with each other in the labour market, but they undertake competition through real or imaginary group building. Individuals and groups react to disintegrative effects resulting from the erosion of formerly legitimate modes of labour division through interest-motivated and symbolically conveyed strategies of *integration*. Nationalistic, xenophobic and racist classifications are attempts to get in touch with "in-groups", to strengthen the individual position in competition for material resources and social recognition.

Imaginary modes of inclusion and exclusion are often based on elements of previous ideologies of integration which through "bricolage" (Lévi-Strauss) are modified and adapted to new circumstances. Nationalism represents a modern type of integration whose aim has always been to weaken the antagonistic potential of employment-related social conflicts. Modern capitalist societies, as noted by Etienne Balibar (1990: 259), "reproduce a regressive image of the nation-state" where "people are 'at home' because they are among themselves". This is because of processes of economic internationalisation. Balibar underestimates the impact of welfare state-capitalism. During the "golden era" of Rhine capitalism, ideologies of social partnership could operate with a universalistic "language", because they corresponded with work experiences of the large majority of employees. From the perspective of the full-time employees and their families, the expanding welfare state saw relative decoupling of the labour force from market risks. Participation of the work force in productivity gains, mass consumption, statutory industrial rights such as co-determination and the expansion of social security systems

became the foundations of a welfare state consciousness, which corresponded to a type of capitalism (Albert 1992; Streeck 1997) which proved extremely cohesive.

The ongoing crisis of this type of society now means that a nationally oriented welfare state consciousness might be transformed into a regressive modernistic ideology of exclusion, in "reactive nationalism" (Dörre 2003).

At the centre of reactive nationalism is "Germany as an island of prosperity", to be protected against foreign, illegitimate requests. To prevent having to share the "cake" with too many, entry to this "island" should be more difficult and severely controlled. Frequently stated criteria of exclusion are (economic) "utilisation" and "culture". Such criteria can be used flexibly. Reactive nationalism of employees, and of old and new employers, does not primarily refer to nationalistic ideas and symbols, but to an understanding of national identity which legitimises social and civic rights. It cannot be generalised as a pre-modern, or a new, variant of a fascist blood-and-soil ideology. A politically delicate feature of this ideology is that it differs only slightly from recent welfare state consciousness. Reactive nationalism in the 21st century safeguards crucial elements of social partnership ideologies; it has a partly well-developed sense of social injustice. It deplores unjust distribution and insists on a "fair exchange", of a balanced give-and-take situation ("good money for good work"), the basis for the relationship between work force and management, between capital and labour. The classification system changes when the German "island of prosperity" is related to other competing nation states. Conflicts for just distribution between "below" and "above" are reinterpreted as conflicts between cultures and nation-states. The reactive nationalism of employees is a specific, social populist answer to unlimited marketisation. Where the former connection between the nation-state and social-reformist policy is obsolete, the integrative power of employment is reduced, and the ideology of globalism is the driving force for social insecurity, the policy of borders represents an imaginary way out.

Reactive nationalism is *one possible* manifestation of the political axiomatic of right-wing populism. Other manifestations are possible. They possess autonomy with regard to concrete experiences; in everyday life they are enriched by concrete experiences, and de- and re-constructed.

3.2 Division of labour, work experience and right-wing populist orientations

Connections between a market-oriented mode of control, work experience and right-wing populist orientations, can be illustrated. We discuss three relevant fields.

Table 3

(1) Negative flexibilisation without political representation
(2) "De-womanisation" and "forced feminisation"
(3) Contested hierarchies in disciplined production communities

(1) Negative flexibilisation without political representation

Employees with transitions towards right-wing populist orientations perceive market-oriented flexibilisation of employment relations and work modes as an external constraint, affecting living and working conditions negatively. Employees perceive themselves as confronted with increasing cost and productivity pressure; those in lower and middle management positions see this as a particular burden. Many suggest increasing pressure of flexibility and performance, which contradicts public discourse on savings and flexibility. A foreman in the construction industry in eastern Germany illustrates this:

> Q: "What is your opinion about the political suggestion of fighting unemployment by more flexible work?"

> A: "We are completely flexible at work. We don't speak about flexibility at work. If the company says 'you have to go there for work' then we go there. We never discuss that. (...) Our guys even go to Antwerp, to Italy or to western German regions. We are highly flexible."

Real requirements at work, and public discourse on flexibility, have little in common. The hardship of the "real working life" has no voice in politics. Labour market reforms represent an additional pressure on traditional performers in society. The same foreman: "I don't know why these measures always refer to little people. (...) Those who take these decisions have to be shot

down. They push people into poverty. These can only be ideas by people living high."

In the eyes of many, there is injustice concerning work-related risks and inconveniences. This feeling can be found among employees without any right-wing populist tendencies. In the group of right-wing populists we observe a particular aspect. The injustice in the relationship between "above" and "below" is considered unchangeable, because "politics" produces this injustice. The political system and its representatives are incapable of solving this fundamental problem of justice. The stronger the feeling of powerlessness, the stronger the inclination to ask for authoritarian solutions, even at the expense of scapegoats.

(2) "De-womanisation" and "forced feminisation"

Market-oriented flexibilisation has consequences for gender specific modes of labour division and corresponding identities. For a long time precarious work ("bad jobs") represented the traditional form of employment for women. Full-time "normal employment" has been a male domain. Most housewives and mothers could not have a full-time job. Their decision for an atypical and potentially precarious job led to a labour market for women, a reservoir for non-normal-employment, traditionally the "helping family member" (Mayer-Ahuja 2003). In a dynamic and highly regulated labour market, many women, as "additional earners", had no problems with accepting insecure jobs with low salaries. In the course of a decreasing employment dynamic, contemporary modes of precarious jobs could spread. The traditional gender specific division of labour suggested a "voluntary" decision for such jobs, and atypical employment has become primarily a female domain. Our type 7 "the content ones" results from this development. Identification with the role as a housewife and mother makes precarious jobs necessary but convenient. This is "secondary integration potential".

Non-voluntary flexibilisation influences the secondary integration potential of the "additional earner". A retail saleswoman locates her job at the lower end of the social scale. She works for financial reasons, but obtains her satisfaction from her roles as housewife and mother. Her "dream" is to

choose her working time to fulfil these roles. This dream does not come true: "The best situation for me would have been to work three days one quarter and the other three days three quarters. This was my big wish because in this case I would have been at home for my children three days a week."

The employee suffers from short periods of planning. Her working times are fixed at earliest six weeks in advance. It undermines social identity, capable under normal circumstances of minimising the precarious character of the employment. Chaotic and unpredictable working times prove incompatible with the role of the caring housewife and mother. The interviewee sees herself as "de-womanised". This makes her angry towards all those capable of living this "dream" without any effort: "Shall I tell you something. I hate this. I'm not hostile towards foreigners, don't get me wrong. But it makes me really angry. They have their six, seven children, they can stay at home sitting on their arses, and poor sods like me have to work. They get enough money from us. These are things that I find really disgusting."

Beside "de-womanisation" we have identified "forced-feminisation". An eastern German production worker in the automobile industry worked as a construction worker and then as a temporary worker. Despite now being in permanent, well paid employment, he is unsatisfied with his position as an assembly worker. He describes his current situation as follows: "The job renders you effeminate. You long for something bigger, something where you see what you produce."

This employee has a job which in his eyes is a female job. He cannot be proud of it, and feels feminised. The implicit feeling of "forced-feminisation" was even stronger during the time he worked on a temporary basis, because he could not play the traditional role of the male bread winner. He was in constant fear of losing his job. This has changed. He is now able to plan, save money and have a social life. He nevertheless suffers from lacking recognition. As a "feminised" assembly worker he sees himself confronted with lack of respect by "foreigners". He does not dislike foreigners as a whole, "working foreigners like Turks and Russians are all right", but he does not want those in Germany "who come here and are just begging for money". It is not direct competition on the labour market that annoys this assembly worker most, but the lack of respect. Despite a permanent contract, he sees the dan-

ger of becoming "effeminate". At first sight, dominant male behaviour from foreigners is an insult for him. Lacking recognition creates hatred against outsiders who, as non-Germans, are capable of "having a life" and symbolically occupy the field of demonstrative masculinity. Overlapping gender-specific and ethnical dimensions sensitise him for messages of right-wing parties. "These parties handle topics which encourage people".

"De-womanisation" and "forced-feminisation" stand for another connection between work experiences and right-wing populist orientations. Where the constraints of market-driven flexibilisation and the corresponding changes of the gender-specific division of labour undermine the secondary integration potential of typical male and female expectations, the employees react by defending their traditional identity. They stick to their life concepts in an imaginary way, and they defend them against disrespectful behaviour from outsiders, capable of living their life concepts without making a contribution.

(3) Contested hierarchies in disciplined production communities

Generally relationships between core workers and temporary workers are unproblematic. Interviews in the car assembly plant show occasional conflicts. If these conflicts take place between foreign core workers and German temporary workers, they obtain an ethnical or nationalistic character. An interview partner (former temporary worker) told us about frictions with Croatian workers which culminated in a murder threat. Such conflicts are typically kept hidden, because those involved have to face the possibility of dismissal. In multinational production communities of Transnational Corporations, ethnically motivated or racial conflicts are dysfunctional. Management and employee representatives will do everything to inhibit them. The reasons for xenophobic, racial classification are not eliminated. The division into core and temporary workers encourages the construction of imaginary groups, which are used as a means in the fight for a good position at work. For many it is certain that "any foreigner lives better and is better treated". It is then assumed that "if these people weren't there, then maybe we would have a better life". Against this background the severe anti-discrimination regime of the

company appears as pure repression. A former temporary worker tells us, "The company says that discrimination must not take place. If I should say something like 'you stupid Russian' then I lose my job. If the Russian says 'you stupid German' then it is no problem". According to this employee the personnel department says "no xenophobia in our enterprise". "But most of the German core workers think that all foreigners should go home". No one says this at work, because otherwise he or she would get dismissed immediately. The quoted employee feels "oppressed in his liberty of opinion". In his eyes "foreigners are in any case better protected". Within the company it is even forbidden to say "I'm proud to be a German. If you do so you are immediately labelled as a right-wing extremist".

The anti-racist policy of the company and works council has no success, because it proves unable to inhibit positional fights within the company. The German temporary workers consider the foreign permanent workers "only as tolerated guests". Not *despite*, but *because* of, the company's anti-racist policy, the belief forms that "the foreigners are better off than we are". Within the company this opinion has no legitimate expression; it is a taboo. The resentments grow secretly. A mode of double reality develops. With regard to the team and the work situation itself, one observes behaviour which respects the company's policy. Under the cloak of political correctness, xenophobic and openly racist classifications develop. Their secret and informal diffusion has the character of subversive action, against "arrogant foreigners", and against "those on top" who enforce their foreigner friendly policy.

4. Conclusion

We summarise these findings for research on right-wing populism. Our hypothesis assumes an connection between transformations of work, precariousness and new right-wing populism.

4.1 "Populist moment" and the right-wing populist axiomatic

Those describing the formation of new right-wing populism in Europe (Decker 2004; Heitmeyer/Loch 2001; Bischoff et al. 2005) assume movements and parties rooted in the transformations of welfare state-capitalisms

since the 1980s. New right-wing populism is a different phenomenon from traditional right-wing extremism. By focusing on ideology, one can define new right-wing populism as a basically individualistic concept which emphasises the social duties of each person, but rejects bureaucratic paternalism and collectively imposed solidarity. New right-wing populism is neither characterised by submissive respect towards élites, nor by sympathy with under-privileged groups (Lasch 1995). When trying to bring into balance individual freedom and social commitment, populists are "pioneers of ambiguity" (Decker 2004: 30; Kann 1983: 371).

The ideological nucleus of right-wing populism is "ethnic-pluralism" or "differential racism" or "racism without races" (Decker 2004; Taguieff 1991; Balibar 1993; Dörre 1997) which represents the constructs of a new intellectual right (Benthin 2004). The parallels with patterns of everyday consciousness, which we define as right-wing populist axiomatic, seem striking. This is an "everyday philosophy" of social currents, which reacts to "de-collectivisation" in a collective manner by mobilising resentments. Xenophobic or even racist classifications are at the heart of this right-wing populist axiomatic, which originates in the discrepancy between official discourse about flexibility and real or anticipated experiences of precariousness. Individuals perceive themselves as objects of market-driven flexibilisation, acting in response to withdrawal of social security. As Robert Castel argues, it seems only possible to withdraw from "the game of change, mobility, constant adaptation and re-qualification" at the expense of "social death" (2005: 71). The more the gap between the official mode of treating this problem and everyday experiences grows, the more likely is a "populist moment" described by Goodwyn (1978) in his classical study of the "Agrarian Revolt in America". We disagree with Castel: not only so called losers of modernity suffer from that development. It can also be a reaction to the rise of the "dangerous classes" (2005: 74), whose moral condemnations refer at least partly to "hard facts" (ibid.: 77f.).

4.2 "Rebellious", "conserving" and "conformist" right-wing populism

We differentiate three transitions towards right-wing populism, which do not directly correspond with the "zones" of the employment society, but possess "zone specificity". We distinguish a "conformist", "conserving" and rather "rebellious" variant.

The *rebellious* variant can mostly be found in the "zone of disaffiliation" and the "zone of precariousness" (type 6, 8, 9). It has its origins in the disaggregation of formerly coherent, rational political orientations. This has to do with what Bourdieu (2000) has seen as the characteristic of subproletarian existences. A life completely characterised by provisional arrangements leads to the "systematic disorganisation of behaviour, attitudes and ideologies". The longer this lasts, the more likely it becomes to stop unpleasant work and to obtain money with least effort. "Unemployment and fixed-term work make an end to traditions and disallow at the same time the concept of a rational living" (ibid.: 107ff.). In the same way, political orientations appear foggy and inconsistent. The disaffiliated and precarious workers dither between resignation and imaginary revolt, a revolt which keeps to modes of protest imposed by the established political system. Their protest seems disorientated; it refers similarly to "those above", to everything "foreign" or "different". It refers to the political class as a whole. The oscillation between resignation and demonstrative expression of misery follows an affective quasi-systematisation based on a closed world view and emotive positions.

The political orientations of rebellious right-wing populists seem contradictory and confusing. The statements are governed by an emotionally grounded system of classification. The emotionally negatively loaded concepts of the enemy such as "the others" or "the foreigners" have the primary function of constructing positively loaded affiliations through explicit demarcation. In the case of young unemployed Turks, this identity politics has quite grotesque characteristics. Migrants of the second generation pretend to be "Hitler fans", although they are aware that they would be the first persecuted by a new Hitler. Stereotypes, such as that Hitler did much to address the unemployment situation, are nothing more than symbolic affiliation to the rea-

soning of the autochthonous majority in their social world. It serves as le-
gitimisation for defiant insistence on their own nationality ("I am Turkish")
which represents a shield against negatively loaded classifications by others.

The "conserving" variant can be found among formally integrated em-
ployees confronted with the possibility and/or fear of social falling (type 3,
4). They defend their own social position by using resentment as a driving
force for "social and political action" (Castel 2005: 67f.). They use resent-
ment in competition with others for resources and social status. Their argu-
mentation is rather "rationalistic": when arguing about distributive matters
they distinguish between "above" and "below"; their positions are compatible
with a trade union policy and collective representation. We find active trade
union and works council members among them. Their main concern is to pre-
serve welfare state-capitalism, including its security promises, by limiting the
number of "insiders" according to "ethnic", "national" or "cultural" criteria.
Disregarding individual convictions and systems of classifications, inter-
viewees agree that migration leads to unemployment, costs a lot and reduces
the quality of life of German citizens. In additiont, the trade union members
among this group whose political orientations are grounded on solidarity
(Schumann 2003) fear that this is endangered by ethnic or national heteroge-
neity. This becomes obvious by referring to German miners: Turkish miners
talking Turkish with each other endanger cohesion in the eyes of their Ger-
man colleagues. A feeling of cultural inferiority (Turks understand German
but Germans do not understand Turkish) goes with the claim for a workers'
solidarity which can be used at any time in a manner which excludes the for-
eign "disturbers". "Conserving" right-wing populism does not imply loyalty
to a specific political party. Among concerned employees we find diehards as
well as former social democrats. They react in a "conserving" manner to pre-
serve the advantages of the former "Bonn Republic" with the help of a strict
migration policy. It is a variant of welfare state consciousness with origins in
the era of expanding Fordism and employment. The excluding mechanisms
of this type of consciousness become visible under changed conditions. We
see this variant as a mode of "reactive nationalism", with a rudimentary
"class instinct", consisting of a mixture of envy and disdain, "which is
grounded on differences between social positions, and where those being

situated just below or just above the observer's own position of the social ladder are held responsible for the latter's misery" (Castel 2005: 68).

The "rebellious" and "conserving" variants have to be distinguished from "conformist" right-wing populism. This can be found in the "zone of integration" (type 1, 2), mainly among interviewees who have "executing" tasks. We speak of a "conformist" variant, because it relies on over-adaptation to hegemonist norms, and on an affirmative position with respect to the market-centred transformation of the German social and economic model. In the IT department of a large bank, we spoke to employees who represent an excluding concept of integration although they are highly integrated at work. These employees define the team in which they work, their colleagues and also the nation, as a community of hard working people. Those who do not meet the performance standards of this community are excluded from integration. This concept of integration is highly problematic as it implies a polarised view of an in- and out-group, stigmatising the latter. Exemplary stigmatising topics are the multicultural society, ethnic minorities, green-card or unemployment. The conformists expect from others what they expect from themselves: the absolute fulfilment of performance norms. The integration of foreigners should be a one-way adaptation to the "German culture" of the hard working population. They complain about lacking justice, and where they can understand right-wing populist reasoning at least "a little bit". These persons could be described as "prosperity-chauvinist" winners of modernisation, or as "Standort"-nationalists. This is insufficient. The conformists understand integration in direct confrontation with the work sphere, which relies on over-adaptation to existing performance norms. This concept of integration is not as solid as it seems. Negative experiences at work, as a consequence of permanent restructuring or even job loss, lead to implicit questioning of these performance norms. While the pressure at work of the conformists is constantly rising, the guarantee that their performance is leading to the desired results is decreasing. With increasing pressure for adaptation and performance, and a strict fulfilment of performance norms, conformists expect the same from any other person. For interviewees, striving for complete integration at work (work orientation) has the function of a normative frame of reference which they use to judge social problems (political consciousness). The

integration of foreigners is thus only conceivable as assimilation, as a complete adaptation. Those who do not meet this understanding of integration fear being labelled as not-adaptable, or bound to be excluded.

The "conformist" variant shows that transitions towards right-wing populist orientations must not be understood as equivalent to the perceived degree of social disintegration, but a consequence of over-adaptation to social norms. These norms might constitute an understanding of integration which structures experiences and judgements in highly qualified knowledge work.

4.3 Explanations: Deprivation or culture of dominance?

Our study proves the existence of right-wing populist potential, which cannot be sufficiently grasped by referring to classic items of right-wing extremist research. Right-wing populism comprises a xenophobic, rather "neo-racist" (Castels 1991: 97ff.; Miles 1991; Taguieff 1991: 221 ff.) dimension. Representatives of the right-wing populist axiomatic act in very different ways, as an "undercurrent" (Birsl/Lösche 2001) in democratic organisations and parties. Contrary to other European democracies (Kitschelt/McGann 1997, Mény/Surel 2002, Werz 2003), there has been no right-wing populist breakthrough at a party political level, at least at federal level. All the attempts of right-wing extremist organisations such as the NPD, the DVU or the Republicans to disguise themselves as populists have been short episodes. The reason for this is specifically German: as soon as the extremist dimension of a party becomes apparent, corresponding with no credible rejection of nationalsocialism, right-wing organisations have no real chances to act as right-wing populist parties (Decker 2004: 156ff.). This is why the right-wing populist axiomatic repeatedly wrangles with the "historical burden", desperately trying to get rid of it.

Right-wing populism relates to different, partly contradictory motives and interests. When referring to theoretical explanations, the supposedly irreconcilable polarisation between deprivation approaches favoured by Castel, and culture of dominance approaches (Rommelspacher 1995, Held et al. 1991) which take a clear distance from so-called "deficit theories", might only refer to different empirical phenomena. The culture of dominance-approach as-

sumes that individuals who "identify with the dominating values of money, professional career and success" and who "glorify the principle of performance and reduce human relationships to their functionality for their own interests" are susceptible to racist and authoritarian-nationalist attitudes (Rommelspacher 1995: 86). Therefore neo-racism is in its "systematic appearance mainly a problem concerning the established and those expected or expecting to belong to the establishment in the future – with all the necessary efforts" (ibid.).

In this diagnosis one can recognise elements of the "conformist" variant of right-wing populism. Even parallels to the old thesis on authoritarism developed by Fromm and Adorno can be seen. A closer look reveals doubts. Although the authoritarian personality refers to a different social context, many of the interviewees do not seem to have a weak ego. Some of them have strong will-power. There seem to be mechanisms at their workplace which provoke the development of an excluding understanding of integration. Our empirical material furnishes new insights. In the higher spheres of the employment society, and in areas of modern participative work, there seems to be a connection between the increasing "marketisation" of work (Sauer 2005), new modes of "self-governance" (Foucault 2000), and a type of self-instrumentalisation which provokes sufferance and techniques of behaviour helping to overcome this pressure. Excluding concepts of integration is a product of such techniques of self-governance. Market-centred governance mechanisms generate "the coercion for self-coercion", a mode of self-labelling (Dörre/Röttger 2003; Dörre 2002) influencing the whole personality. Corresponding self-techniques efface the demarcation line between the work sphere and privacy, lead to the calculated use of emotions, generate restlessness and the inability to relax. Those who work and live like that are no modernity losers, and the term "relative deprivation" (Decker 2004: 27) does not relate to the phenomenon in question. They suffer from success and strive for professionalism. The total willingness to work hard is demanded, and at the same time impossible, because it would negate the social constitution of the personality. Not only the negation of, but also the intention to fulfil, market mechanisms and flexibility pressures can lead to social death. If people are forced more and more to accept the laws of performance and pro-

ductivity, aggression against unproductive, supposedly parasite groups is a logical consequence, although by no means inevitable.

This is one of the possible transitions towards right-wing populist orientations where experiences with flexible work come into play. When theorists of culture of dominance like Rommelspacher (1995: 86) argue that "neo-racism is not an issue of the weakest" but consider "prosperity chauvinism" as the main reason for neo-racist classifications, they are unable to explain the "rebellious" and "conserving" variant of right-wing populism. Neither "rebels" in a precarious position, nor reactive nationalists among formally integrated employees, can be qualified as "prosperity chauvinists". Both groups formulate legitimate expectations of a decent life, which in the labour market today become difficult to realise. Reactive nationalists are not only mere victims of restructuring. The fewer possibilities they see to improve their own situation through individual or collective efforts, the more they compete on the labour market with the means of resentment. It remains their decision . Those groups who embody obvious social falling become their main target.

There are tensions between the sketched groups and political orientations. "Rebellious", "conserving" and "conformist" right wing populism are hardly comparable. This is the structural difficulty with regard to mobilisation for right-wing populist formations. They have to reconcile the irreconcilable. They have to bring together the "conformist" market apologist in a high job position, suffering from self-oppression and the success criteria of the new market regime, and the "rebellious" interim worker seeking protection from the arbitrariness of this regime.

We conclude that there is an interconnection between the increase in precariousness of work, the recurrence of social insecurity and the occurrence of right-wing populist orientations. This can only be negated when limiting the effect of increasing precariousness to the phenomenon of insecure employment. The "zones" of the employment society are related to each other like a system of communicating tubes. The fear of social falling of formally integrated groups is a crucial characteristic of precariousness, and the disciplining pressure triggered by disaffiliated and precarious workers constitutes the pathological dimension of contemporary modes of work. The less employees

can overcome this situation, the greater the tendency to deal with status competition by using resentment, or xenophobic or neo-racist classifications.

This right-wing populism in everyday life is only a virulent danger if it correlates with a crisis in political representation. People acting according to the right-wing populist axiomatic are not right-wing extremists yet! They act in accordance with the dominant ideology offers of society. The implicit acceptance of democratic parties, and even trade unions, to encourage "Standort"-policies on a national level, subordinating social interests to the imperatives of economic performance, produces the frame of reference for modes of "self-governance" which become existential under the circumstances of flexible work. If a political system ignores the social consequences and divisions created by such "self-governance", political formations may fill the gaps.

A crisis of political representation is visible in Germany. The continuous ascent of a new Arturo Ui will not take place, because extreme xenophobia, characteristic of all right-wing populist formations, collides with the interests of the economic elite. Xenophobia and the creation of nationalist orientations are incompatible with the goals of a "transnational class" participating in globalisation and Europeanisation. This is no reason for complacency. The function of organised right-wing populism consists in Germany, of creating space for a right-wing populist undercurrent within democratic parties and trade unions, with regard to topics like migration or policies against criminality or terrorism. Democratic organisations which do not confront such an undercurrent will, in the context of current challenges like EU-enlargement, Turkish membership of the EU etc. lose the capacity to act strategically. An effective political confrontation has to uncover the "substance" of right-wing populist ideologies. Because the right-wing formations are "everything but a phenomenon of 'backwardness' in a process of civilisation of societies" (Klönne 2002: 1, 4), they become a mass phenomenon only where they present themselves as a rationalist organisation of collective "interest representation". The democratic treatment of new and old social questions, as well as migration and cultural integration, are decisive for the future of right-wing populism and democracy. If active treatment of these issues fails, the danger

of "authoritarian capitalism" (Heitmeyer 2001), even in Europe, becomes virulent.

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