The Increasing Precariousness of the Employment Society: Driving Force for a New Right Wing Populism?

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

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

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