

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

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The employment societies of the “atlantic” or “co-operative” capitalisms of Western-Europe have been in a phase of dramatic transformation for several years. A striking characteristic of this transformation is that these societies are being confronted with a phenomenon which is 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 the 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 new division lines in the labour market. We can observe that the prevailing link between wage earning employment and strong social rights is being eroded. As a consequence of a flexible working regime 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 process is taking place in different countries at different times; “institutional filters” of different national capitalisms are influencing the way this process is taking place but cannot stop it. The post-Fordist employment societies are more and more divided into three “zones”. The “zone of disaffiliation”, which is relatively small in Germany, contains all the long-term unemployed. All the regularly, full-time employed belong to the „zone of integration“. Above 60 % of all German employees can be located in this zone (Brinkmann et al. 2006). In between these extremes 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. What these jobs share is that they do not provide long term security and are vulnerable at any time.

The hypothesis of modern employment societies divided into three zones has been developed by Robert Castel in his famous study “Transformation of the Social Question”. He has combined this hypothesis which refers to the French society with the question of how processes of precariousness influence political attitudes. In his eyes the “return of insecurity” represents a huge driving force for a “Poujadist reaction”, for a new model of right-wing populism whose reason can be found in the competition of status between those faced with exclusion from the labour market. Characteristic for this competition are conflicts based on resentment: “The resentment as a social reaction to social misery relates to groups which are involved in competing conflicts for status. 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’s hypotheses have provoked a lively debate. In our recently accomplished qualitative study we tried to answer the question to what extent these hypotheses can be applied to Germany. Our intention was twofold: As a first step we wanted to find out – from a subjective perspective – the effects of processes of precariousness on the quality of integration in a modern society like Germany. As a second step we were interested in identifying modes of dealing with processes of precariousness politically and, in particular, possible transitions towards right-wing populist orientations. The underlying hypothesis is that the current type of right-wing populism manifests itself in the every-day-conscience of employees. Processes of precariousness furnish the “raw material” which, although not automatically, do provide the option for political reaction to be synthesised into right-wing populist orientations.

Contrary to conventional questionnaire-based research in political science which identifies continuities and developments of right-wing extremist potentials with the help of approved questioning strategies, we assumed complex interrelated processes for which appropriate empirical indicators are still to be developed. We are convinced that the contemporary right-wing populism represents also in Germany a politically virulent anti-democratic and anti-egalitarian current. It is however not an anti-modernistic phenomenon. Most often and most effectively nowadays right-wing populism succeeds in a globalised world in re-discussing the social question as a national one and thus to compromise traditional political elites considered as being unable to make a good job by a growing number of people. By doing so, right-wing populist formations can refer to modes of perceptions, values and interest constellations which not so long ago would have been considered as the “welfare state-conscience” of social democratic employees with a trade union membership or affinity. Such transformations of political orientations can occur as soon as crucial deficits of representation within the political system become apparent. Put differently, all populist currents – disregarding whether they have a more left- or more right-wing connotation – have their origins in the crisis of the political system (Priester 2005). The occurrence of populist formations results from the erosion of other political options, that is to say that populist currents always possess a process-character. It is not at all guaranteed that in the course of this process they transform into proper political parties. During long periods they can latently evolve within already

established parties or trade unions. That is what makes it extremely difficult to identify such currents and their potential from a scientific perspective.

For our purposes several aspects have to be taken into consideration. *First*, right-wing populist orientations have to be treated as a multidimensional construct (Hall 1986) that combines elements of idea systems and pseudo scientific political philosophies with explicit political judgements and interpretations, but also with implicit habitualised attitudes and schemes of action and interpretation. Traditional questionnaire research very often grasps only one specific dimension of such orientations, the one which is linked with explicit political statements that can be detected by using a questionnaire. However, the underlying implicit sense of such explicit statements is hardly identifiable through demoscopic survey methods. In his critical review of survey research Pierre Bourdieu differentiates three modes of how political opinions and orientations are constituted: “class ethos”, “systematic political conception” and “second degree decisions”. Bourdieu’s concept in a nutshell: Social ethos constitutes a subconsciously rooted spontaneous relationship with politics. On the other side, the “systematic political conception” represents 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 of constituting political opinions differ from the first one in so far as they provide each political judgement with an explicit character. When “producing” a political judgement every individual refers to all three constitution modes. By doing so, social ethos has the function to compensate for inadequacies of the political axiomatic (Bourdieu 1988: 655-89). All three modes influence the everyday conscience. However, it can generally be stated that the orientating function of spontaneous opinions, emotions and stereotypes becomes more important, the less coherent the political axiomatic of everyday conscience is.

Secondly, one has to be aware of the relative autonomy between work conscience and political orientations. There is no direct causal connection between concrete work experiences on the one side and politically relevant perceptions on the other side. Basic elements of the political conscience develop in the course of socialisation processes which, quite often until the end of the second and sometimes even until the first half of the third life decade, are characterised by the absence of concrete work experiences (Baethge et al. 1989; Dörre 1992). Even with regard to the further life cycle it is known that political conscience is neither determined nor

particularly structured by work experiences (Offe 1984). Earlier studies of the work conscience of employees had as a common result the autonomy of solidly rooted political orientations which started to be questioned and influenced only in particular situations. Taking this into consideration makes explanations obsolete like “the bigger the problems and the more insecure employment exists the more probable the openness for right-wing populist orientations becomes”. Neither unemployment nor precariousness as such culminate automatically in xenophobic or aggressively nationalistic orientations.

Thirdly, the relative autonomy of political orientations by no means implies that the employment sphere is irrelevant for the explanation of the new right-wing populism. More recent studies (Flecker/Hentges 2004: 119 ff., Flecker 2004, Flecker/Krenn 2004) prove that there is a “populist gap” resulting from the ignorance of employment related problems by the political system. Populist potential has also been identified by Robert Castel. He locates this potential not among precarious workers or disaffiliated persons but within the “zone of integration” among groups and individuals in a position where they can really lose something and where the aim is to defend the supposed privilege of their “normal employment”. Bourdieu and his team see a relevant potential for right-wing populist orientations among groups and persons who consider precariousness and social exclusion from the perspective of the social neighbour aiming at distinction. The common denominator of these studies and interpretations is that they distance themselves from a simplistic winner-loser semantic. The connections between work experiences, synthesising interpretations and right-wing populist orientations are much more complex and difficult to understand than such a semantic suggests.

Taking these difficulties into consideration we have looked at possible connections between experiences of precariousness and right-wing populist orientations. This was done on the basis of an explorative study based on approximately 100 semi-structured interviews with different sorts of employees from different sectors as well as with unemployed persons. Additionally we undertook 30 expert interviews with managers, works councils and trade unionists. In the following we concentrate on our results concerning political modes of dealing with insecure employment. For a better understanding, however, we start with some remarks about the phenomenon of precariousness.

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 precariousness” in Germany. This process becomes obvious in the experiences and subjective employment orientations of our interviewees. On the basis of our empirical sample 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. <i>Secure integration (“The safe ones”)</i>
2. <i>Atypical integration (“The unconventional” or “self-managers”)</i>
3. <i>Insecure integration (“The destabilised”)</i>
4. <i>Endangered integration (“Those in fear of social falling”)</i>
Zone of Precariousness
5. <i>Precarious employment as a chance / temporary integration (“The hopeful ones”)</i>
6. <i>Precarious employment as an involuntary arrangement (“The realistic ones”)</i>
7. <i>Bearable precariousness (“The content ones”)</i>
Zone of Disaffiliation
8. <i>Surmountable exclusion (“Those trying hard”)</i>
9. <i>Controlled exclusion / pseudo-integration (“The quasi-excluded”)</i>

In this article it is impossible for us to provide a detailed description of the typology. We just want to focus on one particular phenomenon which we describe as the (dis-)integration paradox of post-Fordist societies. This means in the first place that processes and fears of precariousness can also be observed in the “zone of integration” either as a result of real facts such as collective redundancies or the closure of plants (type 4) or as fear of social falling resulting from insecurity in a context of deteriorating working conditions such as the informal undermining of collective bargaining standards. Furthermore the (dis-)integration paradox means that active attempts of reintegration into the “normal” labour market take place in the “zone of precariousness”. Integration in the “zone of precariousness” is based on what we call “secondary integration potential”. In this case integration results neither from a permanent

employment with a decent salary (labour force perspective) nor from the identification with the concrete activity, providing neither personal satisfaction nor social recognition (work activity perspective). Instead integration results from the hope to finally succeed in obtaining a job in the “zone of integration” (type 5 and 8) or – in other cases – to compound with precariousness and partial exclusion which can be subjectively made bearable by the revalorization of gender specific (type 7) or ethnical (type 9) mechanisms of integration.

Integration in this context has different meanings and functions, depending on each specific situation. In contemporary employment societies precariousness does not automatically stand for total poverty and social isolation. Instead precarious employees find themselves in a particularly “fluent state” (Kraemer/Speidel 2004: 119ff.). On the one hand, the social climbing to the “zone of integration” seems still realistic to them and they have to mobilise all their resources and energies to succeed in becoming a permanent employee. On the other hand, they have to work hard if they want to prevent social falling. Due to the discontinuities of employment, contemporary precarious workers have no phases of rest and partial security. They are the first ones in periods of crisis to be threatened with dismissal. Most of them have to do the more cumbersome jobs. They are the stopgaps, the “general servants” whose material and qualification resources become less applicable, the longer employment insecurity lasts.

The exhausting “fluent state” is what makes precarious employees particularly vulnerable. The old promise of welfare state-capitalism that “normal employment” constitutes the basis for a slowly but continuously rising wealth has become obsolete for precarious employees. Because of this, integration in the “zone of precariousness” means something completely to precarious employees to what it does for “normal employees”. As in several cases precarious employees work together in the same team or the same plant as “normal employees”, they are perceived as a constant warning symbol for the latter. For instance, permanent employees who at first consider temporary workers as a welcome “flexibility buffer” may all of a sudden fear that they themselves will become replaceable when they see how well these employees perform their job. They see that their job is done by employees working under financial and social conditions which would never be accepted by the core workers. Although temporary or fixed-term contract workers still represent a small minority in big companies, their mere presence has a disciplining effect on core workers, even if the latter are members of a trade union. In firms with highly qualified knowledge workers, freelancers have a similar effect.

Their short working weeks combined with long daily working hours pressurise their colleagues with a permanent status to work equally long hours a day. In the construction industry it is the presence of Polish temporary employees which forces the permanent employees to accept salary and working time conditions undermining collective bargaining standards (type 3). In summary, one can say that in all segments of the labour market there are connections between core and flexible employees which make the “possession” of a permanent, full-time employment look like a privilege worth defending.

From this perspective, increasing insecure employment not only encourages the “destabilisation of the stabilised” (Castel 2000: 357). By disciplining and withdrawing possibilities of resistance from the employees, insecure employment or precariousness encourages at the same time a particular “stabilisation of instability”. As such, precariousness is not a phenomenon concerning only the margins of the employment society, but rather has a disintegrative and at the same time disciplining effect. It constitutes a power and control system, which in a divided employment society also creates pressure on the formally integrated units. To be aware of this is relevant for the understanding of political attitudes and orientations resulting from precariousness, as it makes clear that the usual schematic differentiation between “modernity winners and losers” does not apply. For the sake of obtaining substantial findings concerning the connection between transformations of the work sphere, precariousness and right-wing populist orientations, one has to take distance from simplistic dichotomies.

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

In order to identify possible transitions towards right-wing populist orientations, we have looked at individual, subjective interpretations of themes and problems treated in public discourse. The questions we asked in an open form concerned the following themes: 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.

In the interview analysis we looked at hints and hidden transcripts indicating xenophobic, racist, authoritarian, anti-democratic or anti-egalitarian attitudes. Among approximately 30 persons interviewed, representing 25 % of our sample, we could identify eight characteristic topics, which – appearing in different variations and combinations – 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 savings, 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 stands at the forefront of many statements. It is quasi the smallest common denominator of a modern every-day right-wing populist philosophy. Usually the rejection of immigration correlates with the emphasis of “not being hostile towards foreigners”, of “not being a racist”. And individuals often add that they do have contact with foreigners, seeing them as an enrichment. But, nevertheless, many interviewees in all three zones of the employment society pretend that further immigration mainly in big cities might lead to the disappearance of the “German culture”. The latter stands for specific characteristics such as continuity or assiduity and the fact that the Germans have rebuilt their country after the Second World War. “One is proud to be part of it, to have contributed.” In the eyes of this employee, cultural “mixture” endangers not only the virtues which enabled Germany’s economic rise but also the individual identity which relies to a large extent on the power of the national culture. Thus immigration appears to be an attack on one’s own national identity. The consequence consists of the refusal of immigrants being “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 this culturally grounded rejection of foreigners we had several interviewees arguing rather from an economic perspective. In this case foreigners are perceived as competitors on the labour market. Contrary to a rather cultural rejection of supposed superfluous, non-integratable “underclass” foreigners, the economic rejection refers to immigrants who, due to their qualification, are perceived as real competitors. In such cases, the fear of losing the job leads to the claim that we should “first take into consideration the interests of our country”. Against the background of shrinking distributive margins the relationship between foreigners and non-foreigners is constructed as a fight over distribution with – necessarily – winners and losers. The consequences of such a construction are quite obvious: The enlargement of the EU is equally rejected as the EU-membership of Turkey; processes of economic globalisation are primarily perceived as a threat, the introduction of the green-card at best 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“

The motive of the decreasing wealth which has to be protected against illegitimate claims is not only apparent in the context of labour market competition; in a different variation it is also apparent with regard to the welfare state and welfare state reforms. There is a large consensus among the interviewees that if savings have to be made they must not be made with regard to the performers but with regard to those who, without valid reason, 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. In most cases the rejection of “social parasites” goes hand in hand with a damaged sense of justice. This becomes obvious if those unwilling to perform are considered to be among the wealthier parts of the society. However, the chances to solve the lack of justice by referring to the privileged parts of the society are considered to be very slight. Instead the focus is put on the weaker groups of society. While fighting against “social parasites” it is considered legitimate to refer to right-wing populist parties.

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

The topics mentioned so far indicate that many interviewees have the feeling of belonging to the disadvantaged in their own country. We find these perceptions in the “zone of integration” as well as in the “zone of precariousness”. Freelancers in the IT industry as well as saleswomen in retail trade have one opinion in common: Germans disadvantage their own population. Even among young Turkish unemployed, one can observe general understanding of the fact that the Germans aim to be the leaders in their country. In the eyes of many interviewees there is one particular reason which leads to Germans being disadvantaged: the historical burden that prevents the Germans from formulating their legitimate claims towards non-Germans in an open manner. An IT expert working as a freelancer leaves no doubt in this regard: “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”. For the interviewees, overcoming this historical burden represents a crucial precondition for coping effectively with the lack of respect from foreigners. Those who acknowledge their “German identity” and are proud of being German shall no longer be seen and treated as Nazis. Only if this is the case does it become possible for Germans to ask the 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 at the same time an important subjective precondition to be able to construct a national identity with a self-stabilising function. In nearly all cases where we can find transitions towards right-wing populist orientations, the national identity plays an important role. One is either proud or at least would like to be proud to be German. National identity, however, is constructed in different ways. Some people associate national identity with economic power, others with a familiar environment, habits or cultural specifics. Again, others are proud “to be willing to help”, “as Germans to help all the others”. This kind of identity construct has nothing in common with a traditional “blood-and-soil”-nationalism. These constructs become problematic if they are pronounced together with excluding aims which refer to non-Germans in an aggressive manner. National pride always implies a priority for “German interests”. Consequently, even the positive recognition of helping others is formulated in the following way: “We should not forget ourselves as Germans. Above all, we

are important”. Particularly in the eyes of interviewees from eastern Germany, national identity seems to be a symbol for the right for a decent life. And it is precisely those employees who consider their national pride to be blocked through misleading developments. 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“

There is a large consensus among interviewees concerning the identification of the scapegoat: the politicians. Among the well-bred employees the judgements are more or less differentiated. Most heavily criticised are the inability to find adequate solutions and the arrogance within politics. But the lower the position in the vertical hierarchy of the employment society, the harsher the judgements. Particularly those threatened of social falling and the precarious employees consider the entire “system” as corrupt. Politicians are seen as an over-paid, corrupt caste which repeatedly ignores the legitimate claims of “the population”. The politicians belong to those groups 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“

Serious doubts concerning the integrity of the political class merge in some cases into a critique of the political system as a whole. This critique seems at first sight rather 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 in certain contexts obtain an openly authoritarian character. This is the case when the interviewees call for harsher prosecution of foreigners, their consequent expulsion from Germany or the vigorous fight against criminality. Criminality is *the* topic where politics should prove its credibility. An extreme position with this regard 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 the party-democracy. However, for some interviewees the possibility of such a development seems rather realistic. In clear contradiction to the desire to get rid of the historical burden, some interviewees see the possibility that history could be

repeated. “There are hard times” and also “Hitler benefited from high unemployment” can then be heard. But there are also other historical references. It is not by accident that employees from eastern Germany draw parallels between 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 exactly in this context that the opinions about right-wing populist (or right-wing extremist) parties have to be seen. Obviously no one within our sample openly admits being a partisan of a right-wing populist or extremist formation. The employees in question are politically “average people”. The majority vote for the CDU and SPD, some of them abstain from voting. It has, however, to be noted that the interviewed employees associate a positive function with right-wing populist or extremist formations. The smallest common denominator between the interviewees in that respect is that although such parties are too extreme and in fact without influence, they occasionally raise awareness for the right topics. More or less all the employees in question acknowledge that the rightist formations identify relevant questions and problems. The rejection of such formations results less from a substantial perspective but from their outsider status they represent extremist groups. There is not much confidence that these formations are capable of initiating real changes. At the same time there is no doubt among the employees that unemployment, immigration and the destruction of the “German identity” can only be stopped by fundamental changes. Thus their rejection of right-wing populist or extremist formations is based upon very weak foundations, and it seems quite obvious that some of the employees 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

It should be clear by now that transitions towards right-wing populist orientations cannot only be found among particular social spheres. Topics with right-wing populist potential also 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 by itself an important result because it indicates that neither unemployment nor precariousness

are exclusive explanatory factors. The same is true with regard to fears of social falling and precariousness in the “zone of integration”. If, as we are convinced, transformations of the employment system are explanatory factors, it is necessary to take into consideration a whole range of factors, a plurality of structuring influences.

3.1. Employment and unemployment within the right-wing populist axiomatic

All the topics sketched above cannot be explained by exclusively referring to the work experiences of the interviewees. The latter express views, attitudes and judgements which are on the contrary highly persistent with regard to situation-specific influences and experiences. One might support 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, for instance, expressed by interviewees who consider their own job to be safe. And the exclusion of “social parasites” is formulated, surprisingly, by those who live in good economic circumstances and who do not compete for welfare state resources. It has to be noted that neither the 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 much more in the mode of constituting political opinions which Bourdieu identified as “systematic political conception”. These conceptions are relatively consistent schemes of interpretation with which the 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 be treated as something pathological. The opposition of a liberal universalism and national, ethnical or gender specific particularism is in a certain sense inherent in the world wide capitalist economy. Processes of economic globalisation corresponding with market-liberal universalistic ideas go at the same time hand in hand with particular frames, whose function consists in legitimating the placement of labour forces on certain positions in the hierarchy of the employment society. From the perspective of the working population this ideological ambiguity is the indication of 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 constantly 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).

It seems quite likely that this structural contradiction obtains a new dynamic under the conditions of a flexible and market-centred production regime (Dörre 2002). Put differently: the strengthening of market-oriented modes of governance and control of employment has the effect that originally legitimate forms of labour division become more and 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. However, they undertake their 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* – even if it is only a type of imaginary integration. Nationalistic, xenophobic and racist classifications are attempts to get in touch with "in-groups" in order to strengthen the own position in the competition for material resources and social recognition.

The imaginary modes of inclusion and exclusion are based quite often on elements of previous ideologies of integration which through "bricolage" (Lévi-Strauss) are modified and adapted to the new circumstances. Thus nationalism represents a modern type of integration whose aim has always been to weaken the antagonistic potential of employment-related social conflicts. It belongs to the characteristics of modern capitalist societies, as noted by Etienne Balibar (1990: 259), that these societies constantly "reproduce a regressive image of the nation-state" where "people are 'at home' because they are among themselves". This is not so much despite but because of processes of economic internationalisation. Balibar underestimates the impact that this construction of the nation-state had during the heydays 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 – mostly male – full-time employees and their families, the period of the expanding welfare state was characterised by the 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 conscience, which corresponded with a type of capitalism (Albert 1992; Streeck 1997) which at least in Germany proved extremely cohesive.

We assume that the ongoing crisis of this type of society now has the effect that a nationally oriented welfare state conscience might be transformed into a regressive modernistic ideology of exclusion. We call this phenomenon “reactive nationalism” (Dörre 2003). This has to be seen as a catch-all-term referring to very different forms of transitions towards right-wing populist orientations, whose common denominator consists of the legitimisation of positional fights in a wealthy society.

At the centre of reactive nationalism is the idea of “Germany as an island of prosperity” which has to be protected against foreign, illegitimate requests. To prevent having to share the “cake” with too many, the entry to this “island” should be rendered more difficult and severely controlled. Frequently stated criteria of exclusion are (economic) “utilisation” and “culture”. Such criteria can, however, be used in a flexible manner. Reactive nationalism of employees, as well as of old and new employers, does not primarily refer to nationalistic ideas and symbols. In a very modern way it refers to an understanding of the national identity which legitimises social and civic rights. Therefore reactive nationalism cannot be generalised as a pre-modern or even as a new variant of a fascist blood-and-soil ideology. A politically highly delicate feature of this ideology is the fact that at first sight it differs only slightly from a welfare state conscience of former times. Reactive nationalism in the 21st century aims at safeguarding crucial elements of social partnership ideologies. In as far as it refers to inherent aspects of the “island of prosperity”, reactive nationalism has a partly well-developed sense of social injustice. Reactive nationalism deplores unjust distribution and it insists on a “fair exchange”, of a balanced give-and-take situation (“good money for good work”) which shall be the basis for the relationship between the work force and management, between capital and labour. However, the classification system changes as soon the German “island of prosperity” is related to other competing nation states. In this context conflicts for a just distribution between “below” and “above” are reinterpreted as conflicts between cultures and nation-states. The reactive nationalism of employees is thus a specific, social populist answer to an unlimited marketisation. In a historical situation where the former connection between the nation-state and a social-reformist policy has become obsolete, in which the integrative power of employment is considerably reduced and where the ideology of globalism has become the

driving force for social insecurity, the policy of borders appears to represent an imaginary way out.

On the basis of our empirical research we can conclude that reactive nationalism is *one possible* manifestation of what we call the political axiomatic of right-wing populism. As it will also become clear, other manifestations are possible. It is crucial to note that such constructions possess a relative autonomy with regard to concrete experiences; however, in everyday life they are continuously enriched by concrete experiences and as such 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 by referring to various examples. In the following we discuss three relevant fields where these connections become obvious.

Table 3:
(1) Negative flexibilisation without political representation
(2) „De-womanisation“ and „forced feminisation“
(3) Contested hierarchies in disciplined production communities
(4) Ethnically “pure” workers’ solidarity
(5) Self-instrumentalisation in deregulated working modes

(1) Negative flexibilisation without political representation

All the employees where we find transitions towards right-wing populist orientations perceive the market-oriented flexibilisation of employment relations and work modes primarily as an external constraint which affects the living and working conditions in a negative way. In all different employment situations the employees perceive themselves as being confronted with increasing cost and productivity pressure. It is interesting to note that mainly those in lower and middle management positions perceive this pressure as a particular burden. Many of the interviewed employees convey the impression of an increasing pressure of flexibility and performance which contradicts the public discourse on savings and flexibility fundamentally. The statement of 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: “I have to say that 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. I have to say that we are highly flexible.”

Real requirements at work and the public discourse on flexibility have nothing in common in the eyes of most interviewed employees. The hardship of the “real working life” has no voice in the sphere of political representation. On the contrary: The reforms of the labour market represent an additional pressure not only on the weakest parts but also on the 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 interviewed employees there is substantial injustice concerning the existence and distribution of work-related risks and inconveniences. This feeling of injustice can even be found among employees who are not suspicious of any right-wing populist tendencies. However, in the group of right-wing populists we can observe a particular aspect. The injustice in the relationship between “above” and “below” is considered to be unchangeable because “politics” not only ignores but produces this injustice. In the eyes of the interviewees, the political system and its representatives prove incapable of solving this fundamental problem of justice. The stronger the feeling of powerlessness, the stronger the inclination to ask for authoritarian solutions which shall be executed even at the expense of scapegoats.

(2) “De-womanisation” and “forced feminisation”

Negatively perceived pressure for flexibilisation is however not the only source for right-wing populist orientations. Market-oriented flexibilisation also 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 until today primarily a male domain. Most of the housewives and mothers could not exercise a full-time job. Their – often voluntary – decision for an

atypical and thus potentially precarious job led to the development of a specific labour market for women which became a reservoir for non-normal-employment, traditionally the “helping family member” (Mayer-Ahuja 2003). In a dynamic and highly regulated labour market many women being “additional earners” had no problems about accepting insecure jobs with low salaries. This is the reason why in the course of a decreasing employment dynamic, contemporary modes of precarious jobs could easily spread. The traditional gender specific division of labour suggested the “voluntary” decision for such jobs, and thus atypical employment has become primarily a female domain. Our type 7 “the content ones” can be seen as resulting from this development. It is the identification with the role as a housewife and mother which makes the arrangement with precarious jobs necessary but also convenient. We call this “secondary integration potential”.

A characteristic of non-voluntary flexibilisation is that it influences the secondary integration potential of the “additional earner”. This shall be illustrated by referring to a saleswoman of a small retail shop. This woman locates her job at the lower end of the social status scale. She goes to work for financial reasons but she obtains most of her satisfaction from her roles as housewife and mother. Her “dream” is to choose her working time in order to be able to fulfil these roles in the best possible way. But in fact 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 interviewed employee suffers from short periods of planning. Her working times are fixed at earliest six weeks in advance. The crucial thing about this flexible regulation of working times is the fact that it undermines the social identity capable under normal circumstances to minimise on a subjective level the precarious character of the employment. Chaotic and unpredictable working times prove to be incompatible with the role of the caring housewife and mother. In this sense the interviewee sees herself as “de-womanised”. And it is this experience that 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 also identified the phenomenon of “forced-feminisation”. This shall be illustrated by referring to an eastern German production worker in the automobile industry who in the past has worked as a construction worker and then as an 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 to do 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 an 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, to save money and to have a social life. He nevertheless suffers from lacking recognition. As a “feminised” assembly worker he sees himself confronted with a 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 danger 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, in addition to that, symbolically occupy the field of demonstrative masculinity. Overlapping gender-specific and ethnical dimensions sensitise him for the messages of right-wing parties. “These parties treat topics which encourage people”.

“De-womanisation” and “forced-feminisation” stand for another connection between work experiences and right-wing populist orientations. In such cases 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 concerned will react by defending their traditional identity. They will stick to their life concepts in an imaginary way, and they will defend them against supposedly disrespectful behaviour from outsiders capable of living their life concepts without making a contribution.

(3) Contested hierarchies in disciplined production communities

Generally the relationship between core workers and temporary workers are described as unproblematic. Some interviews we carried out in the car assembly plant, however, show that there are occasional conflicts. If these conflicts take place between foreign core workers and German temporary workers they automatically 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 at work are typically kept hidden because all those involved have to face the possibility of dismissal. In multinational production communities of Transnational Corporations, ethnically motivated or racial conflicts are nothing more than dysfunctional. Management and employee representatives will do everything to inhibit them as soon as they arise. But by doing this the reasons for xenophobic, racial classification are not eliminated. On the contrary, the division into core and temporary workers encourages the construction of imaginary groups which are used not only for building up an identity but also as a means in the fight for a good position within the work sphere. For many of the interviewed temporary workers it is more than certain that “any foreigner lives better and is better treated”. Taking this for granted 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 in the eyes of several interviewees as pure repression. In this regard, 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”. However, 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”.

Despite its good intentions the anti-racist policy of the company and the 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 whose reasons are ignored. As a consequence the resentments grow secretly. A mode of double reality develops. With regard to the team and the work situation itself, one can observe a behaviour which respects the company's policy. But under the cloak of political correctness, xenophobic and also openly racist classifications develop. The secret and informal diffusion of such classifications has the character of a subversive action not only against "arrogant foreigners" but also against "those on top" who enforce their foreigner friendly policy with repressive means.

4. Conclusion

The meaning of these findings for the research on right-wing populism shall be briefly summarised. By doing so we refer to our hypothesis from the beginning, assuming an connection between transformations of work, precariousness and new right-wing populism.

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

Those academics describing the formation of a new right-wing populism in Europe (Decker 2004; Heitmeyer/Loch 2001; Bischoff et al. 2005) assume movements and parties whose driving forces are mainly rooted in the transformations of the welfare state-capitalisms since the 1980s. The new right-wing populism is, with regard to ideology, politics and organisation, a clearly different phenomenon from traditional right-wing extremism. By focusing on ideology, which for our approach is the relevant dimension, one can define the new right-wing populism as a basically individualistic concept which emphasises the social duties of each person but at the same time rejects bureaucratic paternalism and collectively imposed solidarity. New right-wing populism is neither characterised by submissive respect towards élites nor by sympathy with underprivileged groups (Lasch 1995). When trying to bring into balance individual freedom and social commitment, populists prove to be "pioneers of ambiguity" (Decker 2004: 30; Kann 1983: 371).

The ideological nucleus of right-wing populism can be described as "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 of these constructs to the patterns of everyday conscience which we define as right-wing populist axiomatic seem striking to us. The latter appears to be an "everyday

philosophy” of social currents which reacts to a sort of “de-collectivisation” in a collective manner by the mobilisation of resentments. Xenophobic or even racist classifications are at the heart of this right-wing populist axiomatic, which not merely fleetingly but to a significant extent has its origins in the discrepancy between the official discourse about flexibility and real or anticipated experiences of precariousness. Individuals perceive themselves as objects of a market-driven flexibilisation primarily acting in response to withdrawal of social security. Indeed, and in that respect we agree with Robert Castel, it seems nowadays only possible to withdraw from “the game of change, mobility, constant adaptation and re-qualification” at the expense of “social death” (2005: 71). And the more the gap between the official mode of treating this problem and everyday experiences grow, the more likely is a constellation characterised as “populist moment” by Goodwyn (1978) in his classical study of the “Agrarian Revolt in America”. However, and in that respect we disagree with Castel, not only so called losers of modernity suffer from that development. It can also be – and Castel gives a slight hint – 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

On the basis of our empirical material we can differentiate between at least three different transitions towards right-wing populism which do not directly correspond with the “zones” of the employment society but which nonetheless possess a certain “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). Characteristic for this variant is that it has its origins in the disaggregation of formerly coherent, rational political orientations. This phenomenon has much to do with what Bourdieu (2000) has seen as the characteristic of subproletarian existences. A life completely characterised by provisional arrangements quite inevitably leads to the “systematic disorganisation of behaviour, attitudes and ideologies”. The longer this situation lasts, the more likely it becomes to strip for some moments from unpleasant work and to obtain money with the lowest possible 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 to be foggy and inconsistent. The disaffiliated and precarious workers dither between resignation and imaginary revolt, a revolt,

however, which sticks to the modes of protest imposed by the established political system. Their protest seems in a certain way disorientated; it refers similarly to “those above”, to everything “foreign” or “different”. But first and foremost 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.

At first sight the political orientations of the rebellious right-wing populists seem not only contradictory but also very confusing. The analysis of their answers however shows that 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” has the primary function of constructing positively loaded affiliations through explicit demarcation. In the case of young unemployed Turks this kind of identity politics has quite grotesque characteristics. Migrants of the second generation pretend to be “Hitler fans” although they are completely aware that they would be the first ones persecuted by a new Hitler. Stereotypes such as the one that Hitler did much to address the unemployment situation are nothing more than the symbolic affiliation to the way of reasoning of the autochthonous majority in their social world. And it serves at the same time as legitimisation for a quite defiant insistence on their own nationality (“I am Turkish”) which represents a subjective shield against negatively loaded classifications by others.

The “conserving” variant can mainly be found among the formally integrated employees confronted with the possibility and/or fear of social falling (type 3, 4). These interviewees intend to defend their own social position by using resentment as a driving force for “social and political action” (Castel 2005: 67f.). These groups use resentment very consciously in the competition with others for resources and social status. Their argumentation is rather “rationalistic”: when arguing about distributive matters they distinguish between “above” and “below”; their positions are thus quite compatible with a trade union policy and collective representation. Consequently, we do find active trade union and works council members among them. Their main concern is to preserve welfare state-capitalism including its security promises by limiting the number of “insiders” according to “ethnic”, “national” or “cultural” criteria. Disregarding their individual convictions and systems of classifications the interviewees share the view that migration leads to unemployment, costs a lot and reduces the quality of life of the German citizens. In addition to that, 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 heterogeneity. This becomes obvious by referring to the example of German miners: Turkish miners talking Turkish with each other endanger cohesion in the eyes of their German colleagues.. A feeling of cultural inferiority (Turks understand German but Germans do not understand Turkish) goes hand in hand with the claim for a workers' solidarity which can be used at any time in a manner which excludes the foreign "disturbers". "Conserving" right-wing populism in this context does not imply a loyalty to a specific political party. Among the concerned employees we find diehards as well as former social democrats. They react in a "conserving" manner because they intend to preserve the advantages of the former "Bonn Republic" with the help of a strict migration policy. It is a variant of welfare state conscience whose origins can be traced back to the era of expanding Fordism and employment. The excluding mechanisms of this type of conscience become visible under changed conditions. We have referred to this variant as a mode of "reactive nationalism". It is characterised by 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 a variant that we identify as "conformist" right-wing populism. This variant can mainly be found in the "zone of integration" (type 1, 2) and here mainly among interviewees who have "executing" tasks. We speak of a "conformist" variant because it mainly relies on over-adaptation to hegemonist norms and on a rather 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, or perhaps even because, they are highly integrated at work. These employees share the characteristic of defining 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. Therefore the integration of foreigners should in their eyes be by necessity a one-way adaptation to the "German culture" of the hard working population. This is exactly the point where they complain about lacking justice and where they can understand right-wing populist

reasoning at least “a little bit”. At first sight these persons could be described as “prosperity-chauvinist” winners of modernisation or as “Standort”-nationalists. This is however an insufficient characterisation. It is crucial to note that the conformists develop an understanding of integration in direct confrontation with the work sphere which relies on an over-adaptation to the existing performance norms. This concept of integration is however not as solid as it seems. Negative experiences at work as a consequence of permanent restructuring or even job loss lead to the 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 start expecting the same from any other person. For the 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 conscience). The integration of foreigners is thus only conceivable as assimilation, as a complete adaptation. And all those who do not meet this understanding of integration have the fear of being labelled as not-adaptable or even as bound to be excluded.

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

4.3. Explanations: Deprivation or culture of dominance?

What is the significance of these empirical findings for the debate about the origins of a new right-wing populism? First of all, our study proves the existence of a right-wing populist potential which cannot be sufficiently grasped by referring to classic items of right-wing extremist research. Instead of extremist currents 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 (vgl. Kitschelt/McGann 1997, Mény/Surel 2002, Werz 2003), there has been no right-wing populist breakthrough on 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 a continuing German specificity: as soon as the extremist dimension of a party becomes apparent, corresponding with no credible rejection of national-socialism, right-wing organisations have no real chances to act as right-wing populist parties (Decker 2004: 156ff.). This specificity is the reason why the right-wing populist axiomatically repeatedly wrangles with the “historical burden”, desperately trying to get rid of it.

Beside this historical reason there is another more contemporary one. Our study indicates that right-wing populism relates to very different, partly contradictory motives and interests. When referring to theoretical explanations this means that 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 to so-called “deficit theories” might only refer to different empirical phenomena. The culture of dominance-approach assumes 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 particularly 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 quite easily recognise elements of the “conformist” variant of right-wing populism. At first sight even parallels to the old thesis on authoritarianism developed by Fromm and Adorno can be seen. A closer look however reveals doubts. Disregarding the fact that the authoritarian personality refers to a different social context, many of the interviewees do not seem to have a weak ego. On the contrary: some of them seem to have strong will-power. But nevertheless there seem to be mechanisms at their workplace which provoke the development of an excluding understanding of integration. In that regard our empirical material furnishes new insights. Particularly in the higher spheres of the employment society and in areas where modern participative work modes exist 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 does not only provoke sufferance but also 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. The corresponding self-techniques efface the demarcation line between the work sphere and privacy, lead to the calculated use of emotions, generate restlessness and the incapacity of relaxing. Those who work and live like that mainly enjoying themselves are no modernity losers, and also the term of “relative deprivation” (Decker 2004: 27) does not precisely relate to the phenomenon in question. It is rather a kind of suffering from success and striving 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 productivity aggressions against unproductive, supposedly parasite groups are a logical consequence, although by no means inevitable.

However, this connection describes only 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 the “rebels” in a precarious position nor the reactive nationalists among the formally integrated employees can be qualified as “prosperity chauvinists”. In fact both groups formulate legitimate expectations with regard to a decent life; expectations which in the labour market nowadays become more and more difficult to realise. Reactive nationalists are however not only mere victims of restructuring. The fewer possibilities they see to improve their own situation through individual or collective efforts, the more probable it becomes for them to compete on the labour market with the means of resentment. But it always remains their own decision whether they finally do it or not. Particularly those groups who embody social falling in an obvious manner become their main target for negative classifications.

Seen from that perspective there are tensions between the sketched groups and political orientations. “Rebellious”, “conserving” and “conformist” right wing populism are hardly comparable. This is exactly 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 aiming at being protected against the arbitrariness of this regime.

On the basis of our research we can 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 interconnection can only be negated when limiting the effect of processes in increasing precariousness to the phenomenon of insecure employment. Such a perception ignores the fact that the “zones” of the employment society are related to each other like a system of communicating tubes. This is not only due to the fact that the fear of social falling of formally integrated groups represents a crucial characteristic of precariousness but mainly due to the fact that the disciplining pressure triggered by the disaffiliated and precarious workers constitutes to a large extent the pathological dimension of contemporary modes of work. The less it seems possible for the employees to overcome this situation, the greater is the tendency to deal with status competition by using resentment or, even harsher, by using xenophobic or neo-racist classifications.

This kind of right-wing populism anchored in everyday life can only become a virulent danger if it correlates with an acute crisis in political representation. People acting according to the right-wing populist axiomatic are no right-wing extremists yet! Instead they act in accordance with the dominant ideology of society. The implicit acceptance of democratic parties and even trade unions to encourage “Standort”-policies on a national level which subordinate 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” then there is the danger that political formations fill the existing gaps by imaginary protest emphasising mechanisms of domination and exclusion.

A crisis of political representation is at least vaguely visible also in Germany. The continuous ascension of a new Arturo Ui will however not take place. The reason for that is that extreme xenophobia characteristic of all right-wing populist formations collides with the interests of large parts of the economic elite. Xenophobia and the creation of nationalist orientations are

incompatible with the goals of a “transnational class” participating in the process of globalisation and Europeanisation. This is however no reason for complacency. The function of organised right-wing populism consists in Germany to a large extent 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 actively confront such an undercurrent will in the context of current challenges like EU-enlargement, Turkish membership of the EU etc. successively 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 attain the status of a mass phenomenon only in a situation where they are able to present themselves as a highly rationalist organisation of collective “interest representation”. The democratic treatment of new and old social questions as well as the policy of migration and cultural integration are political issues which are not only decisive for the future of right-wing populism but also for the future of democracy. If an active treatment of these issues should fail, the danger of an “authoritarian capitalism” (Heitmeyer 2001) even in Europe becomes virulent.

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