

Pegida as *Angstneurotiker*

A Linguistic Analysis of Concepts of Fear in Right-wing Populist Discourses in German Online Media

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The *Digital Lexicon of German Language (DWDS)*¹ defines *Neurose* (neurosis) as a “functional disorder of the nervous system as a result of abnormal processing of experiences”² (*DWDS*). For example “nervous, mental overload, tension lead to neuroses”³ (*DWDS*). According to the *DWDS* typical connections of the noun *neurosis* in the German language usage are as follows: Neuroses are “traumatic,” “sexual,” “narcissistic,” “hysterical,” or “collective.” Neuroses can be “dragged,” “cured,” or “lived” (*DWDS*). The adjective *neurotic* is defined in the *DWDS* as “based on neurosis, belonging to the neurosis”⁴ with typical connections to words such as “Störungen” (disorder), “Symptome” (symptom), “Verhaltensstörungen” (behavioral disorders) or “Persönlichkeitsstörung” (personality disorder) (*DWDS*). Looking at the contexts of *neurosis* within the *DWDS* corpus in 2014, the founding year of Pegida,⁵ an article can be found that contextualizes the relationship between politics, migration, and *neurosis*: “The time when Germany was massively recruiting guest workers abroad, but did not

1 *Digitales Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*, in the following called *DWDS*.

2 “funktionelle Störung des Nervensystems als Folge abnormer Verarbeitung von Erlebnissen” (*DWDS*). All translations from the German are by the author.

3 “nervliche, psychische Überlastungen, Spannungen führen zu Neurosen” (*DWDS*).

4 “auf Neurose beruhend, der Neurose zugehörig” (*DWDS*).

5 Engl.: Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the Occident; German: Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes.

want to be an immigration country, is long gone. But the relationship between politics and migration is still full of neuroses” (*ZEIT*, 10.01.14).⁶

The term “neurosis” refers in this article to the author’s statement that “Germany is struggling with its migrants” (*ZEIT*, 10.01.14).⁷ The fact that, in the previous passage, “neurosis” is used in the plural underlines that migration is linked to different contexts. With regard to the refugees arriving in Europe from 2014 on and the associated socio-political consequences for Germany and other European countries, this experience can certainly be described as “tension leading to neurosis.” Thus neurosis can also be seen as a fear-induced attitude, leading to the conclusion that a surplus of fear produces neurotic responses. Therefore the assumption can be drawn that Germany’s migration-related neuroses are also reflected in the rise of right-wing populist movements such as Pegida, which will be the focus of this article, since “questions and problems concerning the accommodation of refugees [...] directly promoted the emergence of Pegida in autumn 2014” (Vorländer, Herold, and Schäller 6). Furthermore Geiges, Marg and Walter as well as Micus highlight that populism can be seen as an ‘upside-down psychoanalysis’ (see Geiges, Marg and Walter 186; see Micus 14). Upside-down because, in this perception, populists who know the fears or phobias of people do not try to heal them but use them in order to strengthen or reinforce themselves:

[Populism] *has an antenna for insecurity and neurotic timorousness*, but it is not concerned with healing, but with *affirming and stabilizing phobias and paranoia*. Populists do not treat, but draw their honey from the ongoing state of suffering of their ‘patients.’ (Geiges, Marg, and Walter 186; emphasis added)⁸

This means that populists, here right-wing populists, use contemporary neuroses of their societies in order to establish themselves in politics and political discourse. These neurotic fears towards refugees, Islam, and migration in general

6 “Die Zeit, in der Deutschland massenhaft Gastarbeiter im Ausland anwarb, aber partout kein Einwanderungsland sein wollte, ist lange vorbei. Aber die Beziehung der Politik zur Migration ist immer noch voller Neurosen.”

7 “Deutschland tut sich schwer mit seinen Einwanderern” (*ZEIT*, 10.01.14).

8 “[Der Populismus] hat eine Antenne für Verunsicherungen und neurotische Furchtsamkeiten, aber es geht ihm nicht um Heilung, sondern um Bekräftigung und Verstärkung von Phobien und Paranoia. Populisten therapieren nicht, sondern ziehen ihren Honig aus dem fortwährenden Leidenszustand ihrer ‘Patienten’” (Geiges, Marg, and Walter 186).

are deliberately served and reinforced in political statements – as for example the analysis of speeches by Pegida chairman Lutz Bachmann will show. This rhetoric strategy used by right-wing populists will be exploited in the paper leading to Micus’ thesis that “populists do not solve problems, they merely exacerbate them, they do not cure resentments by addressing them, but exploit them, radicalize them” (14).⁹ With a view to this assumption the main aim of this paper is to document the exploitation of fear reflected in language usage and expose it as a neurotic response to migration.

This paper sets out to explore how neurosis – particularly motivated by narratives of fear – is constituted in public discourse regarding migration issues. The analysis will firstly examine attitudes in public discourse towards Pegida as reflected in the media coverage. In this context, this paper will focus on statements regarding Pegida and its legitimation made by opinion makers such as key politicians as well as comments in media articles which reflect shifts in political perceptions such as after a speech of the Dutch right-wing populist Geert Wilders during a Pegida event. Afterwards, I will take into account comments from supporters and opponents posted on the Pegida Facebook group. On the one hand stated fears will be determined and described by focusing on their contexts. I will turn my attention to contexts in the Facebook corpus that concretely articulate neurosis. As part of the context and collocation analyses performed lexemes such as *fear*, *neurosis*, and *neurotic* are investigated. Afterwards I will look at four speeches by Lutz Bachmann, Pegida Chairman, and especially at passages which reflect attitudes and fears in society. For this purpose, four selected speeches, which Bachmann held on 21 March 2016, 29 August 2016, 5 May 2016, and 9 January 2017 in Dresden, will be examined. This will eventually demonstrate how Pegida uses the fears of citizens in order to establish itself.¹⁰

9 “Populisten lösen Probleme also nicht, sie verschärfen sie nur, sie kurieren Ressentiments nicht, indem sie diese thematisieren, sondern beuten sie aus, radikalisieren sie” (Micus 14).

10 The discourse linguistic analysis is corpus-based, focusing on words, word groups, and contexts by using concordance software based on digitalized texts and speeches. The discourse linguistic approach helps to capture regularities of language usage in order to determine attitudes and mentalities regarding a discourse topic in society over time (see Gür-Şeker).

THE DATABASE

The analysis will focus on language data, or more precisely on selected corpus data which can be differentiated into self-built and online databases. The database consists of the following resources:

1. December 2014 to November 2016: *ZEIT* Corpus.
2. December 2014 to October 2015: German online media dealing with Pegida (Pegida News Corpus).
3. October 2014 to January 2015: Pegida Facebook comments Corpus (Pegida Facebook Corpus).
4. April 2015: One political speech by Geert Wilders at a Pegida event in Dresden.
5. March 2016 to January 2017: Four political speeches by Lutz Bachmann at Pegida demonstrations in Dresden.

The complete investigation period spans from October 2014 until January 2017. The Pegida Facebook Corpus collected by Gregor Weichbrodt and Hannes Bajohr can be accessed for free online. The Facebook Corpus contains 282,596 comments and 7,751,654 tokens of anonymized users who express arguments and sentiments for or against Pegida. Additionally, a total set of 13 online media articles or online media sources have been selected by the author to examine how Pegida is presented in the media debate (henceforth called: Pegida News Corpus). The self-built news corpus consists of German online newspapers and news websites such as the online newspapers *Spiegel Online* (*SPIEGEL*), *Welt Online* (*WELT*), *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (*SZ*, online and on paper), *Die ZEIT* (*ZEIT*), *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (*FAZ*), *Frankfurter Rundschau* (*FR*), *Focus Online* (*FOCUS*), and the news website *tagesthemen.de* as well as *tagesschau.de*. In this news corpus the focus lies on the analysis of images and statements about Pegida within the media discourse, mainly concentrating on key events and politicians. Additionally one YouTube video showing a Pegida event with the Dutch right-wing populist Geert Wilders which has been criticized in media discourse as well as four speeches by Lutz Bachmann will be examined in order to widen the analysis. This self-built corpus and its analysis are supplemented by the *Digital Lexicon of the German Language* (DWDS), which consists of different digitalized German lexicons and newspaper corpora.

PEGIDA IN THE *ZEIT* CORPUS (DECEMBER 2014 – NOVEMBER 2016)

The *DWDS* not only provides definitions from digitalized lexicons but also includes different media corpora of newspapers. This paper concentrates on the media coverage in *Die ZEIT* (referred to as the *ZEIT* Corpus) which can be retrieved in the *DWDS*. The *ZEIT* Corpus is used in order to describe media coverage regarding core features and attitudes of Pegida especially regarding migrants. By entering the word “Pegida” as a search term, one soon realizes that there are no encyclopedia entries, since Pegida is a newly created acronym, used for the first time in 2014. What one can find by entering *Pegida* as a search term is a wide range of *ZEIT* articles which were published from December 2014 until November 2016, with a total of 2,490 hits (or contexts).¹¹ The *ZEIT* Corpus only lists short contexts¹² of the search term without further corpus linguistic information such as collocations, frequency of words, or word clusters. The contexts of the search term *Pegida* show not only political statements and positions of the movement, for example regarding migration, but also naming practices in the media. First, the acronym is described and defined at the beginning of almost every article, which can also be interpreted as a semantization of an unknown abbreviation. For example, in the following *ZEIT* article the full title of the movement is mentioned first, followed by its abbreviation: “‘Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes’ (Pegida)” (*ZEIT*, 01.12.14).

But which dominant practices of naming Pegida are used in the *ZEIT* Corpus? This question helps to shed light on the relevance Pegida has in society and how Pegida is classified in public discourse. To begin with, the acronym Pegida is used for naming a new actor. In its early stages, media coverage of Pegida in 2014 labeled it as a “group,” “alliance,” “movement,” or more precisely as a “protest movement” (*DWDS*):

Demonstration of the alliance of ‘Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes’ (Pegida). (*ZEIT*, 08.12.14)

11 More specifically, the search included hits from 1 December 2014 to 22 November 2016.

12 The search usually shows one to three sentences.

Demonstration of the initiative of Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes (Pegida). (*ZEIT*, 09.12.14)¹³

It should be noted that from December 2014 until July 2015 Pegida is named through composites or adjectives which contextualize Pegida as a movement particularly against Islam. For example, we can find compounds such as “anti-Islam movement Pegida” (*ZEIT*, 09.12.14), “anti-Islamic Pegida” (*ZEIT*, 08.01.15), “movements critical of Islam such as Pegida” (*ZEIT*, 07.01.15), or “anti-Islamic protest movement Pegida” (*ZEIT*, 07.01.15).¹⁴

The manual review of the search term *Pegida* in the *ZEIT* Corpus shows that from December 2014 until July 2015 *ZEIT* strikingly often described Pegida as a “movement” with critical attitudes towards Islam. This is mainly reflected in adjectives such as “critical of Islam” or “anti-Islamic.” During this time span, newspaper coverage rarely described Pegida as “right-wing populist” (*ZEIT*, 20.06.15), “racist” (*ZEIT*, 10.02.15), “Islamophobic” (*ZEIT*, 10.02.15) or “xenophobic” (*ZEIT*, 02.05.15). However, in 2016 Pegida is frequently marked and contextualized as “*xenophobic Pegida*” (*ZEIT*, 09.01.16; emphasis added), “*Islamophobic Pegida*” (*ZEIT*, 06.02.16; emphasis added), “the xenophobic and Islamophobic *protest movement*” (*ZEIT*, 05.05.16; emphasis added), or “the Islamophobic and xenophobic *alliance*” (*ZEIT*, 16.10.16; emphasis added).¹⁵

The lexicon used in media coverage of Pegida reflects a shift in public discourse between 2014 and 2016 and shows core topics of the movement regarding Islam and migrants, both of whom Pegida is opposing. As a consequence, these topics probably also have a special place in political speeches or Facebook discussions of Pegida and the construction of fear. But first perceptions of

13 “Demonstration des Bündnisses Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes” (Pegida) (*ZEIT*, 08.12.14) and “Demonstration der Initiative Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes (Pegida)” (*ZEIT*, 09.12.14).

14 “*Anti-Islam-Bewegung ‘Pegida’*” (*ZEIT*, 09.12.14; emphasis added), “*anti-islamische Pegida*” (*ZEIT*, 08.01.15; emphasis added), “*islamkritische Bewegungen wie Pegida*” (*ZEIT*, 07.01.15; emphasis added), or “*anti-islamische Protestbewegung Pegida*” (*ZEIT*, 07.01.15; emphasis added).

15 “*der fremdenfeindlichen Pegida*” (*ZEIT*, 09.01.16; emphasis added), “*die islamfeindliche Pegida*” (*ZEIT*, 06.02.16; emphasis added), “*die fremden- und islamfeindliche Protestbewegung*” (*ZEIT*, 05.05.16; emphasis added), and “*das islam- und fremdenfeindliche Bündnis*” (*ZEIT*, 16.10.16; emphasis added).

Pegida in media and politics are of interest in the next section in order to show which core features of Pegida are highlighted in media discourse.

PERCEPTIONS OF PEGIDA IN MEDIA AND POLITICS

Besides the naming of Pegida as a *movement* with anti-Islamic features it is also important to address the image of Pegida politicians presented in the media in order to highlight the notions of fear Pegida exploits, manufactures, or is associated with. The analysis of the Pegida Online Media Corpus of 14 media articles shows that at first politicians were uncertain as to how to deal with the demands of Pegida demonstrators, who apparently articulated existing “fears” and “concerns” (ZEIT, 12.12.14). In this context, the media described Pegida as a civic movement. Before the anniversary of Pegida in October 2015, politicians used similar expressions in their statements about Pegida. In the following part of the paper I will look at two main political actors, namely Sigmar Gabriel and Thomas de Maizière, and their changing political statements about Pegida. Their shifting views reflect the broader transformation Pegida underwent in public perception, from a civil movement to an explicitly right-wing populist movement.

Despite the uproar caused by a picture of the Pegida leader Lutz Bachmann posing as Hitler found on January 2015 on Facebook, Sigmar Gabriel, at that time Vice-Chancellor, Minister of Economic Affairs, and chairman of the SPD, decided to visit a Pegida debate. His role during the visit was explicitly defined and limited: He visited Pegida as a so-called ‘private citizen’ and he only spoke with other ‘citizens’ at the demonstration – not with the organizers. This seemed to be in line with the argumentation of his political party, the SPD, since SPD General Secretary Yasmin Fahimi, the general secretary of SPD at that time, emphasized that the “Social Democratic Party of Germany rejects discussions with the *Pegida* organizers” (FR, 19.01.15; emphasis added).¹⁶ Sigmar Gabriel justified his visit as follows: “[...] but with *the people* who go there and who *have concerns* and who are *angry about politics* – of course you have to speak with them. I mean, what other means do we have in a democracy except to speak with each other?” (Tagesthemen, 24.01.15; emphasis added).¹⁷ His participation

16 “Die SPD lehnt nach den Worten ihrer Generalsekretärin Yasmin Fahimi Gespräche mit den Pegida-Organisatoren ab” (FR, 19.01.15).

17 “[...] aber mit den Menschen, die dort hingehen und die Sorgen haben und die verärgert sind über die Politik – natürlich muss man mit denen reden. Ich meine, was gibt

is categorized in the media discourse as the “breaking of a taboo” (*Tagesthemen*, 24.01.15).¹⁸ Similarly, Yasmin Fahimi made clear that “it is ‘a wrong signal’, when Social Democrats lend an ear to *supporters* of the Pegida movement” (*ZEIT*, 27.01.15).¹⁹

In February 2015 the newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* reported a statement Gabriel had made during an interview with the German magazine *Stern*: he had said that Pegida “obviously” belongs to Germany. Gabriel’s statements in *Stern* are cited directly: “There is a democratic right to be a German national” and that there is “[e]ven a right to distribute stupidities such as the alleged Islamization of Germany” (*SZ*, 04.02.15).²⁰ Two months before Gabriel’s statements, *Die ZEIT* published an article with Thomas de Maizière, German interior minister at the time, who expressed similar views. In an article titled “De Maizière is Concerned about Pegida Followers” (2014), the paper cited de Maizière as follows:

The federal interior minister asks for *the fears of anti-Islam protesters to be taken seriously* [...]. In the ARD, Federal Interior Minister Thomas de Maizière (CDU) declared that, although there were “problematic developments” with regard to the initiators among the participants of the demonstrations, “there are quite many who express their *concerns* to the challenges of our time.” (*ZEIT*, 12.12.14; emphasis added)²¹

What de Maizière understood under “challenges of our time” remains vague but apparently it is about existing “concerns” which legitimate the protest. Most importantly, de Maizière is cited directly referring to the results of a survey:

es in der Demokratie anderes an Mitteln, außer mit einander zu sprechen?” (*Tagesthemen*, 24.01.15; minute: 00:09:18-00:09:33).

18 “Tabubruch” (*Tagesthemen*, 24.01.15; minute: 00:09:37)

19 “Sie hält es für ‘ein falsches Zeichen,’ wenn Sozialdemokraten den Anhängern der Pegida-Bewegung ihr Ohr schenken” (*ZEIT*, 27.01.15;).

20 “‘Es gibt ein demokratisches Recht darauf, rechts zu sein oder deutschnational,’ sagte Gabriel. ‘Sogar ein Recht, Dummheiten zu verbreiten wie die angebliche Islamisierung Deutschlands’” (*SZ*, 04.02.15).

21 “Der Bundesinnenminister plädiert dafür, *die Ängste der Anti-Islam-Demonstranten ernst zu nehmen* [...]. Bundesinnenminister Thomas de Maizière (CDU) sagte in der ARD, zwar gebe es bei den Initiatoren ‘problematische Entwicklungen,’ aber unter den Teilnehmern der Demonstrationen ‘gibt es doch ganz schön viele, die bringen ihre Sorgen zum Ausdruck vor den Herausforderungen unserer Zeit’” (*ZEIT*, 12.12.14; emphasis added).

De Maizière pointed to a study that showed in his view that a part of the *citizens feel like foreigners in their own country*. “We must take *these concerns* seriously, we have to deal with that.” (*ZEIT*, 12.12.14; emphasis added)²²

In the News Corpus, a variety of articles concentrate on such “concerns” of the demonstrators and contextualize these within a perceived Islamization of Germany (see *FAZ*, 18.11.14) or worries regarding a perceived increase in crime that is connected to migrants or non-Germans (see *FAZ*, 25.11.14). The news website *tagesschau.de* emphasized the comparison to other anti-Islam movements in Germany: “(c)ompared to the Hooligans against the Salafists, ‘Pegida’ acts civil” (*tagesschau.de*, 01.12.14; emphasis added).²³

In April 2015 the Dutch right-wing populist Geerd Wilders was invited to speak at a Pegida event in Dresden. Addressing Chancellor Angela Merkel in German, he said “Mrs. Merkel, the majority of your *Volk* is of the opinion that Islam does not belong to Germany” (Wilders).²⁴ Wilders’ participation and the fact that he has been invited not only as a speaker but a “guest of honor” (*WELT*, 13.04.15)²⁵ can be seen as an important feature leading to a shift in public opinion, since Pegida had not been considered an extremist movement up to this point.

Before the Pegida anniversary celebration in October 2015, which took place in Dresden, the German Interior Minister Thomas de Maizière underlined explicitly his new position regarding Pegida in the German Television channel *ARD* (also cited by *ZEIT* on 18.10.15):

German Interior Minister Thomas de Maizière issued an unusually *clear* warning against Pegida. “By now, it has become completely obvious. [Pegida] organizers are *hardcore right-wing extremists*,” he said in the *ARD*. “They call *all asylum seekers criminals, all politicians traitors*. This is far from any democratic consensus.” [...] “Stay away from

22 “De Maizière wies auf eine Studie hin, die seiner Ansicht nach belegt, dass sich ein Teil der *Bürger wie Fremde im eigenen Land fühle*. ‘Diese Sorgen müssen wir ernst nehmen, damit müssen wir uns auseinandersetzen’” (*ZEIT*, 12.12.14; emphasis added).

23 “Im Gegensatz zu den Hooligans gegen Salafisten *treten die ‘Pegida’ bürgerlich auf*” (*tagesschau.de*, 01.12.14; emphasis added).

24 “Frau Merkel, die Mehrheit Ihres Volkes ist der Meinung, dass der Islam nicht zu Deutschland gehört.” (Geerd Wilders, Quote from a YouTube video, 13.04.15; minute: 10:28-10:36).

25 “Ehrengast” (*WELT*, 13.04.15).

those who inject this *hatred*, this poison in our country.” (*ZEIT*, 18.10.15; emphasis added)²⁶

In the mentioned *ZEIT* article the Interior Minister is reported to have used clear and explicit markers to underline Pegida’s development into a right-wing political organization – in this case reflected by the phrases “unusually clear,” “completely obvious,” and “hardcore right-wing extremists.” By using the metaphor of injecting poison into the country, the last sentence emphasizes the importance of not attending the anniversary celebrations.

Shortly before and after the anniversary date a transformation in the portrayal of Pegida in the media indicated the changing perception of the movement. The image of concerned citizens mainly vanished. Pegida became “a racist movement” (*ZEIT*, 18.10.15), “hard right-wing extremists” (*ZEIT*, 18.10.15), the “islamophobic Pegida movement” (*Spiegel*, 27.10.15), and “the islamophobic and xenophobic Pegida alliance” (*Focus*, 26.10.15).²⁷ While the *Frankfurter Rundschau* quoted vice-chancellor Sigmar Gabriel sharing the similar sentiment that “Pegida is a right-wing populist movement and, in some cases, a right-wing radical movement of revolt,” the paper also qualified his statement with the addition of “says the vice-chancellor *now*” (*FR*, 20.10.15; emphasis in the original).²⁸ The adverb *now* signals that the newspaper is aware of Gabriel’s shifting position regarding Pegida and is highlighting this change (the title “Gabriel’s new sharp tone” foreshadows the change).²⁹ Gabriel’s language reflects the shift in public perception. These examples highlight the change in the media as well as in the public political discourse. Before that shift, however, various politicians

26 “Ungewohnt deutlich hat Bundesinnenminister Thomas de Maizière vor Pegida gewarnt. ‘Inzwischen ist es völlig eindeutig. Diejenigen, die das organisieren, sind harte Rechtsextremisten,’ sagte er in der ARD. ‘Sie bezeichnen Asylbewerber pauschal als Verbrecher, alle Politiker als Hochverräter. Das ist fernab jedes demokratischen Konsenses.’ [...] ‘Bleiben Sie weg von denen, die diesen Hass, dieses Gift in unser Land spritzen’” (*ZEIT*, 18.10.15; emphasis added).

27 “die rassistische Bewegung” (*ZEIT*, 18.10.15), “harte Rechtsextremisten” (*ZEIT*, 18.10.15), “islamfeindlichen Pegida-Bewegung” (*Spiegel*, 27.10.15), and “das islam- und fremdenfeindliche Pegida-Bündnis” (*Focus*, 26.10.15).

28 “‘Pegida ist eine rechtspopulistische und in Teilen offen rechtsradikale Empörungsbewegung geworden’, sagt der Vizekanzler *jetzt!*” (*FR*, 20.10.15; emphasis in the original).

29 “Gabriels neuer scharfer Ton” (Pegida Facebook Corpus, user post 2014-12-10T17:38:07+0000; emphasis added).

have utilized the notion of “fear,” thereby lending credibility to assumptions about anxiety fueling the protests.

NEUROSIS AND FEAR IN THE PEGIDA FACEBOOK GROUP

The following section focuses on social media, especially Facebook, and on the discourse of fear and neurosis developed by its users. In this part of my analysis I employ the concordance software AntConc to find patterns in how users understand the name Pegida as well as the attitudes and positions of the movement in the Facebook corpus. In the Pegida Facebook corpus the term *Pegida* can be found 43,597 times. The slogan “We are the Volk”³⁰ is used 1,480 times. For example, one user wrote about the Pegida demonstrations on 10 December 2014: “Best without big speeches, justifications etc. The mere *presence of people* and the *flags* are the message: *We are the Volk* and *we lay claim to our country!*” (Pegida Facebook Corpus; emphasis added).³¹ In this comment the flags are symbolically used to indicate that Pegida is a movement for what Pegida sympathizers understand as the German nation. The colors of the flag of the Federal Republic of Germany – black, red, and gold – dominate almost all Pegida demonstration, becoming a symbol for the participants’ identification with national space and soil (see Vorländer, Herold, and Schäller 11-17). The user associates the flag with the country, the “presence of people,” and thus with the slogan “We are the Volk.”

In other Facebook comments, the use of “We are the Volk” leads to the conclusion that if “We are the Volk,” we are also the “state” (Pegida Facebook Corpus). These statements actually reflect the mistrust towards the state and its political representatives and the mistrust of the governed towards their legitimately elected representatives. Over time this key feature of mistrusts culminated in the rejection of leading politicians such as Chancellor Angela Merkel. This rejection can be seen as a key feature of populist movements that oppose established polit-

30 “Wir sind das Volk” (Pegida Facebook Corpus, user post 2014-12-12T12:49). “We are the Volk” has been a popular rallying cry during the 1989 revolution when citizens of the FDR toppled their government through peaceful demonstrations. The phrase articulates the demand for democratic reforms and the claim to popular sovereignty by stylizing the demonstrators as “the people” (“Volk”).

31 “Am besten ohne große Reden, Rechtfertigungen usw. auftreten. Allein *die Präsenz der Menschen* und die *Fahnen* sind die Botschaft: *Wir sind das Volk* und *wir erheben Anspruch auf unser Land!*”

ical actors (see Priester) and found expression in the slogan “Merkel has to leave.”³²

The lexeme “Angst” (fear) occurs 5,812 times in the Facebook corpus. Partner words which frequently occur with “fear” are for example: “Islam” (151),³³ “Islamization” (129), “Islamists” (55), “terror” (47), “Muslims” (39), “violence” (39), “Muslims” (34), “foreigners” (31) or “strangers” (30).³⁴ Other related phrases are “I’m scared,” “afraid,” “fear and anxiety,” or “not afraid” (Pegida Facebook Corpus).³⁵ Expressions of Islamophobia can be found in various posts. Without being able to list all at this point, only a selection of contexts in which this fear is expressed in connection with the supposed Islamization of Germany is listed below.

But this *increasingly extreme Islamization scares and frightens*. Are we Germans worth nothing in our own country? (Pegida Facebook Corpus; emphasis added)³⁶

So I know another stat 54% are *afraid of Islamization* and 27% would march. (Pegida Facebook Corpus; emphasis added)³⁷

“Fear” is also contextualized with internal security and immigration as expressed in the following postings.

Are you actually running around blindfolded? Is it okay that *German women have to be afraid* when they are alone on the street? (Pegida Facebook Corpus; emphasis added)³⁸

32 “Merkel muss weg.”

33 Parentheses show frequency of words.

34 In German: “Islam” (151), “Islamisierung” (129), “Islamisten” (55), “Terror” (47), “Moslems” (39), “Gewalt” (39), “Muslime” (34), “Ausländer” (31), “Fremden” (30).

35 “Ich habe Angst,” “Angst haben,” “Angst und Bange,” “keine Angst” (Pegida Facebook Corpus).

36 “Aber diese *immer extremer werdende islamisierung macht einem Angst und Bange*. Sind wir deutschen denn im eigenen Land gar nichts mehr wert? Mann o mann” (Pegida Facebook Corpus, user post 2014-12-10T16:47:58+0000; emphasis added).

37 “Also ich kenn eine andere stat 54% haben *angst vor islamisierung* und 27% würden mitmarschieren.” (Pegida Facebook Corpus, user post 2014-12-18T18:24:51+0000; emphasis added).

38 “Lauft ihr eigentlich mit verbundenen Augen durch die Welt? Ist es in Ordnung *das deutsche Frauen Angst haben* müssen wenn sie allein auf der Straße sind???” (Pegida Facebook Corpus, user post 2014-12-14T06:55:46+0000; emphasis added).

Of course I'm afraid, what would Mrs. Merkel say if she gets pushed down the street by about 13 Africans and break her bones? Unfortunately this happened to me a week ago. I'm terrified. We need a lot more police presence in and near asylum accommodations. Peaceful life in Germany is over. (Pegida Facebook Corpus; emphasis added)³⁹

As mentioned above, the corpus not only contains posts from Pegida supporters but also from opponents or critics who pick up on and dissent with Pegida's use of fear.

How does one come up with the idea that the *Muslims* living quite normally among us want to *take over the "Occident"* (ridiculous expression)? *Here a general fear of the future is channeled towards "foreign fellow citizens" and Islam.* (Pegida Facebook Corpus; emphasis added)⁴⁰

Exactly 50 meters away from me asylum seekers are housed, in the neighboring house. Nobody is afraid of them here. There are far more attacks on asylum homes than by asylum seekers on Germans. *This hatred of a particular group here in Germany is what scares me.* (Pegida Facebook Corpus; emphasis added)⁴¹

The first user makes clear that a general anxiety is channeled towards minorities (in the context of Pegida and the Facebook group). The second user reverses the fear formulated by Pegida supporters by projecting them onto Pegida. In both

39 *"Und ob ich Angst habe, was würde Frau Merkel sagen wenn sie auf der Strasse von ca. 13 Afrikanern zu Boden geschubst wird und sich dabei Knochenbrüche zuzieht. Mir leider vor einer Woche passiert. Ich habe Riesenangst. Wir brauchen viel mehr Polizeipräsenz vor Asylantenunterkünften und in der Nähe von diesen. Das friedliche Leben ist in Deutschland vorbei"* (Pegida Facebook Corpus, user post 2014-12-20T21:58:07+0000; emphasis added).

40 *"Wie kommt man denn bloß auf den Gedanken, daß die ganz normal zwischen uns lebenden Moslems das 'Abendland' (lächerlicher Ausdruck) übernehmen wollen? Hier wird eine allgemeine Angst vor der Zukunft in Richtung 'ausländischer Mitbürger' und Islam kanalisiert"* (Pegida Facebook Corpus, user post 2014-12-16T21:00:57+0000; emphasis added).

41 *"Genau 50 Meter von mir entfernt sind Asylanten untergebracht, im Nachbarhaus. Hier hat keiner Angst vor ihnen. Es gibt wesentlich mehr Angriffe auf Asylheime als von Asylanten auf Deutsche. Dieser Hass auf eine bestimmte Gruppe hier in Deutschland ist das, was mir Angst macht"* (Pegida Facebook Corpus, user post 2014-12-20T22:10:41+0000; emphasis added).

posts and their contexts, Pegida critics indicate that Pegida and their supporters are what they are afraid of.

The analysis of “fear” in the Facebook Pegida Corpus shows that the noun is used 5,812 times and is highly associated with Islam and migration but also with developments within German society. The analysis shows that fear is highly present in the discourse surrounding Pegida both in the media coverage and in social media debates. These discursive constructions of fear lead to neurotic responses to migration reflected in the persistence of Pegida demonstrations in Dresden or the success of the right-wing populist Party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) which won a number of seats in the German Federal Parliament in the 2017 election.

In the Pegida Facebook corpus, users employ the lexemes “neurosis” (2), the noun “neurotic” (3), and the adjective “neurotic” (7). Complexes with “neurosis” such as “profile neurosis” (6), “social neurosis” (1), and “obsessive-compulsive disorder” (1)⁴² are preceded by adjectives like “heavy” and “light,” or pronouns like “their own.” Without mentioning all contexts, the following use can be noted: Compounds with “neurosis” are used in all contexts to describe a mindset or behavior of a person or group that is connoted negatively or whose opinion the speaker does not share.

However, in the corpus users also qualify Pegida’s xenophobic attitudes as neurotic – a perspective which gains particular relevance in this investigation of Pegida as a neurotic response to fear. A negative attitude towards Pegida is expressed in the following post:

You did not understand anything about the history of 89, and yet you appropriate it to *spill your neurotic, xenophobic crap*, that is sad. Poor Germany. (Pegida Facebook Corpus; emphasis added)⁴³

The following example similarly contextualizes xenophobia with neurosis, asking Pegida supporters whether “you *fear-neurotics* know how much your main school meetings [Pegida demonstrations] on Mondays cost?” (Pegida Facebook

42 “Neurotiker,” “neurotisch,” “Profilneurose,” “Sozialneurose,” and “Zwangsneurose.”

43 “Ihr habt nichts begriffen aus der Geschichte von 89, und dennoch macht ihr euch sie zu eigen *um euren neurotischen, fremdenfeindlichen Mist zu verzapfen*, das ist traurig. Armes Deutschland” (Pegida Facebook Corpus, user post 2014-12-23T00:16:17+0000; emphasis added).

Corpus; emphasis added).⁴⁴ The compound “fear-neurotics” implies that Pegida plays with or caters to existing ‘fears.’ “Fear neurotics” is also an attempt to stigmatize Pegida supporters by drawing attention to the core element of Pegida rhetoric: addressing sociopolitical challenges by fueling fear in order to legitimate the movements’ existence. After the selective analysis of the Facebook comments has shed light on determining fears of Pegida supporters, the following section will examine speeches by one leading figure behind the Pegida demonstrations, Lutz Bachmann, to help understand which kind of fears Pegida addresses.

FEAR OF MIGRATION AND ISLAM IN PEGIDA SPEECHES

The speeches of Lutz Bachmann (LB) were transcribed on the basis of YouTube videos in the project “Language and Rhetoric of Right-wing Populism in a Country Comparison” funded by the main research area “Transformation of Contemporary Societies”⁴⁵ of the University of Duisburg-Essen (see Gür-Şeker 2017).⁴⁶ While Bachmann does not use words like *neurosis* or *neurotic* in these speeches, his rhetoric ties in with formulations of fear and anxieties that have been expressed within the Pegida discourse. Of interest is which fears or worries Bachmann formulates in his speeches and how his language usage characterizes migration. The search term “fear” in the singular could be found in three contexts:

1. An understandable *fear* about losing job, pension, and reputation. (LB, 05.12.16; emphasis added)
2. Almost everything we have been *warning* about has become a *reality*, (.) and that is *scary*. (LB, 09.01.17; emphasis added)

44 “Wisst ihr [Pegida-Anhänger] *Angstneurotiker* was eure *Hauptschulversammlung* [Pegida-Demonstrationen] kostet Montags?” (Pegida Facebook Corpus, user post 2015-01-11T02:06:20+0000; emphasis added).

45 “Die Sprache und Rhetorik des Rechtspopulismus im Ländervergleich: Eine bilinguale und multimodale Medien- und Sprachanalyse rechtspopulistischer Akteure in YouTube- und Facebook-Videos in Deutschland, den Niederlanden und Flandern” gefördert vom Profilschwerpunkt Wandel von Gegenwartsgesellschaften an der Universität Duisburg-Essen.

46 For more information, please visit the project’s website which also contains the multilingual Dutch and German corpus: www.uni-due.de/rechtspopulismus.

3. And it is this clear line of reason and common sense (.) that *scares* them, the rulers. (LB, 21.03.16; emphasis added)⁴⁷

Context (1) deals with the fear of civil servants who apparently had written Bachmann in order to share their fears with him. Context (2) deals with Pegida positions regarding postulated consequences of migration and refugee policies, which according to Bachmann had become reality. Context (3) refers to the supposed fear of policy makers regarding Pegida.

The search term *fear* in the plural is used in contexts such as “economic fears” (LB, 21.03.16 and 09.01.17).⁴⁸ Bachmann appropriates anxieties about the future by citing the (supposed) experience of an (unnamed) refugee helper:

Islam controls these people down to the smallest ramifications of everyday life (.) And if only a fraction of all refugees thinks this way, (.) *I look with concern to our future.* (.) We still have (.) not understood (.) what is coming our way, (.) neither our laws, (.) nor we are prepared for it. (.) We think that tolerance makes everything possible (.) But someone said: (.) ‘Tolerance is the last virtue of *a sinking society.*’ (LB, 29.08.16; emphasis added)⁴⁹

The repeated worries about the future and the notion of a society in decline are two narratives which make clear why critics in the Facebook group call Pegida supporters “Angstneurotiker.” In contrast to the Facebook corpus, there is no evidence for lexemes such as *neurosis* or *neurotic* in Bachmann’s speeches, but contexts can be found in which alleged fears of the citizens or worries about “the country” are formulated. Referring to the chairman of the German police union Rainer Wendt, Bachmann continues:

47 “verständlicher *Angst* um Job, Pension und Reputation” (LB, 05.12.16); “Nahezu alles wovor wir *gewarnt* haben ist *Realität* geworden, (.) und das macht einem *Angst*, [...]” (LB, 09.01.17); “Und genau diese klare Linie der Vernunft und des gesunden Menschenverstandes (.) macht ihnen *Angst*, den Herrschenden (.)” (LB, 21.03.16; emphasis added).

48 “wirtschaftliche Ängste” (LB, 21.03.16 and 09.01.17)

49 “*Der Islam* hat diese Menschen bis in die kleinsten Verästelungen des Alltags im Griff (.) und wenn auch nur ein Bruchteil aller Flüchtlinge so denkt, (.) *sehe ich mit Sorge in unsere Zukunft.* (.) Wir haben (.) immer noch (.) nicht begriffen, (.) was da auf uns zukommt, (.) weder unsere Gesetze, (.) noch wir sind darauf vorbereitet. (.) Wir denken mit Toleranz geht alles, (.) dazu sagte aber schon jemand: (.) ‘Toleranz ist die letzte Tugend *einer untergehenden Gesellschaft*’” (LB, 29.08.16; emphasis added).

4. our country would be (...) exposed to *dangers* (.) that are always connected with *mass immigration*. (LB, 05.12.16; emphasis added)
5. This is how the *dangers* for our country *grow constantly*. (LB, 05.12.16; emphasis added)⁵⁰

In another context regarding refugee policies Bachmann highlights again the issue of danger:

6. So instead of reducing the *danger* in the run-up. (LB; 09.01.17; emphasis added)⁵¹

In the four Bachmann speeches refugees are labelled as “murderer-refugees,” “refugee terror à la Würzburg, Munich, Berlin,” “so-called refugees,” or alternative designations are used such as “adventurers” for example in his speech on 21 March 2016:

7. The worst part, (---) is that now we even pay for the *invasion of these adventurers called refugees*. (LB, 21.03.16; emphasis added)⁵²

In context (7) the alternative term “Glücksritter” is used for refugees who are portrayed as adventurers trying their luck. In this context real reasons for flight are deliberately hidden and even ridiculed by using the term “Glücksritter.” The fact that these people are seeking protection from instability, war, and destruction is strategically ignored here. Meanwhile, the invasion metaphor reinforces the image of forced immigration which is a key feature of Bachmann’s speeches. Bachmann contextualizes flight with the adjective “illegal” (see contexts 8, 9) and highly inflates numbers of migrants in Germany to construct a threat scenario (see contexts 8, 10, 11):

8. Qualitative immigration like the Swiss or Canadian model, instead of currently common *quantitative, illegal mass immigration*. (LB, 09.01.17; emphasis added)
9. rejected asylum *cheater*. (LB, 29.08.16; emphasis added)⁵³

50 “wäre unser Land auf die *Gefahren*, (.) die mit *massenhafter Zuwanderung immer* verbunden sind (.)” (LB, 05.12.16); “so *wachsen* die *Gefahren* für unser Land *beständig*” (LB, 05.12.16; emphasis added).

51 “Anstatt also die *Gefahr* im Vorfeld zu reduzieren” (LB; 09.01.17; emphasis added).

52 “Das Schlimme daran ist, (---) dass *wir* diesen *als Flüchtlinge bezeichneten Glücksrittern* jetzt auch noch die *Invasion bezahlen*” (LB, 21.03.16; emphasis added).

Again, the contexts also show that real reasons for flight are hidden. Bachmann speaks of “illegal mass immigration,” contextualizing “immigration” with “illegal” and highlighting with the noun compound “mass” a large number of people. Similar strategies can be found in contexts (4), (10), and (11).

10. *Millions of so-called refugees.* (LB, 21.03.16; emphasis added)
11. In the summer of 2015, when you were still diligently dancing a Schuhplatter as a sign of welcome (.) at the Munich Central Station for *hundreds, hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants.* (LB, 21.03.16; emphasis added)⁵⁴

Overall, Bachmann’s speeches are characterized by fear- and hate-mongering attitudes towards immigration processes and a highly exclusionary language against refugees, immigrants, and Islam. He deliberately exaggerates (“mass,” “millions,” “hundreds of thousands”) and excludes legal immigration per se (“illegal immigration,” “invasion,” “so-called refugees”) by also systematically relativizing the human right to asylum (“rejected asylum cheater”). The compound “Angstneurotiker” thus reflects public perceptions about Pegida and its political attitudes, which deliberately present immigration and its consequences for Germany as negative.

CONCLUSION

The paper outlined and examined three perspectives on Pegida. First, the media analysis showed that media and politicians were apparently surprised by the success of Pegida. The number of participants at Pegida demonstrations has been interpreted as a legitimate expression of the existing fear(s) and anger of “the Volk.” After October 2015, a shift of public attitudes towards the movement occurred that explicitly marked Pegida as a right-wing populist movement. Since its beginning, however, Pegida displayed some of the core features of right-wing populist movements such as its opposition to immigration, which is not only re-

53 “Qualitative Zuwanderung, anstatt momentan gängiger *quantitativer, illegaler Masseneinwanderung* nach schweizerischem oder kanadischem Vorbild” (LB, 09.01.17) and “abgelehnten *Asylbetrüger*” (LB, 29.08.16; emphasis added).

54 “*Abermillionen sogenannte Flüchtlinge*” (LB, 21.03.16) and “Als ihr im Sommer 2015 noch fleißig den Willkommens-Schuhplatter (.) am Münchener Hauptbahnhof für *hunderte, hunderttausende illegale Einwanderer* getanzt habt (.)” (LB, 21.03.16; emphasis added).

flected in media coverage and discourse but also in how topics such as immigration, migration, and Islam are contextualized in the Pegida Facebook group. Furthermore, slogans and signs at demonstrations in Dresden as well as statements on social media reflect Pegida's resentment towards rising ethnic and cultural diversity in Germany (or Europe) (see Boonen, Gür-Şeker, and Thomcezek). Neurotic perspectives of Pegida sympathizers mainly focus on immigration issues and questions of internal security expressed in fears about the role of Islam and the presumed negative consequences for German society.

As a conclusion of the analysis, it can safely be argued that Pegida instrumentalizes citizens' fears regarding social changes. The analysis could show that Bachmann spreads resentments through specific language usage such as marking immigration or flight as illegal, highlighting exaggerating estimates of migrants present in the country, or hiding reasons for flight. These are only some of the strategies which can be traced in the four speeches – further analysis of the complete speeches particularly in comparison to other right-wing populists' such as Björn Höcke or Frauke Petry remains necessary in order to show the similarities and differences in their language use. In addition, the analysis of Facebook comments could show that Pegida supporters also formulate fears and resentments towards minorities. But the positions of Pegida and its supporters are also systematically criticized by opponents. This criticism is reflected in the stigma word “Angstneurotiker,” which underlines and confirms Micus' thesis that populist are not solving sociopolitical challenges or problems but on the contrary radicalize and exacerbate them.

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