
The value-based Nationalism of Pegida

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Abstract

In the fall of 2014, the new German grassroots political protest movement “Pegida” emerged. The movement’s targets of criticism include the pronounced ‘failures’ of German asylum and immigration policy, refugees, and a so-called “Islamization.” This contribution is an analysis of Pegida’s programmatic publications. Pegida claims to promote national values and already has a positive image of Germany in particular and the nation state in general. Germany is seen as an agency of ‘humanity’ that fulfils a selfless moral mission in granting asylum to refugees. For Pegida, the consequences of this policy include ‘foreign infiltration,’ as well as so-called “Muslim parallel societies,” which are seen as dangerous imports of competing moralities. To save the ‘good order’ that said “patriotic Europeans” imagine as their home, the integration of foreign ‘national identities’ is seen as both necessary and hard to achieve. Therefore, Pegida demands the optimization of state force and its use to establish a requirement of integration and enforce the sanctioning of criminal immigrants and “asylum betrayers.” According to this logic, the preservation of home through a “zero tolerance policy” is a self-purpose, ensuring to prevent negative social consequences like poverty and unemployment. The result of this analysis proposes an explanation approach to the xenophobic logic of Pegida’s value-based nationalism.

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Pegida - a right-wing Protest Movement

The acronym "Pegida" stands for "Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes" (*Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the Occident*). This grassroots political protest movement originated in Dresden and was founded in the fall of 2014 as a reaction against a demonstration in the inner-city of Dresden on the 10th of October 2014. At this rally, solidarity with the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) in the war against the Islamic State (IS) was demanded. Pegida's criticism against involving Germany with claimed 'non-German' or 'Islamic' conflicts has remained an important theme for the movement, which is expressed in one of their main slogans: "[Pegida is] non-violent and united against religious and proxy wars on German ground" (Geiges, Mark & Walter 2015, 49) However, the protest against the PKK was only the initial point of Pegida's engagement, the issue is no longer a dominant theme for the movement. Pegida generally addresses three issues: refugees, 'Islamization,' and pronounced 'failures' of German asylum and immigration policy. On the 20th of October 2014, Pegida's first protest gathering was held in Dresden. While only 350 people came to this event, the numbers increased dramatically over the following months. At its peak in mid-January, Pegida attracted as many as 25,000 people at their demonstration marches. Since late 2014, 20-50 more or less successful local varieties³ of the movement were initiated all over Germany, adapting the acronym to their respective cities, for example *Legida* for *Leipzig* or *Mügida* for *München* (Munich). However, after Pegida gained nationwide media coverage and broad political attention, most of the local adaptations were confronted with counter-protest against xenophobic resentments and for an open-minded climate of tolerance and a German *Willkommenskultur* (welcoming-culture). Pegida was outnumbered by "NoPegida" everywhere except in Dresden. Since its peak in popularity, Pegida has seen a decline in

³ The blogs "montagsdemonstration.blogspot.de" (2015) and "Bürgerbewegungen.net" (2015) count 56 and 22 local varieties of the movement.

open supporter numbers, but did not cease to exist (cf Geiges, 33). In June 2015, Pegida is still able to regularly attract 1000-2000 people at their rallies in Dresden. Pegida has thus remained a relatively local phenomenon, successfully mobilizing great numbers of supporters in Dresden and Saxony.

Pegida organizes their explicitly peaceful “*Spaziergänge*” (walks) in order to “make politicians see the light,” as well as to demand that they recognize the will of the people. This indicates Pegida’s disillusionment with politics and implies that a disconnection exists between the people, politics, and the media. Accordingly, two of Pegida’s main paroles label politicians as “*Volksverräter*” (“Traitors of the people”) and the media as “*Lügenpresse*” (“lying press”). Shortly after its peak, Pegida experienced a crisis. The original “organization team” (“*Orga-Team*”) of the movement had partly broken up over a factional dispute on several questions, which was preceded by the publication of a compromising picture and supposed racist statements that Pegida-founder Lutz Bachmann made via social media (cf. FAZ 2015, February 21). This moral unmasking of Pegida falls in the wider context of media or political contributions against Pegida by the “‘clean side’ of civil society” (Geiges et al. 2015). On January 21st, Pegida published a press handout (Pegida 2015), where the movement disassociated itself from Leipzig’s Legida. The variety formulated their positions more aggressive and it is reported that Legida protests saw a greater number of neo-Nazis and hooligans (netz-gegen-nazis.de, 2015). Shortly after Bachmann resigned from his post as chairman of Pegida, the co-founder and spokesperson of Pegida, Katrin Oertel, and five other members of the organization team announced their resignation. Among them was the former second chair of Pegida, René Jahn (2015), who stated that the collective resignation was decided against the “background of the continuance of Bachmann as a member of the orga-team and the lack of Dissociation towards Legida in Leipzig”. Four weeks later, it was announced that Bachmann was re-elected as one of three chairs. In addition to that, a former member of the 2013 founded right-wing party Alternative For Germany (AFD), Tatjana

Festerling, was presented as a new member of the organization team (cf. *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, 23.02.2015). Festerling had left the AFD in Hamburg after being rebuked by the party for expressing solidarity with the far-right hooligan movement Hooligans against Salafism (HoGeSa)⁴ after their violent protest in Cologne on October 26, 2014. Later in 2015, Festerling was announced as Pegida's candidate in the mayoral elections in Dresden in June 2015. She received 9.6% of the votes in the first round of election, but then withdrew her candidacy and recommended her voters to support the liberal candidate in order to make a left-wing coalition impossible.

The relationship between AFD and Pegida is not perfectly clear yet. Since Pegida emerged, the AFD (2015, 2) has accused all other parties for "not liking Pegida and not taking their concerns seriously." The members of the AFD are involved in a factual dispute over whether the party should focus 'problems' in the field of integration and immigration or remain with their focus of right-wing Euro-scepticism. The vice-president of the AFD, Alexander Gauland (2015), repeatedly called Pegida a "natural ally of the AFD", but distanced himself from this view after Lutz Bachmann refused to leave Pegida.

Pegida's relationship with politics has developed from an explicit dissociation to an apparent two-pronged approach and strategy. In the early times of the movement, Pegida explicitly disassociated themselves with politics and this is still an important theme for the movement today. Festerling's candidacy in the mayoral elections is, so far, an exception.

Pegida - a Symptom of Homelessness?

Scientists emphasize that Pegida is not a phenomenon of the lower-classes and indeed, the movement mobilizes mostly better-educated men who are also more financially advantaged than the local average (cf. Vorländer, Herold & Schäler 2015; Rucht 2015).

⁴ HoGeSa (*Hooligans Gegen Salafisten*) is a nationwide 'action group' against Salafists and an offshoot of the far-right, anti-Islam hooligan organizations European Defense League and the English Defense League.

The prevalent assumption that social relegation leads to xenophobic tendencies is thus challenged empirically (cf. Geiges et al. 2015, 69). The fact that Pegida supporters are mostly from the middle class shows that nationalist ideas and the fear of losing the national identity cannot simply be deduced from their position in society. Another approach to Pegida focuses on understanding ideas of nationality. During a radio interview, the German sociologist Heinz Bude (2015) points to eastern Germany's communist past, arguing that Pegida is a "local phenomenon of the disappointed after 1989"; in this view, Pegida's main slogan "*Wir sind das Volk!*" ("We are the people!") mirrors the loss of a people's identity since "the East-German people no longer exist" (ibid.). This approach is problematic however, and not just because Pegida has had supporters in western Germany. This theory works under the assumption that xenophobia cannot develop in cases where somebody (still) has a proper home or homeland; ideologies of homelands and xenophobia are put in opposition to each other. In fact, many scholars explain Pegida in this way. For example, Geiges et al. (2015, 186) see Pegida as a result of "mental homelessness, organizational orphanhood and a loss of political representation." We argue however that Pegida is not a product of homelessness, but rather of a nationalist construction that establishes a homeland Germany which is threatened by a constructed "Islamization", asylum seekers, and by foreigners in general.

In addition to that, the often postulated opposition of (good) patriotism and (bad, i.e. xenophobic) nationalism will be opposed (cf. Billig, 1995; Adorno 1977/2003, 589). Representative studies suggest a significant ideological overlap of Pegida's conceptions with common ideas among the German people in both the east and west. Andreas Zick and colleagues (Zick et al 2011, 62f) found that 50% of the German populace agrees with the notion, "there are too many immigrants in Germany." Newer studies suggest however that right-wing extremism is in decline in the so-called "middle" of society, while at the same

time the demand for more policies which privilege “homeland” inhabitants over immigrants is growing (Zick & Klein, 2014).

With regards to Benedict Anderson’s (1996) classic definition of the nation as an “imagined community,” we critically reconstruct Pegida’s perspective on immigration, asylum and “Islamization” by focusing on the demands and positions formulated in their manifest-like “Position-Paper” (Pegida 2014), that Becher et al. (2015, 21) marked a “distillate of right-wing objectives.” In February 2015, Pegida and Legida (2015) updated their views and published the “Dresden Theses” as a collective effort. We suggest that these publications are not as much watered-down by strategic relativization as is often claimed by political actors⁵, but rather contain the movement’s xenophobic positions in plain text. Our arguments are structured around two central issues: First, we will outline Pegida’s imaginations regarding immigration and asylum. The second focus is the analysis of Pegida’s criticism of “Islamization” and “Parallel Societies”. The thesis is that Pegida’s construction of Islam is located on the level of national values, where Islam is identified as an enemy stereotype that threatens an imagined value-driven order. As Sune Lægaard (2007, 50) found, “the nationalisation of liberal values exhibits clear affinities with nationalism” in most contemporary European societies, especially in the context of immigration and integration, where the opposition between majority and (Muslim) minorities is particularly salient. We further argue that social questions are connected to this nationalist perspective of society as a community in which every member lives by useful as well as natural principles, which paradoxically need protection by the state. This obviously not very natural order is then perceived as guaranteeing every citizen rightful participation in the national wealth, depending on one’s dutiful contribution to the general public. In this

⁵ For example, the regional chair of the social democratic party in Saxony, Martin Dulig (2015), argues in a radio interview that the dissociation of the Pegida organizers is a “dishonest” attempt to portray a “wolf in sheep’s clothing”.

ideology, damaged interests are caused by injustices, or in other words, by disturbances to the harmony of the national order.

Asylum as a 'Human Duty' of 'our' State

Pegida published the anonymous “position-paper” in the beginning of December 2014. This manifest-like paper contains 19 demands on the German government. The first nine focus on asylum and migration, beginning with the following stance:

“PEGIDA is IN FAVOR OF the admission of war-refugees and those who are persecuted for religious or political reasons. This is a human duty!” (Pegida 2014, pos. 1)

This first position is interesting in various ways. First of all, as the capitalized letters significantly show, Pegida demonstrates that they are not “destructive” critics. Although their name suggests otherwise, Pegida publishes most of their positions in the positive formulation of being *in favour of*. With their first demand, Pegida also denies the criticism that they are “heartless” - as, for example, the German chancellor Angela Merkel (2014) called them in her New Year speech. A “human duty” is proposed to help a certain type of refugee, which has led to the perception that Pegida “masks” their xenophobic views behind a hypocritical advocacy for refugees.

In this context, another leading social-democratic politician, Ralf Jäger, labelled Pegida as “pinstripe nazis⁶”. This term constructs a problematic contradiction between the ‘true nationalist beliefs’ of the movement and its acceptable appearance (“pinstripe”). Both leaders and followers of Pegida have rejected such considerations as intentional misunderstandings and as a result have denounced the press, in this as well as other

⁶ The expression made headlines in national as well as international media, see for example *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (December 11, 2014) and *The Guardian* (December 16, 2014)

contexts, as “*Lügenpresse*” (lying press). In any case, it can indeed be assumed that Pegida altered the formulation of their demands in order to prevent such interpretations and to immunize themselves against the condemnation that they are right-wing-extremists.

Nonetheless, the assumption that Pegida masks their ‘real’ positions behind a gentle tone is problematic in itself because in this form, their arguments are considered as an acceptable position; it wouldn’t be considered a masquerade otherwise. This perspective of interpretation requires an explicitly xenophobic position behind the actual text that could be unmasked and condemned. Of course, there are indicators for such positions among Pegida, including numerous explicit statements which have been observed during their protest walks with some participants declaring, “Islam as cancer,” or the statement, “Multiculturalism kills!” (cf Geiges et al. 2015, 45 - 60). The official organizers of Pegida obviously wanted their differentiated views on asylum policies to be understood, but the relativized nature of their demands also correlates with the non-violent form of the protests and the diversity of followers. This indicates that - particularly in comparison to radical and extreme right gatherings like HoGeSa - many supporters of Pegida share this relativized view.

A closer look at Pegida’s arguments helps to understand their xenophobic logic. Pegida emphasizes that it is a “human duty” to accommodate “refugees of war” and to treat them with “dignity” (cf. Pegida 2014, pos. 1, 3 & 5). In their demands, Pegida postulates refugee policy to be attributed to a duty by a higher cause, which is uncritically imagined as the assignment of the German state. With this, Pegida interprets the German refugee policy as a more or less incomplete, or failed approach to realize an ethic necessity. In this ideology, nation appears as “an inherent attribute of humanity” (Gellner 1983, 6). This perspective however denies self-interests of the state, i.e. the use of asylum as a diplomatic instrument. One instance in which this becomes very clear is that of Edward Snowden. Asylum in the case of persecution is only granted if Germany judges the persecutor as illegitimate. The

German government did not give asylum to Edward Snowden because of the negative consequences for the German-United States relations, as German politician Hans-Christian Ströbele (2014) pointed out. Clearly, asylum must be considered a political instrument which can be used for different political purposes.

Furthermore, the characterization “human duty” sees asylum solely as an imposition, a negative and uncomfortable, but necessary service to a believed higher moral mission of the German nation. Asylum policies therefore are not only a necessary service to refugees, they also prove the morality of the nation itself. In his latest publication, Patzelt (2015, 72) argues that Pegida supporters have fears of super-alienation and think that every citizen should live where he “fits in”. He (ibid.) further argues that Pegida-supporters have a right-wing opinion and accept the “humanitarian claims” of German immigration and asylum policies in general, but criticizes the actual practice of them. Patzelt (ibid.) trivializes the xenophobic arguments as an “exaggeration” of a basically acceptable attitude and emphasizes that there are “no plausible reasons” to accuse Pegida for; especially since Pegida does not want to “harm our country”.

Pegida believes the state to be overwhelmed with asylum as a *selfless act of humanity*, a position that is articulated in a popular phrase in German migration discourse: “Our boat is full.” This sentence praises the imagined purpose of German asylum policy and contains two ideological elements. First, Germany is seen only as a helper for refugees and by no means as a contributor to the causes of flight (cf. Schiffer-Nasserie 2014). Second, Germany can somehow not fulfil this altruistic mission of morality due to a lack of resources. Another popular phrase differs slightly from this sentence: “We are not the world’s welfare agency” (“*Weltsozialamt*”). This phrase does not deny the morality of the state, but posits that the highest value in a nation is not humanity - it is the particular nation itself. According to this perspective, it is a wrong policy if a state tries to realize humanity

and tries to ‘solve the problems of the whole world’ instead of thinking of ‘*German* humans first’.

Justified and illegitimate Causes of Flight

Pegida differentiates between justified and unjustified causes of migration, which parallels the logic of the legal asylum policy in Germany. In the nationalist construction of meaning, the refugees’ individual and unique motives do not qualify as a sufficient reason for the right of residence. Only in cases in which an *unusually serious situation* exists in the home country of a refugee would a Pegida supporter not be critical against their stay in Germany. Furthermore, the differentiation between war or persecution as just reasons to seek asylum in contrast to extreme poverty, which is considered an unjust reason to seek asylum, makes it clear that not every ‘human’s’ (extreme) state of emergency is covered by ‘humanity.’ This selective view on flight which excludes poverty-induced flight from ‘humanity’ proves the hypocrisy that necessarily lies in the attempt to legitimize the asylum policy, which follows the interests of the nation-state as a pure realization of supranational values.

Pegida will accept someone’s application for asylum as morally legitimate only after it has met a set of very high standards. This is because in Pegida’s ideology, foreigners normally do not ‘belong’ in Germany.⁷ This is the unspoken presupposition of the argumentation (with a special cause) that makes it seem reasonable to dislocate a foreigner from his or her ‘own’ nation, where he or she ‘belongs’. Citizenship therefore is not seen as an act of a modern state that puts “all citizens without exception [...] under the exclusive rule of the territorial government” (Hobsbawn 1996, 1065), but rather as a natural ‘belonging’ of someone with a ‘national identity’ to a national community. Here a conclusion

⁷ In this idea, the will to stay in a country is not important, because the inner nature, the “national identity” of a person determines one to be a member of a certain community. National identity therefore is linked with constructions of race (cf. Miles 1989).

can be drawn: In Pegida's view, every single foreigner has a "natural" identity that is determined by the national group of which he/she is a part. This "natural" identity determines a foreigner to live in their 'own' community; an essentialist division of people into national categories is presupposed in the imaginations of Pegida and functions as a basis of their demands regarding all national questions of asylum and migration.

This moral understanding is emphasized in their demand for an improved ratio of social workers to refugees so as to be able to provide adequate support for the traumatized human beings.⁸ The category "traumatization" here does not simply refer to the bitter fact that flight often has devastating consequences for the refugee's psyche. It rather indicates a moral recognition of *innocently* experienced suffering. The *guiltless* individual - who naturally *wanted* to stay at "home," but *could* not - suffers from his or her *unjustified* misery and thus deserves sympathy and compassion. A person, on the other hand, who 'comes here' solely for economic reasons - the so-called "economic refugee" ("*Wirtschaftsflüchtling*") - is, in the view of Pegida, 'using' or 'misusing' 'our' helpfulness, and is therefore somehow *evil*. Poverty as a cause of flight is equated with an economic calculation for the purpose of self-profit, which in turn is considered a motive that justifies the forceful deportation of the refugee.

Integration and naturalized national Identity

For Pegida, integration is a risky operation since it allows persons into Pegida's 'own' community who belong to a different community, in which their habits and identities, their nation-specific naturalized inner integrity, complies with the values of their nation rather than those of Germany. The empirical will of the individual is subsumed under his or her 'national identity.' According to this ideological construction, this different 'identity' must

⁸ "PEGIDA is IN FAVOR OF a lowering the care ratio for asylum seekers (Number of Refugees per social worker - currently 200 : 1, practically no care for the partly traumatized people)." (Pegida 2014, pos. 5)

cause problems because the refugee is seen as having been ‘shaped’ by a different set of values than ‘ours’, which has to lead to conflicts. The individuals of foreign nationality who have been constructed by foreign values and traditions, do not therefore fit into the German society.

To make them ‘fit’, refugees are expected to transform their identity. This would not only require somebody’s change of mind, but a change of the person itself. Integration appears to be, if not impossible, at least very difficult to achieve. And the *possibility* of this necessary transformation does not equate to the *will* to do it. This leads Pegida to another demand: Migrants *must* integrate.

“PEGIDA is IN FAVOR OF the inclusion of a right and a duty to integrate in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany (so far there is only a constitutional right to asylum)!” (Pegida 2014, pos. 2)

The negative perception of the will to integrate was the reason for the demands made in Pegida’s position paper that prescribes a duty of integration. It is assumed that refugees do *not want* to integrate and therefore the obligation to integrate would ensure that they do. This argumentation sees the refugees as elements of a different community, that is based on different - or rather, competing - values. The imagined result of a mandatory integration is that foreigners are transformed into citizens of the ‘own’ community with a congruent national identity.

‘Good’ and ‘bad’ Refugees

The construction of Pegida separates immigrants of all kinds according to the categories ‘integrable’ and ‘non-integrable.’ However, according to the viewpoint of Pegida, many asylum seekers cannot perform the *salto mortale* of jumping the nature of their own

will, which they claim is revealed in cases of criminality. Crime, in this context, directly stands for the absence of a will not only to accommodate to 'our' rules and values, but to *be* German. It shows that a foreigner, who has been shaped by foreign values, does not fit into 'our community'. Thus, as refugees are denied asylum, "the existing laws about the issues of asylum and deportation should be exhausted" (Pegida 2014, pos. 8). Decisions concerning the necessity of asylum are to be taken under consideration by German law, which is understood to be a suitable moral authority.

According to this perspective, the not (or not yet) integrated individuals of foreign origin are a contradiction to 'our' social order. All immigrants are alleged to be guilty of "integration refusal" (Piwoni 2015, 94). In principle, foreigners are suspected of not wanting to be a part in the "imagined community" (Anderson 1996) regardless of their actual will because, as foreigners, their 'natural identity' does not fit into the moral order that is imagined to exist in the national community. With this, Pegida joins the debate that personalizes integration with the argument that it is the migrant's responsibility to integrate and not the responsibility of society to simply accept and assist the migrant. A slight radicalization of Pegida's position can be observed in the Dresden Thesis (Pegida/Legida 2015, pos. 3). According to this paper, a "social prognosis"⁹, which is normally applied to convicted criminals, is also necessary for determining whether immigrants can live in the community where they may be placed. The demand for a social prognosis assumes that foreigners are naturally criminal and that their potential innocence must be tested and confirmed by official documents before they are allowed to stay in Germany. A 'right and duty to integrate' is to ensure that foreigners integrate and it puts foreigners under general suspicion, but it does not assume liability.

⁹ A social prognosis is usually a criminological, psychiatric and psychological risk evaluation of a delinquent person with regards to the ability and motivation of future compliance with given rules and laws.

In order to minimize the burden of inevitable costs of integration on the ethno-cultural polity through non-integrable elements, Pegida (2014, pos. 6) demands a “speed up” on “proceedings” and an increase in the funds of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, which is in charge of asylum procedures. Subsequently, Pegida (2014, pos. 7) also calls for an increase in police funding, since the police are responsible for enforcing the status of the asylee as determined by asylum procedures. This way, the ‘bad’ refugees can be winnowed away more effectively from the ‘good’ refugees. Again, the moral authority of the practices of the German state to sort human individuals are assumed to be based on criteria of ‘humanity.’ Those who are allowed to stay must be integrated quickly because, as unintegrated elements, they disturb the German moral order. Integration is thus not understood as a method of helping migrants to pursue their own interests in an initially foreign society, but rather it serves as protection of the society from infiltration by foreign elements. Deportation is considered appropriate for individuals who are unwilling or unable to integrate, a “zero-tolerance policy” for criminal immigrants is demanded (Pegida 2014, pos. 9), and so-called “asylum-betrayers” (“*Asylbetrüger*”) should be dealt with.

Asylum is considered to be a *burden* which every EU-State has to equally share (cf. Pegida 2014, pos. 4). The respective societies are thus understood as equally righteous collectives which have a morally unquestionable desire to help humans. But furthermore the refugees are seen not as ‘humans’ in a national ‘community of humans’, but as purely negative cost factors. This shows the exclusionary character of nationality. Foreigners, who are not useful labour immigration for the ‘own’ nation, may only hope for help in the case that they are useful for the political interests of the state. And the help then is not seen as a plain necessity, but as a *negative* necessity. From Pegida’s point of view, the competition between the European states about asylum as a cost factor appears as a question of *just* apportionment of charges for the righteous collectives in their selfless mission to help. This

indicates that Pegida imagines the competing states of the European Union as an ethnic communion of shared values: The *Abendland* (Occident).

Pegida's Images of "Occident" ("*Abendland*") and "Islamization"

Pegida roots their perspective in a common culture held by all members of the German nation and further, in a common culture of the *Abendland*, which includes not only shared traditions, but also a political community that is assumed to exist. The category *Abendland* is a "content-free and stretchable" concept, as Wolfgang Benz (2015) says, which has had different meanings and represented various ideological perspectives in and on history. Nowadays it stands for "Judeo-Christian values." The *Abendland ideology* can be seen as a value-based way to construct an "imagined community" (Anderson 1996). Pegida includes mainly the European nations in this construction, which are seen as a community of "homelands." From this abstract point of view, no internal and external social antagonisms exist between the European states. Some Pegida supporters exclude southern European nations, others explicitly exclude the United States, which is considered a problem in and of itself (Patriotic Europeans against Americanization, a.k.a. *Pegada*).

Pegida constructs their perspective around three levels of patriotism: local/regional, national and European. As Geiges et al (2015, 92f) found, Pegida supporters are very convinced of the fact that they live in an "exceptional place" that is distinguished by a "characteristic and incomparable togetherness" of inhabitants who show a great "compliance of mentality". Saxony, and Dresden (or Leipzig) in particular, are perceived as particularly excellent realizations of occidental values. According to this Saxonian national narrative, the Kantian concept of the enlightenment and the peaceful revolution of 1989 belong together in the character of Saxon people (ibid.). Many Pegidians claim that a talent exists in Saxonians of being able to detect social imbalances in society earlier than others and that they have the ability to formulate these observations more pointedly and concisely,

as well: “The Saxon is bright.” (Geiges et al. 2015, 95). For them, regional patriotism is a subdivision of (supra-)national patriotism.

Tatjana Festerling (2015, min. 49:10 - 49:30), a member of the *Orga-Team*, emphasizes the great moral value of the German and northern European nations by characterizing them as “highly trustworthy cultures.” Culture here is identified with a universal moral value - trustworthiness - which is particularly well-realized in said nations and much less so in southern European or Islamic societies. Although trustworthiness is only needed where competing interests coexist, in this construction it solely stands for a national harmony. This view parallels Pegida’s theoretical engagement with the issue of refugees and the interpretation of the German state as an agency of humanity.

The category *Abendland* is also a combat term against Islam and creates the image of an enemy (Benz 2012; Ruf 2014). Concerning the formation of prejudices about Muslims in European societies, Benz (2012, 50) argues, “The differentiation of the self and the other in social discourse takes place as a comparison of values that culminates in a morally reasoned judgment.” Pegida approaches Islam according to this argumentation and on the basis of the previously outlined concept of Pegida’s ‘own’ community of values.

Issues which can be found in most societies are presented as problems that are imported to the own (‘good’) community through the presence of original, uncivilized Muslim identity: “Pegida is against a misogynist and violent political ideology, but does not oppose assimilated and politically moderate Muslims” (Pegida 2014, pos. 10). Pegida further points to factual phenomena like conflicts¹⁰ between different groups with Muslim background, which they label as “religious and proxy wars on German territory.” In opposition to these ‘perpetrators of violence’, Pegida emphasizes the fact that they are “non-

¹⁰ 2014 saw an increase of conflicts between different Muslim groups, who took sides in the conflict about the establishment of the Islamic State (IS) in Iraq and Syria, which resulted in several violent encounters, mainly between Kurds and Salafists.

violent.” Thus, Pegida finds violence only on the side of the others, which is typical of a nationalist point of view.

Thematizing proxy wars in the position-paper and in Pegida’s logo as well refers to what initially motivated the demonstrations. Bachmann stated in an interview that the demonstrations of the PKK in Dresden were the concrete event that caused the foundation of Pegida (cf. Becher et al. 2015, 9). Becher et al. (ibid) further argue that actual conflicts between Kurds and Muslims in the town of Celle played a role. It must be emphasized here that the demonizing of Islam in the German public as the source of terrorism didn’t result from such factual proxy wars. Insofar, Pegida picked up on a national problem definition and blamed politics for not taking proper care of the defined problem. Here, the common ground of Pegida and large parts of the German public is the ‘national problem’ of the threat of ‘islamization’ as measure by which German politics are judged. Pegida differs in two regards from the public opinion. First, Pegida sees the German order threatened to a greater extend by ‘foreign influences’ than the public. Critics of Pegida often do not reject Pegida’s standard of criticism, which is the nationalist fear of ‘foreign infiltration’ in itself, but criticized that the extent to which foreign infiltration and ‘Islamization’ happen can be neglected.¹¹ One argument says that the percentage of Muslims in Dresden is very low, which affirms the standpoint of the criticized - if the percentage would be higher, the protest of Pegida would be seen as legitimate. The second difference lies in the extent to which the people in question trust politics to be capable or willing to manage that problem. Pegida doubts the ability of German politics to take action against ‘Islamization’ and foreign infiltration.

In this way, the use of force to protect ‘our’ morals and the ‘own’ order - Pegida demands more and better-equipped police - seems justified. Also, Pegida does not link the

¹¹ The percentage of foreigners in Saxony is 3.01 % (Federal Office for Statistics, 2014) and the percentage of Muslims in Saxony is less than 0.1 % (Media Service Saxony, 2010).

“War on Terror” with terrorism in Germany. As Ruf (2014, 80) finds, the anti-Muslim resentment, which is inherent to the category *Abendland*, includes the “general assumption that ‘the Muslims’, wherever they are in Europe, are not loyal towards the state they live in.” In fact, Pegida states that they are not against Islam itself, nor against a “well-integrated” (Pegida 2014, pos. 10) Islam in Germany. Islam for them becomes problematic when the religion is practiced as a competing set of values, deviating from German values.

It is problematic to sketch this opposition solely in terms of ‘culture’. Lægaard (2007, 49) suggests a more differentiated view and argues that, although “micro-level oppositions between different cultural practices” cannot be denied in this conflict, there is “a more general clash of views about how society should function and what the proper aims of politics are – liberal democracy versus *sharia* law.” Muslim communities are not seen as threatening “parallel societies” simply because they practice a different religion (cf. Almstadt and Dapprich, 2011). This is underlined by the fact that more than two-thirds of Pegida protesters are unaffiliated with any religion, as Geiges et al (2015, 67) have shown. This logic of Pegida’s construction of Muslim “parallel societies” as oppositions to liberal values can be deduced from the following sentence:

“PEGIDA is AGAINST allowing parallel societies/parallel jurisdictions in our midst, like Sharia-courts, Sharia-police, peace-judges, etc.” (Pegida 2014, pos. 16)

A deviant morality, that does not remain as ‘just an opinion’, but which is lived and practiced like the sharia, is seen as a contradiction to ‘our’ order. According to interviews conducted by Geiges et al. (2015, 107), Pegida supporters see Islamization as an intrusion of religion into a religion-free space of a modern, laicist society. But at the same time, Pegida fears the loss of the Christmas celebrations as a national holidays and, as a protest against it, sang Christmas carols in public. In this context, Stanislav Tilich (2015), the Saxonian

Minister-President, stated that “Islam does not belong to Saxony” and differentiated between a religion that lives according to ‘our’ values and a religion, that justifies acts of terror. This is just one example of a public statement made by a German politician that is identical in content to the standpoint of Pegida, which argues for an enlightened religion that integrates itself in “our value order” (ibid.).

Parallel societies do not become a problem because they question the “unique cultural identity” (Smith 2010, 37) of the Nation, but rather because they act as competing moralities. This thought must be understood against the backdrop of public discourse on immigrant integration as being a threat to the “culturally conceived German nation”, as Piwoni (2015, 90) showed using the example of the Sarrazin debate. Thilo Sarrazin’s (2010) book “Germany Does Away With Itself” posited the thesis that ‘wrong’ (Muslim and Arab) immigration is ‘dumbing down’ the German society and was perceived to represent ordinary people’s anxieties. The publication fuelled the debate regarding ‘valuable’ and ‘useless’ migration.

Islamisation, Relative Deprivation and national Privilege

It is a popular assumption that unemployment and precarious living conditions lead to xenophobia. This assumption is problematic in general, because living conditions do not determine the thoughts that people have about their situation. But the fear of Islamization does have a connection with a person’s own realities and fears of downward social mobility. In nationalist ideology, the people’s material situations are deeply connected with values. Values are imagined as basic principles of living together, making the “us” act as a community. As fundamentals of society, values are believed to guarantee that diverging interests in society are bound together in a positive way, that everyone contributes to society and gets a ‘fair share’ of what he or she deserves. ‘Islamization’ in this view threatens the useful order that guarantees a decent living to every member of the national community.

This means, that the damaged “higher good” inevitably causes material trouble for the citizens.

In one of her speeches, Kathrin Oertel (2015) stated: “As long as there is only one Dresden citizen who is worse off than any immigrant from a foreign country, Dresden’s politics has to look after Dresden’s citizens.” This argument seems to confirm the theory of relative deprivation (cf. Runciman 1993 [1966]), because here a nationally defined group is seen threatened by an ‘unfair’ advantage that is granted by German politics to a ‘wrong’ (immigrant or refugee) group. According to Smith, Pettigrew, Pippin, and Bialosiewicz (2012), the theory of relative deprivation aims to analyse the individual experience of feeling deprived. In this theory, different factors are needed to come together so that relative deprivation is experienced. Deprivation is the result of a comparison with a reference group that an individual makes. In this comparison, a perceived “disadvantage” is seen as “unfair”, with the consequence of “angry resentment” (ibid).

It is problematic to deduce xenophobia out of relative deprivation, because this theory gives no answer to the question, why the comparison group are the foreigners. A deprived living situation can be compared with that of many other groups, and it could be explained in different ways, for example as a result of a ‘wrong’ economic policy. This shows that xenophobia is, by no means, a logical or necessary answer to the question of relative deprivation. But nationalists indeed compare their living situation with that of foreigners and come to the conclusion that their own shortcomings have the reason in an inappropriate advancement of the foreigners. For them, their own precarious living conditions do not show the bad reality of the regular life as the used or unused labour force of the nation. Instead, nationalists focus on the welfare state as an institution, which is imagined to exist to serve the need of the German people, and explain their experienced maltreatment in real life with an unfair gratification of foreigners. As foreigners, they generally deserve a deprived living status according to this logic. Therefore, deprivation is

not unjust, in case it is done to foreigners; it is an adequate treatment of those who incorporate a less worthy national identity, meaning that they deserve less social compensatory treatment. Nationalists compare their own dissatisfying living situation with the situation of other people of a different nationality, who face the same or even worse precarious situations, instead of comparing it to the comfortable life of the rich. For nationalists like Pegida, belonging to the 'own' national group grants a priority, a privilege, and it already is a success when this privilege is re-established. According to this logic, a state realizes a just national order and fulfils the interest of decent citizens by treating foreigners worse than natives.

'We are the People!'

Pegida's main battle-cry "We are the people!" has several meanings. It is a sentence that excludes foreigners, who are not meant by the word "we." Furthermore it is an expression of estrangement between 'the people' and politics. For Pegida, the source of this distance lies in the fact that politics do not fulfil their duty to represent the needs and values of the people. Therefore, as Lutz Bachmann (2015, as cited by Spiegel Online) has put it, "it is time to show the elites who is in charge here."

The slogan "We are the people!" has been used frequently as a battle cry during political turmoil in modern German history. The origin of the slogan goes back to the early 19th century. In recent German history, the slogan was most prominently used during the Monday marches in East Germany. In the beginning, this phrase meant delegitimization of the East-German government. Since then, this slogan contests the legitimacy of the government in power. After 1989, the parole was used during the Monday's vigils (*Montagsmahnwachen*) after the reform of the welfare state and the implementation of Hartz IV in 2004. Here, the protesters used the parole from the position of the common people who were affected by the reforms, leaving many of the lower classes and

unemployed with less income - which was considered an irresponsible act against 'the people'. Pegida also uses the slogan according to its dominant interpretation as they do indeed accuse the current German government to be corrupt, irresponsible and somehow illegitimate. Pegida's idealism is made explicit, for example, in the opening statement of their first press conference: "We do not want a revolution, but we want a different relation of politics and people" (Pegida 2015a, min. 0:52). Here, Pegida adheres to the general political order, but find that, *as* people, they deserve to have their morals, values and judgement represented in politics. Politicians are accused as "*Volksverräter*" for not respecting the need of 'the people' for a both ethnically and ethically authentic homeland that is not corrupted by 'un-German elements' and people-forgetting elites. Former civil rights activists from the GDR, as well as various politicians have accused Pegida to misuse the phrase "We are the people" (cf. Berliner Morgenpost, January 6, 2015). This accuse is solely based on the question of legitimacy: The government of the GDR is considered illegitimate and the government of the FDR is considered legitimate, therefore, the phrase "We are the people" is regarded a misuse in the FDR.

However, Pegidians do not just accuse the *own* government of treason and corruption, as anti-Western and particularly anti-American themes are common among speakers and followers of Pegida. The engagement of the EU in the conflict about the political orientation of Ukraine and the wars in the world, particularly in the Middle East and in Africa, which are seen as the source of the 'refugee problem' in Germany and Europe. Since the beginning of Pegida, many speakers and followers are provocatively demonstrating an understanding/appreciation of Russia's interests and symbolically solidarized with Russia's president Wladimir Putin. This alignment picks up on the often or

sometimes partisan¹² framing of the conflict in German media, which many Pegidians identify as “lying press” and, as a consequence, demonstrate sympathy with the other side. However, the issue was introduced into Pegida’s programmatic publications only with the Dresden Theses. Here, Pegida and Legida (2015, pos. 8) demand the “normalization of the relations with the Russian Federation” and the “ending of all warmongering”, while the Position Paper does not include any remarks to that conflict.

In the Dresden Theses, Pegida further demands the “protection, preservation and a respectful treatment of our culture and language” (Pegida & Legida 2015, 1) and the “aspiration of a peaceful, European bond of strong, sovereign nation-states in a free political and economic self-determination” (Pegida & Legida, 9). The ideology of Pegida, particularly since their crisis in January/February 2015, contains elements of the right-wing theory of ethnopluralism. In this theory, all nations of the world are imagined to be “ethnically homogenous populations of the state” and migrants (as well as, for example, the forces of globalization) are supposed to disturb this ethnic harmony (Globisch 2013, 174; Globisch 2011). This marks the movement as a nationalist formation that Eric Hobsbawm (1998; 2012, 169f) characterized as a typical defence reaction against international consequences of globalization. Indeed, the claims for ethnic and linguistic homogeneity, coupled with the anti-foreigner positions of Pegida, are similar to the positions of other European nationalist formations like the French Front National or the British National Party.

The ideal-typical image of European nation-states, which Pegida constructs, is remarkably similar to what Rogers Brubaker (1996) described as “The old ‘New Europe’.” However, whereas Brubaker locates this variant of “nationalizing states” in the interwar period, Pegida, in that sense, desires to “re-nationalize” the German state, and even other

¹² In June 2014, the program advisory board of Germany’s main public TV channel ARD rebuked the channel’s news coverage of the conflict in Ukraine as “partly biased and tendentially directed against Russia and the Russian positions.” (Program advisory board, protocol 582, June 2014, as cited by Telepolis, September 18th 2014)

European states, according to “the idea that the core nation legitimately ‘owns’ the polity, that the polity exists *of* and *for* the core nation.” (ibid, 83)

From this perspective, politics is accused of allowing “Islamization” and committing treason by not practicing the necessary “self-defence against cultural foreign domination” (Rucht & Teune, 2015, 15). Politics is accused of being responsible for “Islamization”, which is imagined to be taking over public life in Europe and Germany. The introduction of plebiscites and other forms of more direct democracy are considered promising ways to help the German political system be able to better serve the common good.

However, some Pegidians do not accuse German politics, but the USA, for making war and ‘using’ the European people to deal with the resulting refugees. The former Pegida-spokesperson Oertel (2015a) even published a video where she apologized to all Muslims in Germany, because “most of them live well-integrated”. During a national talk show, Oertel (2015b, min. 28:50-29:20) explained this change of mind and argued that the “NATO-propaganda” is the actual cause for the symptoms in Germany.

Xenophobia and value-based Nationalism

The ideological link between right-wing constructions of home as a community and xenophobia can be approached by the following thoughts on *value-centred nationalism*.

Values are commonly perceived as structuring principles of society that, on the one hand, do not need to be substantiated, since they appear as quasi-natural entities that belong to a given society. On the other hand, values like solidarity or freedom are believed to be ‘good’ and ‘useful’ principles which allow the individual in society to pursue his or her own good. Value systems are simultaneously national and supranational, they are thought to be basic to humankind and therefore exist universally and eternally. At the same time, they are also considered particularly well-realized (or in the case of national shame, poorly realized) in a specific nation and its ‘national character’. Values like freedom are understood to stand

above particular interests of citizens and their nations, they do not depend on interests, and they do not contain interests - they are *abstract* principles. As such, they are also the basis for all legitimate interests, they are believed to stand in a generally positive relation to every legitimate interest. This means that the need for legitimacy of interests with regards to values like freedom, equality or social justice is seen as an act of reason, which in the end is necessary and useful for every subject in society.

Values are the imagined higher order behind the laws and practices that constitute modern societies and they provide an ideal standard of criticism for the members of a society. “Regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation” (Anderson 1996, 7) that exists in capitalist societies, all citizens are seen as a community of free and equal persons who equitably participate in the production and distribution of national wealth. Society appears as classless and is “always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (ibid.). Justice, in this understanding, means a harmonic order of rights and duties. Since the difference between interests and rights is negated, this imagination abstracts from the opposing relation of interests in competitive societies. As a decent citizen, every individual can achieve its success according to his or her own abilities; individual successes and failures are viewed as expressions of individual differences. This means that, in the light of national values, all members of the nation are equal.

From a patriotic angle, these ideals do seldom exist in pure form, and therefore are the topic of nationalist dreams and visions. They are the basic principles of nationalist ideology and function as criteria for nationalist criticism. An equality of comrades usually is naturalized in the concept of a ‘national identity’: The moral individual is understood as a quasi-natural incarnation of values. National harmony is always, in some way, characterized as a natural harmony. Preserving this natural harmony is not only a necessary precondition for all interests of the ‘national comrades.’ For a nationalist, it is much more important, and

valuable in it itself, to save the national harmony as a greater good. Sacrifices are legitimate to preserve this living condition of ‘the people’.

In such a setting, every interest raises the question of legitimacy, and as a result, legitimate interests can justly claim their realization. In the case that a legitimate interest is not realized, this raises the question of guilt - the search for a reason for injustice. For example, one popular belief explains shortcomings with egoism, ergo a wrong mentality that places the ego above the order and ‘wants too much’. In this argument, the lack of value consciousness leads to damaged interests. Since, in national harmony, no interests can be harmed, all damages that exist must be caused by injustices, which is the same as a failing or disturbed order. This prejudice is the reason, why discontent always leads to a search for culprits, for reasons, why the ideal order does not (properly) exist.¹³

From this point of view, the foreigner comes into perspective as someone who lives in a different, ergo “wrong” nation. Their deviant set of morals, incorporated in their principally different identities, is viewed as the reason for disturbances. The actual percentage of foreigners living in a community is - as shown above - negligible, because the disappointment about the unrealized nationalist ideal is the reason for xenophobia. In the argument logic of Pegida, the xenophobic transition posits that incarnations of a different national order living in ‘our’ home *must* be the cause for dysfunctionalities. In order to re-establish the disturbed order, the imagined negative influence of foreigners has to be diminished by politics. According to this right-wing ideology, this can be achieved through the establishment of a strict and selective asylum and immigration policy, the deportation of criminal (thereby proved ‘non-fitting’) foreigners, the (forced) assimilation of the remaining foreigners, and the sanctioning of non-assimilating foreigners.

¹³ In principle, conspiracy theories are driven by the same ideological logic as xenophobia - the search for a more or less complex explanation why the fictional ‘good order’ is unrealized in the light of the negative consequences that belong to the factual order: Different actors motivated by cruel intentions join forces to pursue an ill will that leads to results that nobody would want. This is why conspiracy theories are very popular among Pegida-supporters.

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