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*Far-right populism as a response to the crisis of multicultural Europe.  
PEGIDA case study*

***Abstract***

The influx of refugees to EU states in recent years has contributed to the rise of xenophobic and racist sentiments. In at least several countries parties and organizations that are far-right, eurosceptic, with a negative attitude to the admission of migrants and demands for wide political changes got into public debate. This paper is a case study of German organization PEGIDA, which, as I will try to prove, is the avant-garde of new far-right movements. The features I will discuss include an extremely efficient use of social media websites to mobilize supporters and building transnational alliances with ideologically similar organizations from other European countries but not only. I will describe the history of establishing PEGIDA, profiles of its activists, relationships with other groups such as HoGeSa or the Alternative for Germany, as well as the demands they make, comparing individual topics with the situation of nationalist organizations in Poland. I will also show that the opposition to Islam, in spite of being the flagship slogan, is only an excuse for making a wide range of demands and reactivating anti-establishment resentments, which I will discuss in detail. Finally, I will analyse the real roots of the rise of xenophobic sentiments on the continent, linking them to the economic crisis and the neo-liberal model of societies.

Key words: migration, refugees, Europe, PEGIDA, Germany

When analysing the phenomenon of the recent years commonly called “the migrant crisis”<sup>1</sup>, the researcher is confronted with a phenomenon that is associated with it, namely the rising popularity of the far right in EU states. Comparing the results of ten biggest eurosceptic parties in elections to the European Parliament, we can observe that eight of them won more

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1 I avoid using this term in my research, or I use it as a quote because of its ideological focus and a symbolic shift of responsibility. Speaking of "*the migrant crisis*" may suggest that the problem lies only in the masses of people coming to Europe, whereas geopolitical causes of migration and the way of responding to it are silently omitted.

votes in 2014 than in 2009 (Karaian, 2014).<sup>2</sup> Germany was one of the countries that have accepted the biggest number of migrants in recent years. It was in Germany where the rapidly rising popularity of the far-right wing and the number of participants of nationalist demonstrations increased three times in 2015, compared to the year before (Cowburn, 2016). Over two and three years respectively, two conservative groups with a significant support among the society developed as well, i.e. PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the West<sup>3</sup>) and the political party AfD (Alternative for Germany).<sup>4</sup> I will focus on the former in my work. I am particularly interested in the rate of its development, its mobilization based almost entirely on social media, criticism of political correctness in its manifesto and a specific way of understanding it. I will also focus on similarities and differences between PEGIDA and the Polish nationalist movement, and I will try to put the establishment of PEGIDA into a broader context of increasing xenophobic and Islamophobic attitudes in Europe related to the economic crisis and the fact that the middle class is growing poorer.

The roots of these phenomena, thus indirectly the roots of establishing the new far-right wing in Europe, are in the September 11 attacks in 2001, which reactivated the theory of "*the clash of civilizations*" (Huntington, 2008) and the revived rich practices orientalisating the Middle East, presenting its impassable dissimilarity, strangeness, the incomprehensible system of values which sooner or later must lead to a conflict between the enlightened West and barbarian, benighted, intolerant Islam/Arabic World/Middle East – these terms are from now on interchangeable as terms containing a complete set of features, prejudices, images which lead to implementation of specific policies both in nation states (which is manifested by cultural and institutional prejudices) as well as at international level (military interventions justified by cultural and religious enmity). The notion of terrorism, attributed by the Western world to the religion of Islam, is changed in media narratives into an abstractive, transnational mutation with cultural ideas rather than political or social facts (Wheeler, 2008). This is the first point I want to highlight, namely populist movements like PEGIDA do not come from a bottom-up, mass levy because what we call a mass levy is usually the direct result of practices

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2 At the same time, it should be noted that one of the ten parties listed above, i.e. the Polish Congress of the New Right did not exist in 2009, but the party from which it evolved, i.e. the Real Politics Union, won 1.10% of the vote then, compared to 7.15% for the Congress of the New Right in elections in 2014.

3 For the first weeks after its establishment, its name was "**P**eaceful Europeans against Islamisation of the West."

4 According to a survey conducted in 2014 by the research company YouGov on a representative sample of 1107 people, 49% of the respondents expressed a positive opinion on PEGIDA demonstrations (30% supported them, 19% declared a positive rather than negative attitude). On the other hand, the AfD gained support at the level between 15 and 24% in a series of regional elections (Zeit Online, 2014).

implemented top-down and the discourses which create a specific political climate and hierarchical sets of antagonising images of the world and politics.

Such ideological sets, as the authors of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* called them (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2010), shape the language used by different populist movements. Therefore, since the early 21st century, the narratives of far-right groups, focusing on biological distinctness of the enemy, have been gradually withdrawing to make room for discrimination due to differences in cultures and civilisations (Balibar, 2007). In Germany such groups have been developed as the neo-Nazi National Democratic Party of Germany, German People's Union, Autonomous Nationalists that soon will be in their heyday in Poland, as well as the terrorist National Socialist Underground. While we associate Polish groupings that have had similar profiles over the last twenty years with dominant anti-Semitic and anti-communism issues because there is no actual Islamic enemy, for a long time in the West, including Germany, the blade of far-right criticism has been aimed at Muslims living in immigrant districts (Dolezam and Helbling, 2010; Lucassen and Lubbers, 2011) and also immigrants themselves, including Poles. Obviously, it does not mean that the biological approach in the form of purely race prejudices has disappeared completely. The darker skin colour still matters, and the fact whether an Arab is a practising believer or not, or in general a Muslim or a new immigrant, or has had German citizenship from generations is less important. Propaganda puts the main focus on cultural criticism, namely a belief that integration with German society is impossible, and therefore it creates a potential threat. Furthermore, while earlier discourses about "*moral degeneration/West corruption*" enjoyed popularity also in Poland, in the first decade of this century there is a shift to the positions of "*defenders of Western civilization*", which has gradually started to operate in Poland, since the rapes in Cologne in the New Year.<sup>5</sup>

In Germany newer and newer groups are emerging among the groups listed above, including Citizen' Movement Pax Europa, the Identity Movement, some kind of movement is also developing around networks of right-wing blogs related to Politically Incorrect News, a

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5 During a series of anti-immigrant demonstrations in Poland and Germany women's rights are presented as the achievement of Western civilization that is currently threatened by the influx of culturally different strangers from the Middle East and Africa. The president of the National Movement and an MP of Kukiz'15 party said during a manifestation in Warsaw in February 2016 (referring to the rapes in Cologne), "*Just like we faced the invasion of barbarians in the 5th century, now an invasion has been launched. Hordes of immigrants want to trample us, destroy our civilization. We must cooperate with different nations. This does not erase our difficult history, this does not erase the scars we have. This is the moment when we have to stand together and this moment is the invasion of a foreign civilization*" (Niezależna.pl, 2016). Manifestation "*in defence of European women*" was also organized in Poznań by KORWIN party whose leader is known for comments about restricting women's rights.

movement against the construction of new mosques is growing. All these communities have their day and disappear, and are replaced by new ones. For the far-right wing the establishment of the Islamic State in 2014 and a series of military successes in the Middle East, which again mobilizes people to take to the streets, were a strong impulse to act. It was then, exactly on 26 October 2014, when the whole of Germany heard about a group named HoGeSa, Hooligans against Salafists. This is a community that earlier operated on the Internet, mainly on Facebook, where at its peak it had several dozen fans.<sup>6</sup> It consists of football hooligans/fans from different clubs, and their objective is to fight against the Salafist fraction of Islam (De Genova, 2015). Earlier, this group took to the streets several times but it did not attract more than a few hundred people.<sup>7</sup> A breakthrough was in autumn 2014, when 5,000 people took to the streets in Cologne under the slogan “*Awakening of German spirit*”, which ended up with struggles with police (59 injured officers) and attacks on nearby Asian outlets and people with darker skin (Pabst, 2014). Kategorie C, a band linked to a neo-Nazi community, played a concert for the demonstrators. Police reports contain a comment that this is a completely new and surprising experience for police forces – mass riots of football hooligans who are strongly ideologized in terms of culture (Burger, 2016).

However, over time HoGeSa has lost momentum, two lines of a dispute cross each other inside. One runs between the formal wing that wants to turn the group into a political project and the underground wing that wants to limit itself to street riots and direct actions. The other, which is not a less important dispute, runs through divisions between football fans of individual clubs, often at variance with each other, which have an issue with taking to the streets together, particularly due to the fact that in Germany some part of extreme community of football fans is linked to an anti-fascist movement (Schwier, 2006). It makes "reaching an agreement across borders" against the common enemy much more difficult, which can be observed in Poland during annual Independence Marches, where football fans from clubs that fight against each other on daily basis demonstrate together their (far) right values. A year after the famous demonstration in Cologne, a HoGeSa anniversary demonstration is held in the same city, which attracts only a thousand people. The protest itself has a hooligan rather than anti-Islamic character, football hooligans are motivated mainly by the prospect of a confrontation with the anti-fascist movement, and it actually happens there (The Local.de,

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6 HoGeSa pages have been many times removed by Facebook because they promoted hatred. At the moment there is no central page.

7 Demonstrations in Mönchengladbach, Mannheim and Dortmund in 2013-2014 gathered between a hundred and three hundred people and then were surprising for public opinion.

2015). After the demonstration which was a great disappointment for far-right activists, activists from HoGeSa start to participate in PEGIDA protests.<sup>8</sup>

The establishment of PEGIDA coincides with a well-known HoGeSa demonstration in autumn 2014, its sudden emerging and popularity embarrass both scholars and the media<sup>9</sup> (which I will explain thoroughly in the next paragraphs). Before the description of PEGIDA, it must be pointed out that when it was being established, the AfD, a populist right-wing party, had already operated actively, gaining popularity in two areas: 1) criticising Angela Merkel, mainly for refugees, for giving up the nuclear power programme, for too few investments in the army and legalization of single-sex relationships; and 2) criticising the whole central German right for supporting Angela Merkel and her actions (Berbuir, Lewandowsky and Siri, 2015). "Normalization" is a topic that appears in speeches given by their leaders on regular basis. Thus, it may seem that the growing AfD, with more and more support by intellectuals and its successful presence in the mainstream media should gather all similar movements and be a catalyst for possible street protests. But it does not happen so. While the AfD achieves its first election successes, it is not able to lead a street mobilization<sup>10</sup>. Compared to the cultural overtones of PEGIDA protests, the manifesto of the Alternative for Germany may come down to Euroscepticism (Arzheimer, 2015), thus it has a more political character (Brack and Startin, 2015). Euroscepticism is also present in PEGIDA's manifesto which oscillates around the whole set of slogans of the conservative right but like HoGeSa it focuses on one thing – to stop the "*Islamisation of Europe*." Despite very similar masses of supporters<sup>11</sup>, PEGIDA and the AfD are different organizations at political and organizational level.<sup>12</sup> Almost two months after creating its page on Facebook, PEGIDA takes 10,000 people to the streets. Only a month later, after the attack on Charlie Hebdo editorial office, a demonstration of Patriotic Europeans already has 25,000 people. PEGIDA sections are quickly established in other German cities, attracting between a few hundred and ten thousand people, and soon they also move abroad. An attempt to establish a

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8 More on links between far-right football hooligans and PEGIDA in: De Genova, N., 2015, pp. 4-5.

9 As The Economist rightly observes, "*The demonstrators do not even try to explain their manifesto. Convinced of their political correctness, they refuse to make a comment for the press*" (The Economist, 2014).

10 A breakthrough was made only in the second half of 2015, when 5,000 people took part in an anti-immigration AfD demonstration in Berlin. Still, this is a much lower number than PEGIDA demonstrations at its peak.

11 In a public opinion poll conducted by The Economist, 9 out of 10 PEGIDA supporters declare their support for the AfD (The Economist, 2015).

12 A high profile AfD politician, Hans-Olaf Henkel, called AfD supporters for not participating in PEGIDA demonstrations due to its possible "*xenophobic or even racist links*" (Huggler, 2014).

Polish section is made but it is much hindered due to the anti-German attitude of football fans who support anti-Muslim protests.<sup>13</sup>

Thus the opposition to Islam becomes PEGIDA's flagship slogan, which does not mean that it should be taken literally. After a more detailed analysis of PEGIDA's narratives, examining its supporters and slogans that appear at demonstrations, it should be rather concluded that "stopping Islam" is only an umbrella term, which concerns a wide range of resentments and postulates. It is not an accident that the word "West" in the name "Patriotic Europeans against Islamisation of the West" means in original *des Abendlandes*, which is literally an *Occident/Occidental civilization* in English. This term originates from the Latin word *occidentem*, which literally means "a place in the sky where the Sun sets." It should be interpreted symbolically as the end of the civilised world. This term was used in the 20th century in Germany by the proponents of cultural pessimism; Oswald Spengler is their best-known proponent. Basing on the achievements of philosophy of life, his works expressed the decadent atmosphere from the period preceding Hitler's rising to power, the fear of a civilizational dominance of other races and the decline of politics (Spengler, 1990). Similarly, a quasi-apocalyptic atmosphere of the upcoming catastrophe of European civilization has been announced by the modern far right. Islam is not its main enemy but rather a symbolic personification of threats lying in wait. As anthropologist Nicholas de Genova points out (2015), "*»Islamisation« here operates as a figure not necessarily construed to be in opposition to Christianity as such (...), »religion« matters here not really as a matter of doctrinal difference, not as a rivalry of competing faiths, but rather as a simple markers of the difference that is more elementary and fundamental.*"

PEGIDA is developing not as an opposition to the influx of immigrants. However, when considering its declarations, this is a very moderate opposition, particularly taking into account the confrontational language of far-right movements preceding it. PEGIDA's nineteen-point manifesto says, for example, that more restrictive asylum policy is to provide a better quality of support for current refugees. It also emphasises that the organization has nothing against Muslims who integrate well. Comments about immigration and religion interweave with a demand to increase the number of police officers, a protest against hatred to women, with freedom of sexual choices, support for Judeo-Christian foundations of Western culture/Occident (*Abendlandkultur*), a demand to introduce people's referendum like the

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13 An anti-immigrant demonstration of Polish PEGIDA section was planned to take place in Wrocław in February 2016, however, according to the organizers, local nationalists and football fans threatened to use force to end it, in fear of competition.

Swiss formula, opposition to "*genderization*"<sup>14</sup> and political correctness (PEGIDA, 2014). As it can be easily noticed, one document contains a whole range of various topics, where "criminal immigrants"<sup>15</sup>/"Islam" are only an issue holding everything together. Furthermore, although the official slogan is opposition to Islamisation, a demonstration against the Kurdistan Workers' Party, i.e. a secular Kurdish movement fighting against the Islamic State, was the reason for establishing PEGIDA (Popp and Wassermann, 2015). As far as geographical and demographic conditions are concerned, the organization enjoys the greatest popularity in Saxony, where foreigners represent about 2% of the population, including no more than 0.1% of Muslims (The Economist, 2014, 2015b). Thus, we see that it would be a major simplification to claim that PEGIDA is simply a response to the real or imaginary lack of integration of Muslims who have lived in Europe in millions for several decades. A declaration to fight against Islam has nearly nothing to do with the immigrants themselves, it is a new way to express the ideology of nationalism which has been a taboo in Germany since the end of World War II.

It seems that the real motivation of the protesters in PEGIDA or AfD ranks is, like in the case of Poland (Pietryka, 2014a), opposition to elites in a broad sense, which are considered foreign, undemocratic, are believed to serve the interest of the European Union instead of the nation and control the media, education and the police. That is why both social researchers and journalists are confronted with ignorance or hostility during PEGIDA demonstrations. The current political set-up is described as *Volksverräter*, "traitors to the people."<sup>16</sup> The term *Luegenpresse* is used in relation to the press. It means the "lying press", and it is best expressed in the neologism *lie-press*. It is known mainly from the Nazi period, when the authorities called the content attributed to Jews and communists like that.<sup>17</sup> According to PEGIDA and AfD interpretation, the lie-press are simply the mainstream media that legitimize government policies, multiculturalism, and censoring opinions of ordinary German citizens. The fact that it was given the title of "*the non-word of 2014*" in a well-known language competition, Sprachkritischen Aktion Unwort des Jahres, shows the

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14 The original contains the term *Gender Mainstreaming* and *Genderisierung*. Similarly, the richest translation into English in terms of meaning would be "gender ideology."

15 It is worth adding here that the founder of PEGIDA, Lutz Bachmann, was convicted for drug trafficking, stealing a property of high value, making false statements, driving a vehicle without a licence, drink-driving, sixteen burglaries, physical attacks and false accusations, and he was an immigrant in the Republic of South Africa for two years, then he was deported back to Germany. Although these facts are known to public opinion, they do not create confusion among PEGIDA supporters.

16 Müller, J.W., 2016. Behind the New German Right. *New York Daily*. Online: <http://www.nybooks.com/daily/2016/04/14/behind-new-german-right-afd/> [Access on: 30 May 2016]

17 However, the roots of this term date back to the first half of the 19th century, and it was also used by the labour movement in Weimar Republic in relation to the bourgeois and fascist media.

popularity of this term.<sup>18</sup> The Nation would be in opposition to *Volksverräter* and *Luegenpresse*. The main slogan of weekly demonstrations is *Wir sind das Volk*, "We are the nation." PEGIDA supporters and activists demand more authenticity, representativeness of political representatives, to serve German interests.<sup>19</sup> Their ideological package also includes an anti-American (opposition to American imperialism) and pro-Russian attitude<sup>20</sup> (flags of the Russian Federation flew on their marches), alarming about the low birth rate among native Germans, and protecting cultural heritage.

Who exactly shows up on demonstrations of Germany's new far right? Attempts to examine this issue are hindered due to their aversion to scholars and the media I mentioned that are perceived as part of the universe reproducing destructive *politische korrektheit*. So far, the most representative survey has been successfully conducted by researchers from Dresden University of Technology on the sample of 400 people, but they were only 35% of the respondents, most of them refused to answer the questions. Being aware of disadvantages to such low responsiveness, it is still worth presenting the results of research since it confirms the conclusions I have drawn in my work so far. An average participant of a PEGIDA demonstration is male, nearly 50 and comes from the middle class. Although he is afraid of "Islamisation of Europe", this is not the main reason he takes to the streets. Most of all, he is extremely displeased with the formula of current policy that operates in isolation from citizens. This is the reason declared by the vast majority of the respondents, since for as many as 54% it was the reason of participating in the march, compared to 20% who expressed their aversion to the mass media, and only for 15% it was aversion to immigrants (Huggler, 2015a). The average respondent declares that he is not a follower of any religion and he does not support any political party. The results of research are similar to the description of Polish participants of far-right protests, where sometimes anti-immigration slogans are a catalyst for actions, but they are a fusion of the sense of no agency, sense of exclusion, slogans against homosexuality and "gender ideology", anti-feminist slogans or calling for increasing the army (Pietryka, 2014b). The age structure of participants of PEGIDA marches is a noticeable

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18 Reuters, 2015. *Revived Nazi-era term 'Luegenpresse' is German non-word of year*. Online: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-islam-protests-idUSKBN0KM21F20150113> [Access on: 30 May 2016].

19 Thran, M. & Boehnke, L., 2015. The value-based Nationalism of Pegida. *Journal for Deradicalisation*, 15(3), pp. 178-209.

20 Slogans such as "Putin, help us, save us!" appeared during the demonstration. Pro-Russian narratives are often presented in the mass media as evidence that Russia sponsors the European far right, in particular after the outbreak of civil war in Ukraine. While there is some evidence to the financial links between nationalistic organizations and Russia, however, it seems that the pro-Russian slogans during demonstrations are positively construed and easily embraced by people.



contrast to similar movements in Poland, it mainly contains late middle-aged people, while at most Polish nationalist demonstrations mainly very young people can be observed (CBOS, 2015).<sup>21</sup> It would be interesting to compare the wealth structure among Polish and German supporters of far-right groups. Although at the moment I do not know about such research, sociologist Maciej Gdula (2013) suggests that football hooligans gathering in large numbers, for example during the Independence Marches, are "*the lower middle class, not excluded people.*"

The methods of PEGIDA operation must be taken into account, including two features that are typical for the new far right also in other European countries. The first one is mobilizing its supporters almost exclusively on the Internet and almost exclusively on one website, i.e. Facebook<sup>22</sup>. PEGIDA, like the National Movement in Poland, uses its full potential. PEGIDA websites are managed professionally, with proper proportions between text and graphic posts, a specific number of posts per day, planning posts, advanced comment moderation, as well as high responsiveness to their readers and regular comments about social and political developments.<sup>23</sup> Created by the end of 2014, PEGIDA fanpage had more than 200,000 people in May 2016. For comparison, Dresden Nazifrei, an anti-fascist coalition consisting of many organizations, gathered 55 thousand followers on Facebook over the last seven years.<sup>24</sup> For now, it does not translate into proportions on the streets because when anti-fascist protests against PEGIDA marches started, they were several times more numerous (Huggler, 2015b)<sup>25</sup>. Nonetheless, the effective mobilization and the Internet range of Germany's new populist right are as phenomenal as its establishment is.

The other distinctive feature is "nationalistic internationalism." PEGIDA was very quickly based on an export model – its local sections were spontaneously established, including Austria, Bulgaria, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, Belgium, and even Canada. On 23 January 2016 a meeting of 14 far-right and fascist organizations from all over the continent was held in the Czech Republic (Poland was "represented" by the National Movement), it was initiated by the Patriotic Europeans. The

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21 Surveys conducted regularly in Poland by CBOS also show that people aged up to 35 have the most negative attitude to refugees.

22 Like supporters of other far-right groups, PEGIDA supporters are very active also on other social and news websites, including Twitter. Case study concerning this issue: Puschmann, Ausserhofer, Maan and Hametner, 2016.

23 Observations based on my own examination of the following pages for a few months:  
[online:] [www.facebook.com/pegidaevdresden](http://www.facebook.com/pegidaevdresden), [www.facebook.com/RuchNarodowy.net](http://www.facebook.com/RuchNarodowy.net) and [www.facebook.com/Niepodleglosci.Marsz](http://www.facebook.com/Niepodleglosci.Marsz)

24 [online:] [www.facebook.com/dresden.stellt.sich.quer](http://www.facebook.com/dresden.stellt.sich.quer)

25 At the beginning of 2015 in Hanover, Munich, Leipzig, and Dresden respectively 19 thousand, 20 thousand, 35 thousand, and 35 thousand people took part in protests against PEGIDA.

participants discussed the migrant crisis, and finally signed the "Prague Declaration", i.e. a document against Islam in the public sphere and against further admission of refugees. It established the informal "*Fortress Europe*", namely an association of present organizations that declare to protect Europe, even at the cost of their own lives, against the "*invasion of Islam*." Typically, the objection to Islam was again used to criticise political elites and negative social issues: "*The rule of global elites has brought only poverty, unemployment, corruption, chaos and the decline of morality.*"<sup>26</sup> The decision about calling for anti-immigrant demonstrations in the whole of Europe on 6 February was a direct consequence of the meeting. It showed that nationalist organizations are able to agree with each other but also carry out mass international actions in an efficient way.

If we assume that the alleged "Islamisation of the West" is not the real trigger reviving the far right, the question raises: What is that trigger? This is an issue for a separate work. Conclusively, I suggest that this phenomenon should be interpreted in the context of theories about the crisis of universal values and the economic crisis (which is the real meaning of the term "*migrant crisis*"). Critics of the liberal and conservative interpretation of mass migrations as a potential threat to material prosperity and/or cultural stability of Western civilization point out the functional meaning of such interpretations for the neo-liberal economic system, which makes use of the aversion to *the other*, relocating the resources of social dissatisfaction from the material sphere to the cultural one. That is why the demonstrations of dissatisfied citizens march under anti-Muslim, anti-Semitic or homophobic slogans. As Balibar (1998) and Wallerstein (1998) point out, contempt or fear are the secondary features of modern racism. Its main significance is to contribute to the additional value by controlling (as needed) the influx of cheap labour, namely immigrants who usually do not have rights, are employed illegally, are not union members, are not supported by the rest of the society or even victimized by it.

Despite common aversion of PEGIDA and similar organizations in other countries to the EU project, we cannot fail to observe a kind of symbiosis between the street protest against admission of refugees and the attitude of the EU, which is completely paralysed, severely criticized by organizations protecting human rights, and the governments of member states which, in spite of having all logistic and economic opportunities to control the crisis, decided to respond in the form of border militarisation, overusing force by police (Amnesty International, 2016), tightening asylum law, or the controversial and incompatible with human

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26 *Deklaracja praska – nie poddamy Europy naszym wrogom!* [online:] <http://www.dzienniknarodowy.pl/659/deklaracja-praska-nie-poddamy/>

rights selection of refugees on the borders and their expulsion (Doctors Without Borders, 2016), which leads to a high number of victims (Human Rights Watch, 2016). Adverse feelings to *foreigners* do not result from the actual characteristics of the refugees, who are diverse, and they are too varied community to be able to describe them in any homogeneous way. These feelings are euphemistically developed top-down, they reach the society in the form of publicly expressed fears that migrants are not able to assimilate, spread potential diseases or religious radicalism. Already in 2007, German sociologist Georg Klaua (2007) alarmed that *"Islamophobia has, at least in this country [in Germany], its relevance not as a mass phenomenon, but as an elite discourse, which, shared by considerable numbers of leftist, liberal, and conservative intelligentsia, makes possible the articulation of resentments against immigrants and anti-racists in a form which allows one to appear as a shining champion of the European enlightenment."* The way of perceiving Islam followers as obsessive about sexuality, lacking morality, violent barbarians is not a bottom-up, racist narrative of marginal (less and less) far-right groups; Western culture has been based on such a contrasting (barbaric, Muslim East – civilised Europe) perspective since the medieval times (Law, 2014). Multicultural policy tried to overcome it but finally, in the face of the economic crisis, it gives in.

Thus, social and political issues are again culturalized, which allows to block the admission of refugees as a potential threat. The particularism of such modern racism highlights the fact that parallel discourses on immigrants/Muslims/Arabs operate in European countries in relation to various, excluded minorities such as the poor (Górniak, 2015). Public opinion attributes such features to them as high reproduction, lack of personal hygiene, inadequacy, excessive use of social assistance (Charkiewicz, 2010). In other words, as Michał Buchowski says (2006), *"workers, agricultural workers and farmers are blamed for their own, degraded position and social problems."* An analogical operation is observed in xenophobic arguments. The actual division into various social strata with separate interests is turned into a cultural division into things that are German and non-German, Polish and non-Polish, English versus non-English. Failures in life resulting from the fact that the state withdraws from the social sphere are identified as the effect of dividing national unity due to the influx of culturally foreign immigrants. A quote by Monika Bobako may summarize this issue: *"Racism does not belong to the past, it is not a distinctive feature of marginal, small far-right groups either. It is a permanent element of modern societies and their economic system based on the unlimited accumulation of capital"* (Bobako, 2015).

For many years the far right has achieved bigger or smaller electoral successes, but it was in anomy in terms of the potential of social mobilization, i.e. the actual, direct agency that emancipates beyond putting a vote into the ballot box. In the 21st century such phenomena as transnational solidarity of the far right (caused by reviving the myth of "the clash of civilizations"), combined with the power of mobilizing social media, allow to create a real mass movement. Like Syriza was to be a catalyst for the pan-European extreme left, PEGIDA has become a catalyst for the European far right that takes a new operational model, treating the national interest equally with the interest of the European continent, questioning the order based on the European Union, organizing social and political structures to overthrow it successfully. It is happening together with the fact that the middle class is getting poorer and poorer (International Labour Organization, 2016), the polarization between the income of the poorest and richest social strata is progressing (Dallinger, 2013), as well as the unwillingness and incapability of European governments and institutions to solve the migrant crisis jointly (according to analysts the problem is going to get worse). This state of affairs means further radicalization of xenophobic, anti-establishment feelings and the rising popularity of the right wing on the political scene. In the second decade of the 21st century Schmitt's triad *Staat-Bewegung-Volk* has found its missing, joining element (Schmitt, 1933). Regardless of further PEGIDA condition, with its activity, it has significantly strengthened the tendency, which has been progressing for several years, to use social dissatisfaction by the xenophobic far right, enriching it with new elements that in the near future may lead to a situation when more similar organizations emerge, and they will have more stability than ever before.

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