

*80,000,000 hooligans. Discourses of resistance to racism and xenophobia in German punk lyrics 1991-1994*

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80.000.000 Hooligans<sup>i</sup>.

Discourse of Resistance to Racism and Xenophobia in German Punk Lyrics 1991-1994

## **Melani Schröter**

Department of Modern Languages and European Studies, University of Reading, Whiteknights PO  
Box 218, Reading RG6 6AA, m.schroeter@reading.ac.uk

The late eighties and early nineties in Germany were not only marked by the fall of the Wall and German unification, but also by the dramatization of the political issue of asylum, resulting in outbreaks of xenophobic violence. In the context of the asylum debate of the early nineties, a number of punk bands produced songs between 1991 and 1994 which criticise the xenophobic climate created by the asylum debate and undermine an exculpatory official discourse about the violent attacks. The lyrics of these songs will be analysed as instances of counter-discourse emerging from a subcultural sphere that nurtures a critical distance towards hegemonic public and political discourse, arguing that Critical Discourse Analysis should pay more attention to defiance of hegemonic discourse.

## **Key Words**

Critical discourse analysis, subculture, racism, defiance, punk, critical language awareness

## **Introduction**

The outbreaks of xenophobic violence in Germany in the early nineties are epitomised in the pogroms in Hoyerswerda (17-24 September 1991) and Rostock (22-26 August 1992) and in the arson attacks in Hünxe (3 October 1991), Mölln (23 November 1992) and Solingen (29 May 1993)<sup>ii</sup>. They have become the subject of public commemoration and continue to spark debates about the reluctance to recognise and to name racism as a societal problem. Twenty years after these events, this reluctance still features in the current debate about failures of Germany's police and state security to identify a racist motive and a radical right terror group – the 'Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund' (NSU) – as responsible for ten murders and two bombings over ten years.

While German racism and xenophobia in the early nineties (e.g. Panayi 1994, Kürthen et al 1997, Herbert 2003) as well as the hegemonic public discourse about migration and migrants at that time (cf. Jäger 1992, Wengeler 1993, Jung et al 2000; Lynen von Berg 2000) received scholarly attention, little is known about 'other voices' in this context, such as migrants' and asylum seekers' own voices and discourses emerging from spheres that nourish

on a critical distance and critical attitude towards hegemonic discourse. This article aims to make a case for studying such dissenting or marginal(ised) discourses. This will be exemplified by looking at punk subculture as a sphere that sustains defiant discourse. To this end, a number of more general characteristics of defiance in punk discourse are briefly sketched to demonstrate how this subculture nourishes a critical distance and critical attitude towards hegemonic discourse. After outlining the historical background of the German asylum debate, it will be discussed how a number of punk lyrics from the early nineties undermine an exculpatory argumentation in hegemonic public and political discourse that failed to tackle racist ideology and racist violence. In doing so, this article aims neither to capture more comprehensively the discursive specifics of punk subculture, nor to contribute to theorising the genre of song lyrics or to developing multimodal analysis of popular music (Frith 1989, Machin 2010). Rather, this article looks at a specific historical situation and at voices that position themselves against the prevailing public and political discourse.

This article also intends to promote more interest in dissenting, subversive discourse and the various forms and spheres in which it occurs including formats that are not always appreciated by a highly educated audience. It is argued that niches of counter-culture and counter-discourse develop strategies of discursive defiance which undermine hegemonic discourse. An understanding and investigation of spheres of counter-discourse, of which punk subculture is one, can also contribute to critical language awareness as one of the aims of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough 1995) alongside the critical analysis of hegemonic discourse.

There are at least<sup>iii</sup> twenty songs by twelve German punk bands between 1991 and 1994 whose lyrics deal specifically with political and social issues surrounding the German asylum debate. After outlining general characteristics of punk discourse in the light of its potential value for the study of discursive defiance and, hence, for CDA, the article proceeds to outline the German asylum debate and politics in the late eighties and early nineties. It pays special attention to the emergence of violent attacks on foreigners, to the concerns about this violence and the explanations for it in public discourse which will be outlined as an exculpatory argumentation. The analysis of the punk lyrics identifies counter-discursive moves to elements of this exculpatory argumentation and it is informed by the Discourse Historical Approach to CDA (Reisigl & Wodak 2009) with its emphasis on contextualisation, pluriperspectivity, intertextuality and argumentation: The analysis and examples of the hegemonic and counter-discourse will be embedded in an outline of the historical and political situation in which they occurred, and will draw on a range of texts from media,

political discourse and song lyrics, illustrating different perspectives on the matter of asylum and xenophobic violence in Germany in the early 1990s. Intertextuality needs to be understood broadly here in that the texts all contribute to the asylum debate and in that the punk lyrics react to the argumentation put forward in hegemonic discourse, even though they do not directly quote from news articles or political speeches. An outline of the argumentative structure, leading to the exculpatory claim ‘We (the Germans) do not have an inherent problem with racism and xenophobia’ will be provided, indicating the counter-discursive moves that can be traced in the punk lyrics.

### **A Critical Discourse Analysis view on punk**

Existing studies in the area of Critical Discourse Analysis are based on a variety of linguistic concepts and methodological approaches with “a shared interest in the semiotic dimensions of power, injustice, abuse and political-economic or cultural change in society” (Fairclough et al 2011, 357). Discourse is understood to dialectically constitute and at the same time to reinforce social reality by symbolic interaction in social contexts (cf. Jäger & Meier 2009). Discourse can be studied by analysing linguistic and other means of communication, assuming that the dialectical process of constituting and reinforcing social reality becomes manifest in the texts selected for study. Since CDA is concerned with the notion of power (cf. Fairclough 1989; van Dijk 2008), it is of interest to note on the one hand that powerful voices and stakeholders influence discourse, and on the other hand the pervasive power of hegemonic discourse in influencing people’s perceptions of social reality. Thus,

Gramsci’s observation that the maintenance of contemporary power rests not only on coercive force but also on ‘hegemony’ (winning the consent of the majority) has been particularly influential in CDA. The emphasis on hegemony entails an emphasis on ideology, and on how the structures and practices of ordinary life routinely normalize capitalist social relations. (Fairclough et al 2011: 360)

Furthermore, Bourdieu’s (1991) notion of ‘symbolic power’ maintains that certain styles of speech are protected by elites and the educational system as proper and legible, whereas others become devalued and marginalised – aptly demarcating class, ethnicity and cultural hegemony. Within this broad framework, CDA has mostly been interested in analysing hegemonic (media, political) discourse. Analysing hegemonic discourse is of crucial interest since its reach and pervasiveness means that a broad range of people are exposed to it and/or help maintain it.

It is nevertheless somewhat surprising that subversive or defiant discourses remain neglected in the broad variety of CDA-based empirical studies, especially since critical language awareness can also be fostered by looking at or adopting practices that challenge or undermine hegemonic discourse and by drawing attention to what remains absent from (hegemonic) discourse (cf. Blommaert 2005, 31ff.). This paper argues that more attention should be paid to a broader variety of voices in discourses, especially by looking at the continuum between hegemony and resistance (Lamb 2013). There are more recent attempts at counter-balancing the focus on e.g. racist and sexist discourse through ‘Positive Discourse Analysis’ in looking at alternative, non-hegemonic discourse practices. However, the gist of this proposal is to look at ‘healing’ discourses that ‘make the world ‘a better place’ (cf. Martin 2010; for a more cautious approach Bartlett 2012). There is reason to doubt that punk could be seen, or would like to be seen in terms of ‘positive discourse’.<sup>iv</sup>

Within empirical research on subcultures, text and discourse are not often the focus of interest, which tends to be aimed at documentation of scenes and practices (for West German punk see e.g. IG Dreck auf Papier 2008; for East German punk cf. Furian & Becker 2008, Galenza & Havemeister 2005, Boehlke & Gericke 2007) and on social/historical context as well as style in the widest sense (cf. Gelder & Thornton 1997, McKay 1996). A study on subcultural discourse practice (Widdicombe & Woofitt 1995) is based on interviews (i.e. not genuine subcultural text production) with a sociological/sociolinguistic interest in language as a means of establishing and maintaining (subcultural) group identity, e.g. by accepting or rejecting labelling/categorisation.

Research on song lyrics suggests that the music genre largely determines the setting, predication and nomination in song lyrics and that lyrics reflect broader social and cultural developments such as changing gender roles and relationship patterns, for example, an increasing emphasis on individualism and self-fulfilment (cf. Machin 2010, 77ff). Frith (1998 and 2004) provides an account of different frameworks of analysis within which song lyrics have been dismissed for their content rather than regarded as part of a performance and genre-determined performance conventions (cf. Coupland 2011).

However, it seems that some lyrics may also be ‘read’ as historical documents when they refer to specific historical events and situations. Songs that react to a specific historical situation and/or political issue can ‘hit a nerve’ with a wider public and become quite successful. Well-known examples from German popular music include Nena’s *99 Luftballons* (1983; English version: *99 Red Balloons*, 1984) and Nicole’s *Ein bißchen Frieden* (A Little Bit of Peace, which won the 1982 Eurovision Song Contest). Both songs and the success with

which they met need to be understood in the historical context of the 1980s nuclear arms race. The Scorpions' *Winds of Change* (1990) can be regarded the popular music hymn on the fall of the Iron Curtain. Fiddler (2014) looks at the protest expressed by musicians against the formation of a coalition government in Austria in 1999 which included the far-right Freedom Party of Austria; not only expressed in lyrics, but also in their treatment of music as a theme that is central to Austrian identity. The present article has a similar interest in punk bands' reactions to a specific political issue at a certain time, but is limited to an analysis of lyrics and contrasts these with hegemonic discourse.

Punk does not constitute a homogenous subcultural movement or scene; the uses and limitations of attempting to define punk are regarded with scepticism within the subculture itself. Recent illustration of this is provided by the foreword and introduction of a volume on Punk (The Subcultures Network 2014) in which an essentialist definition of punk is rejected. It is instead suggested to work on the basis of a number of characteristics that largely cover the common ground of individuals, bands or groups that perceive themselves as part of punk subculture while acknowledging that these or more refined lists of characteristics may apply more or less.

First, punk has tended to situate itself in opposition to any dominant culture or perceived status quo. Second, it exudes an irreverent disregard for symbols of authority and pre-established hierarchies. Third, punk typically purports to provide a voice or means of expression for the disenfranchised, marginalised and disaffected. Finally, punk has consistently demonstrated a commitment to some form of self-sufficiency or autonomy: do-it-yourself, be yourself. (The Subcultures Network 2014: 2)

Based on Worley (2011) and the author's own qualitative survey of a corpus of more than 1400 German punk lyrics, punk as a cultural (and discursive) phenomenon and punk lyrics as a genre can be described with reference to a number of general characteristics which apply to some degree to most of the activities and activists that sustain punk subculture. In terms of origin, punk can be considered a reaction against the liberal utopianism of the sixties counter-culture; they appear distinctly dystopian and disharmonious (Worley 2011). It can also be seen as a reaction against prevailing musical tastes – either the 'distinguished' tastes of the elite (cf. Bourdieu 1984) and against popular music with its discourse about fun, leisure, love and romance. The style of punk, in clothing as well as musical expression and graphic design, is confrontational. It seeks to repel audiences and to prevent positive identification (Laing 1985). Band names more often than not refer to things or states of mind that are undesired,

unsettling, harmful or disgusting – examples from Germany include Müllstation (waste disposal site), Dritte Wahl (third choice), Chaos Z, Slime, Toxoplasma, Alarmsignal. Arguably, punks' 'ugliness' reflects an 'ugly world' and the restraints of the human condition – album sleeves often exhibit unpleasant, boring, grey and dull or filthy environments in which people are unlikely to harbour great expectations and where mindless routine prevails. Punk discourse is characterised by a rhetoric of individual or collective crisis, rhetorical gestures of cutting through the hypocrisy and myths that maintain the existing order, and it reasserts the right to say no (Worley 2011). This becomes apparent in a topos of demasking ugly truths – the most prominent feature of punk discourse is dysphemism (Schröter & Pappert 2010) – and in a topos of refusal; a recent album (2011) by the band EA 80 is titled: *Definitiv – nein!* (Definitely: no!) However, punk embraces self-realisation in a do-it-yourself culture, usually initiating and building up subcultural centres, events and fanzines from scratch and without budget. Punk discourse can involve a deliberate ignorance of what institutionalised education deems worth knowing about; 'instead', punks reflect on and engage with their immediate environment – 'I go out and look around and I tell you what I see' is another common topos in punk song lyrics. Another typical feature of punk discourse is irony – the Anarchist Pogo-Party of Germany is one case in point, dubbing itself the party for non-voters, plebs and benefit fraudsters and stating its political agenda as follows: The right to paid unemployment, the balkanisation of Germany within the borders of the Holy German Empire as of 1237 and the total re-stupefification of mankind (I.)<sup>v</sup>

These characteristics constitute a counter-discourse which is marked by disturbance, disagreement and distance. Punks usually have no problem with implying themselves as ugly, deprived, undesirable, useless and wasted. In this paradigm, the pressure of success, gain and beautification seems to be lifted from individuals and voluntary identification with social underdogs and with 'shamed' groups of people becomes possible. From this position, what is captured in the German notion of 'Nestbeschmutzung' – soiling one's own nest, i.e. your 'own' community, homeland or people – seems to pose less of an identity conflict. This stance also informs punks' reactions to German racism and xenophobia and especially their insistence on Germany being/remaining inherently fascist.

German punk is aligned to the political Left, even though there are numerous factions, including those favouring apolitical pogo-fun-punk as well as anarchists and antifascists – with overlaps all around. Locally, punk cultural and political initiatives support antifascism, for example, through gigs in support of antifascist activism, organising and (wo-)manning counter-demonstrations at Neo-nazi demonstrations, and sustaining criticism of racist



discourse and politics in fanzines and events such as gigs, radio programmes and screenings of independent film productions. An approach based on participants' categorisations is embraced here: if a band considers itself punk, and if there is evidence that (a part of) their audience and others outside the band do so as well, the texts it produces will be considered part of punk discourse. In Germany, the division of what is arguably based on the same musical and cultural roots between politically left (punks) and right (Neo-nazis/nazi-skins) took place around the mid-eighties – those who persist in calling themselves skinheads have to clarify their position (left or right). Neo-nazis do not consider themselves (near) punk and would hate to be considered punk and vice versa – precisely for reasons of ideology and political alignment (cf. IG Dreck auf Papier 2008, 97ff.).

At the same time in the early nineties there were also a number of right-wing and Neo-nazi bands around in Germany, most notably Die Böhsen Onkelz (who subsequently denied their right wing stance) and the Neo-nazi band Störkraft. Despite a partly common musical paradigm, it would be inadequate to subsume these under punk subculture in the German context for reason of political alignments. This is the one reason why they are not considered any further, even though they certainly construct their stance as defiant of hegemonic discourse, too – in line with their perception that left-liberals hold the discursive floor in Germany. The second reason is that this article is concerned with resistance to (hegemonic) racism and xenophobia, not with its more extreme manifestations.

## **The German Asylum Debate**

### *Background*

Germany was a divided country between 1949 and 1990 and most of Germany's post war history of immigration is related to the Federal Republic, or West Germany. The largest groups of immigrants since 1945 were ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe, guest workers – who were recruited between 1955 and 1973 and the largest group of which came from Turkey – and refugees. Germany, with a concept of citizenship that was based mainly on *ius sanguinis* until the recent citizenship reform (1999/2000) has over the last decades received ethnic German immigrants with arms opened relatively wide. Regarding guest workers, the ban on recruitment in 1973 in the wake of the oil crisis and economic downturn counter-intentionally led to a process of settlement of guest workers and through family reunions, to increasing numbers of foreigners especially from Turkey. Turkish guest workers feared that they would never be able to return if they left Germany for a while, at the same time they were entitled to bring their family members to Germany to live with them. Facing this

unwanted de-facto immigration, there was a distinct lack of any national policy initiatives to integrate the growing foreign population. Helmut Kohl (conservative party, CDU), who became chancellor in 1982 and remained so until 1998, initiated a scheme, which was intended to create financial incentives to motivate former guest workers to return to their countries of origin – rather than accepting that immigration had taken place and dealing with a diversifying society. During the eighties, the number of people seeking asylum in Germany rose slowly but steadily and especially the fall of the Iron Curtain and the Bosnian war led to a notable increase in numbers between 1990-1993. The increase in number is background to the fear that Germany would be ‘flooded’ by a large scale migration of peoples and the impression grew among a wider range of people that a politically paralysed country was facing unsurmountable difficulties (Bade & Oltmer 2004, 108).

The Kohl government introduced a series of legislation measures in the eighties to make living conditions in Germany more and more difficult for asylum seekers by imposing restrictions on mobility, by placing asylum seekers in accommodation outside of or at the margins of local communities, changing sustenance from money to vouchers and by restricting and in the end abolishing permission to work, no matter how long they were stuck in Germany (cf. Herbert 2003, 263ff.). This is also relevant for the perception of asylum seekers as ‘lazy spongers’. Other measures were meant to help dealing with asylum applications and therefore to get rid of the applicants more quickly, since most applications for asylum ended up being rejected. The issue of asylum was further problematized and featured prominently in the CDU’s 1987 election campaign.

### *Heating up the issue of asylum*

At the end of the eighties, the political situation regarding asylum is characterised by Herbert (2003, 273) as an early regress to irreconcilable positions which made a pragmatic political compromise impossible at that point. The CDU sought to gain votes with the topic and thereby condoned a radicalisation of the issue which would become difficult to control (ibid.). By the end of the eighties, the CDU had come to argue that a change in article 16 of the Basic Law, which granted an individual right to asylum on the grounds of political persecution was necessary to reduce the number of asylum seekers who were perceived to exploit the generosity of this fundamental right by coming to Germany and claiming to be persecuted while ‘only’ aiming to improve their standards of living. On the Left, the issue was reduced to its basic human rights aspect (helping refugees), not grasping

the migration of refugees as part of a global migratory movement the causes of which lie in the gaping and increasing economic differences between the rich countries in the north and the poor countries in the south of the world. (Herbert 2003, 273) (II.)

The SPD and Green Party were at this point entirely opposed to changing article 16 of the Basic Law. The Basic Law is the German constitution, changing it requires a two-thirds majority of the vote in parliament. Committed to a change of the Basic Law and without votes from the opposition, the CDU saw itself unable to move in this respect. In this situation, the fall of the Berlin Wall came about with the opening of the border between East and West Germany on 9 November 1989, leading to the formal unification of these formerly two separate and different political entities on 3 October 1990. These events invested a greater currency into the national narrative – a shared German nationhood was the rationale and adhesive for joining the two formerly separate states. The national euphoria surrounding the coming down of the Berlin Wall was fuelled by Germany winning the football world cup in the summer of 1990. Suddenly, according to the punk band Normahl, there was an ‘overdose of Germany’ (*Keine Überdosis Deutschland* 1994).

The German daily tabloid *Bild Zeitung* launched an anti-asylum publicity campaign (Herbert 2003, 300) e.g. reporting in 1990 on cases of alleged exploitation of German ‘generosity’ by asylum seekers driven by criminal energy to draw whatever they could from the German welfare system. However, the dramatisation of the issue was not only a feature of the tabloid *Bild Zeitung*, but also the weekly magazine *Der Spiegel* which at that time was still perceived to be left of centre produced title pages problematising the sheer number of asylum seekers, most notably ‘Ansturm der Armen’ (Invasion of the Poor) (37/1991) which featured a picture with an infinite number of people clambering on an already overcrowded boat painted in the colours of Germany’s flag, drawing on the STATE as SHIP metaphor and on the communalised phrase ‘Das Boot ist voll’ (the boat is full) (Jung et al 2000, p. 173ff.). Another *Spiegel* title (15/1992) ‘Asyl: Die Politiker versagen’ (asylum: politicians fail [to do anything about it, MS]) shows a photograph which suggests an endless queue of immigrants lining up at Germany’s border and creating so much pressure at the gates that the German border control cannot keep them shut anymore, so that the immigrants break through them and make way for more persons to enter.

The political deadlock and the increased media attention to the asylum issue in a situation of significant political changes and instabilities led to a significant rise in the number of xenophobic attacks in the early nineties in West and East Germany by “a small

violent minority, [who, MS] in an absurd misinterpretation of the situation and of their own position, perceived themselves as advocates of an outraged but silent majority.” (Bade & Oltmer 2004, 108). (III.) Incidents included attacks on and murder of individuals, arson attacks on asylum seekers’ hostels as well as homes of foreign families and two pogroms in East Germany (Hoyerswerda 1991 and Rostock 1992) where asylum seekers’ hostels were besieged for days by a growing group of Neo-nazis, applauded by a growing crowd of bystanders.

In the face of the xenophobic violence, the CDU pointed the finger at the opposition and accused it of preventing to ease the situation with its refusal to change the Basic Law. This created enough pressure for a sufficient number of SPD MPs to finally agree to vote in favour of the change. The violence was used by the CDU as an argument in favour of their political aim and the response of the party in this situation was to a) condemn the violence, b) to frame it as a consequence of the strain posed on Germany by the extraordinarily high number of asylum seekers whose claims to asylum were mostly illegitimate, c) to insist that changing the Basic Law provided a solution to the problem with numbers and d) to consequently ask the opposition to revise their standpoint. This way, the violence helped the CDU and it was used as an argumentative resource by the party to realise its political aim of changing the Basic Law. The amendment of article 16 was voted through on 16 May 1993. To further illustrate the political climate, 132 SPD MPs voted in favour, 101 against the amendment. The debate went on for ten hours, comprising 76 speeches or statements by MPs. A further 36 could not be held for timing reasons and were added to the protocol, together with 44 statements (mostly statements of dissent by SPD MPs who voted against the amendment). Because of a large demonstration outside the Bundestag, the Green Party MPs launched a motion to suspend the banning of public demonstrations in the immediate vicinity of the parliament buildings while the police struggled to contain demonstrators behind the barriers. The amended law contains a regulation which prevents asylum seekers from entering Germany if they have set foot into another safe third country beforehand, determining that they would have to apply for asylum in the other safe country they first entered. Since Germany is surrounded by safe third countries, it is technically only possible to apply for asylum if asylum seekers have travelled to Germany on a plane.

### **Undermining a discourse of exculpation**

A schematic argumentative structure is provided in Table 1 below of what is understood here as an exculpatory hegemonic public and political discourse which avoided putting ideological

racism and xenophobia on the agenda as an issue that needed to be tackled politically. The challenges to these arguments found in punk lyrics will also be indicated in the schematic overview of the argumentative structure. This is followed by a qualitative analysis with quotes from public and political discourse which illustrate the hegemonic exculpatory argumentation regarding the occurrence of xenophobic violence. These will be juxtaposed with quotes from song lyrics and a characterisation of the way in which punks react to the particular argumentative strand of the argumentation. The quoted lyrics are part of a corpus of currently 1409 German punk lyrics from 1979-2006 that was compiled for a range of analytical purposes. In a qualitative survey of the corpus, 20 songs by 12 different bands that were released between 1990 and 1994 were identified as reactions to the German asylum debate of the early nineties. For practical reasons, in order to collate such a corpus, the lyrics were downloaded from free user-fed lyrics internet forums, [www.golyr.de](http://www.golyr.de) and [www.lyrix.at](http://www.lyrix.at). This means that there are occasional, mostly spelling errors in the lyrics, but spot checks were carried out (by listening to the songs or comparing between different sources such as lyrics provided in album sleeves or booklets) to ascertain accuracy. Where spot checks were made, in no case were the lyrics incomplete or were the effects of errors such that they would cause a distortion of meaning. However, this procedure also means that only bands with a certain level of popularity could be included – i.e. bands that had released songs via music labels and that had sufficient followers to include those who would bother to share the lyrics online. There is a broad collection of lyrics from canonical punk bands such as Slime, Toxoplasma and Abwärts. A slightly lesser known band such as Wohlstandskinder (1995-2005) that have released six albums during their time has a presence with 113 lyrics on golyr.de, 111 on lyrix.at. A more recent punk band like Alarmsignal (since 2000) who have released five albums can be found on lyrix.at with 45 lyrics. A broad range of punk bands is represented in these collections, from Chaos Z to Turbostaat and from Dödelhaie to Razzia so that it seems that once punk bands have been around for a few years, have released a couple of albums and assembled a sufficient fan community, there is nothing that prevents their presence at one or both of these lyrics forums. However, more short-lived bands and unreleased material that might have been played live in different places are less likely to be documented here. All quotations from originally German material were translated into English by the author; the German original text is provided in the notes. Band names and song titles (in italics) remain in the original German.

*Outline of the hegemonic exculpatory discourse*

Facing a number of obvious manifestations of racism and xenophobia, the public and political discourse about the issue of asylum still featured the central claim that ‘We (the Germans) do not have an inherent problem with racism and xenophobia’. This claim is challenged upfront in punk lyrics in that some lyrics maintain that racism and xenophobia is inherent in German society as a legacy of Nazism which has never been overcome but was always lurking just beneath the surface. There are two warrants for the exculpatory claim: On the one hand, those committing acts of violence are seen as un-normal, aberrant individuals that are not part of the German society proper and whose acts are not informed by political opinion, but a result of frustration and intoxication. This warrant is challenged in some lyrics that describe processes of politicisation and radicalisation of Neo-nazis embedded in organisational structures and ideologies of the radical right. It is also challenged by reference to the support of the radical right by a wider public.

The other warrant refers to the pressures put onto the German population by an exceptional political and historical situation from which legitimate concerns arise. This warrant is backed by two aspects: First, the exceptionally high number of people seeking asylum in Germany and second, the perceived illegitimacy of the grounds on which people enter Germany and claim asylum; protection from poverty and misery was not envisaged by the Basic Law. This warrant is challenged in some punk lyrics by shifting the notion of (il)-legitimacy. They maintain that the concerns of the Germans are not legitimate, because it is illegitimate when rich countries exploit poor countries, as a result of which people flee from poverty to begin with.

<b>Claim:</b> We (the Germans) do not have an inherent problem with racism and xenophobia		
<b>Warrant 1:</b> Manifestations of racism and xenophobia are caused by aberrant individuals who are not part of the German society proper	<b>Warrant 2:</b> There are legitimate concerns about illegitimate asylum seekers that need to be tackled politically	
	↑ <b>Backing 1:</b> There is pressure from a too large number of asylum seekers entering the country	↑ <b>Backing 2:</b> Most claims to asylum illegitimate in that they are based on grounds not covered by the German Basic Law.

<p>↑</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <p>a) existing structures and ideologies of the radical right</p> <p>b) Support by wider public</p> <p>c) Nazism as inherent in German society</p>	<p>↑</p> <p><b>Challenge:</b></p> <p>The exploitation of poor countries by countries such as Germany has caused these migratory movements; it is a consequence of Germany's own illegitimate conduct</p>
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*Table 1: Schematic overview of exculpatory argumentation and challenges*

The first section in the following analysis deals with Backing 2 and illustrates the way in which it was brought forward in hegemonic discourse as well as the ways in which the problematisation of the numbers of asylum seekers was challenged. The second section, *Aberrant individuals*, looks at Warrant 1 and outlines Challenges a) and b) to this warrant while the third section, *Germany's brown sludge*, looks at Challenge c). The fourth and final section of the analysis deals with the notion of *good/useful vs. bad/useless foreigners* and illustrates the interplay between Backing 2 and the challenge of it.

*A worried and overburdened population with legitimate concerns*

Once the occurrence of xenophobic violence could no longer be ignored, the violence and the Neo-nazis became part of the asylum debate. Firstly, the high number of asylum seekers was used as an explanation for the violence, implying that the violence was a consequence of the pressure put on Germany and that it could be ended by reducing the number of incoming asylum applicants. This is reflected in the first two speeches in the parliamentary debate that preceded the vote on the change of article 16 of the constitution in May 1993, held by Wolfgang Schäuble (chairman of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group) and Hans-Ulrich Klose (chairman of the SPD parliamentary group), both speaking in favour of changing the Basic Law. Both refer to the pressure of numbers and to the illegitimacy of asylum seekers who were seen to abuse the individual right for protection from political persecution granted in the German constitution:

(...) that in the past year an additional 440 000 people came to Germany, and most of them are not politically persecuted (...) that month after month in this year 1993 50 000 came claiming the right of asylum who are overwhelmingly not prosecuted, who seek and get access to Germany for too long. (Wolfgang Schäuble (CDU), Deutscher Bundestag WP12/160, 13505) (IV.)

However, there is a growing fear among a lot of people of the overburdening and threat to standards of living through mass abuse of the right to asylum. And who would deny that this does happen? (...) (Hans-Ulrich Klose (SPD), *ibid.*, 13508) There were 438 161 asylum seekers in the past year, 20 460 in Hamburg only. This is roughly the number of people who found access to Great Britain in the past year - following which the right to asylum has been tightened there. (*ibid.*, 13509) (V.)

The violence is referred to implicitly firstly by explaining the unsettling effects of the presumed lack of control of the situation on ordinary Germans.

We all know that the local authorities cannot cope with it anymore. There are no flats left, no empty houses, no places in hotels or hostels. (...) But there is a need to talk about the consequences of all of this for our own population. People who for example live in a part of Hamburg with a high proportion of asylum seekers experience the consequences very directly and in a very concrete manner. The people there are not xenophobic, but their standards of living decline often in a worrying way; they feel threatened, personally and socially. (Hans-Ulrich Klose, *ibid.*) (VI.)

Secondly, the violence is referred to implicitly by asserting the need to guarantee peace, tolerance and the civic order (by limiting the number of immigrants). Schäuble quotes from a document of the German convention of Bishops:

The insecurity increases. This is the breeding ground for aggression and protest, and for making foreigners scapegoats. (Wolfgang Schäuble (CDU), *ibid.*, 13506) (VII.)

Based on this assessment of the situation, Schäuble continues:

If this is the case, we must contravene this breeding ground by countering this insecurity. We owe our citizens (...) an order which guarantees that people live together in peace. Only when we reassure our citizens that this (...) state is able to guarantee such an order, only then can we create the necessary and essential basis for a relaxed co-existence of Germans and foreigners in this country. (*ibid.*) (VIII.)

The band Die Goldenen Zitronen comment ironically on this premise, highlighting that this amounted to the claim that by committing acts of violence, Germans were only exercising their right to self-defence in the face of the threat posed to them by 'asylum fraudsters':



Thus we came to the grotesque solution, the poor souls the problem that needed to be solved. No violence without asylum fraudsters, it's their fault – the citizens only defend themselves (Die Goldenen Zitronen: *Die Bürger von Hoyerswerda* 1992). (IX.)

The problematisation of numbers also became apparent in the notorious use of WATER metaphors (Wengeler 1993, Böke 1997, Jung et al 2000), and another lyrics by the same band uses this to criticise the hypocrisy of politicians who, as described above, condemned but at the same time condoned the violence by insisting on problematizing asylum seekers as too numerous and illegitimate in their claims to the right of asylum. In these lyrics, *Das bißchen Totschlag* (1994), Die Goldenen Zitronen move between ventriloquizing and commenting the hegemonic discourse in a rather dense and complex interplay of allusions. In the following extract, the lyrics refers to a large demonstration of around 300 000 people in Berlin against the xenophobic violence in November 1992, including politicians. Left wing anarchists torpedoed what they perceived to be a hypocritical event when the German federal president started a speech on stage, including throwing eggs in his direction. In the following extract, 'they' refers to the members of the political elite (including the federal chancellor and president) who participated in the demonstration.

Unexpectedly, they took a lesson in 'experiencing first-hand violence' – Nazis? Almost, so-called left-wing anarchist self-proclaimed humanists, and now they also felt exposed to xenophobia, they were afraid, you see, because no, not Molotov Cocktails were sent flying, but eggs, and quite a few of them, but they remained brave, they would not give in to any kind of mob, and also not to the fraudsters and scroungers the...what's the word – yeah, the flood, the latter they said the other day but not too loudly and in a matter-of-fact way and with unified force they got their law through (Die Goldenen Zitronen: *Das Bißchen Totschlag* 1994). (X.)

The lyrics ridicule the politicians' concerns about being 'attacked' by left-wing activists throwing eggs at them by contrasting this with the violence immigrants were exposed to (Nazis, Molotov Cocktails) and they ventriloquize the way in which asylum seekers were portrayed in political and media discourse (fraudsters and scroungers, FLOOD) while at the same time commenting on the hypocrisy which blurred the degree to which the political discourse about asylum seekers had contributed to the xenophobic violence against which people were demonstrating – 'they' initiated and perpetuated the harmful problematizing of asylum seekers, but 'not too loudly and in a matter-of-fact way'.

### *Aberrant individuals*

The committed acts of xenophobic violence were seen as a matter detached from mainstream society and mainstream German politics/public discourse; only marginal (extreme right-wing Neo-nazis) and/or marginalised, problematic individuals (angry, deprived young men, especially from East Germany, suffering from reunification and unemployment) would react in this way.

State security officials claim that only a minority of these youths were organised in extreme right parties or associations. Most of them belong to the 6500 „of these weak-headed, dumb skinheads“ who, according to state security president Eckart Werthebach, „as booze buddies commit their terrible deeds spontaneously“. Three circumstances were typical for slipping into the skinhead-scene, according to state security official Uhrlau (...): unfavourable domestic circumstances, alcoholism or unemployment of the parents, failing marriages; deficient education reflected in low level qualifications or learning difficulties; limited job perspectives, chances if at all mainly in manual jobs. (Der Spiegel, 23/1993) (XI.)

The band Die Toten Hosen released a song about the Neo-nazi *Sascha* (*Sascha... ein aufrechter Deutscher*, 1992) – a name which in the early nineties carried strong social associations with working class or below working class milieu. He is introduced with the lines “Sascha is unemployed, whatever is he going to do without a job, he cuts off his hair and pisses on a Jewish grave”. (XII.) Thus, they crudely suggest in the first two (in German rhymed) lines that becoming a Neo-nazi follows as a logical consequence of being unemployed, and thereby mock the public discourse which suggested just that. The song perhaps also undermines the stereotyping of Neo-nazis and extreme right attitudes as a result of a lack of education and intellectual capability by stating:

He even knows the alphabet and knows the location of the Führerbunker. No, this man is not an idiot, Sascha is a German REP [member of the extreme right German Republican Party, MS]. He is politically informed and knows that foreigners are a nuisance (Die Toten Hosen, *Sascha ... ein aufrechter Deutscher*, 1992). (XIII.)

Sascha’s ‘education’ and attitude are characterised in such crude terms that it may likewise just suggest Sascha’s intellectual deficits, and the lack of intelligence was also suggested by other bands; *Schrei nach Liebe* (1993) by Die Ärzte is heavily based on the notion of the intellectually and psychologically underdeveloped personality:

You are really totally stupid (...) everything needs to be explained to you because you really don't know a thing about anything (...) you never learned to do articulating yourself [the original German contains a deliberate grammatical mistake in the use of the verb 'to articulate', MS]". (XIV.)

Similarly, the band Abwärts (*Hallo ich heiß Adolf* 1991) suggests "not much brain in the head and a brick in the hand and everyone's proud to be German". (XV.) Neo-nazis were portrayed as angry, deprived, dangerous and fearsome young males. Some punk lyrics also deal with the fear of and threat from Neo-nazis:

You walk through the streets at night, you are afraid and you know why, brown shadows follow you, the fear leaves you mute, slogans on the wall they are not enough anymore, there are so many of them now, and they get more and more and what they want is war (Toxoplasma: *Krieg* 1992). (XVI.)

*Schrei nach Liebe* by Die Ärzte attempts to undermine this fear of Neo-nazis by ridiculing them, especially through the deconstruction of hyper-masculinity, a typical feature of fascism as well as contemporary Neo-nazi scenes. They suggest that the hatred of the fictitious Neo-nazi that they address in their lyrics is a consequence of his parents' and girlfriend's neglect, reframing his radicalism as a result of soft spots and emotional disappointment ("your combat boots long for tenderness"). (XVII.)

However, other parts of the lyrics of *Sascha* suggest that the above quote about his 'education' could also be read as an acknowledgement that Sascha's attitudes are part of an ideology, which is to some degree informed by an interpretation of social reality and history, by writing and debate – rather than merely a mindless, instinctive reaction to the trigger of deprivation. This interpretation is supported by parts of the chorus that occurs three times with varied lyrics so as to describe a process of Sascha's increasing radicalisation:

Sascha is a German and being German is difficult and Abdul will never be as German as Sascha (...)  
Because Sascha is a German, and being German is difficult, and if you are as German as Sascha, it does not leave room for much else (...)  
Sascha is a German, and being German is difficult, if you are as German as Sascha, you are nothing else anymore (...) (Die Toten Hosen, *Sascha ... ein aufrechter Deutscher*, 1992). (XVIII.)

This development is reflected in the stanzas which portray Sascha's engagement first as joining a subculture and starting to become uneasy with foreign food, then joining a party and getting politically interested until in the last stanza he takes part in a violent arson attack on an asylum seekers' hostel. The lyrics portray *Sascha* as someone who consciously and

deliberately engages with racist ideology, who progressively radicalises and who sees himself doing a service to his country; his setting fire to the hostel is commented “everybody does what they can, when it comes to German thoroughness, Sascha is in the know” (IXX), as though Sascha felt he needed to contribute to the welfare of his country and the increased degree of his ‘Germanness’ helped him to commit the attack.

The two themes – the pressure put on Germany by a high number of illegitimate asylum applicants and the marginalisation of violent Neo-nazis – helped to exculpate German politics and ‘ordinary Germans’. They helped sustaining an exculpatory narrative of a country driven to the brink, a situation in which violence occurred as a reaction rather than as ideologically motivated, deliberate acts. They framed Neo-nazis as separate from ‘ordinary Germans’, detached from German society and consensus. This constituted a denial of a continuum of racist and xenophobic attitudes from rejection to concerns over the German standard of living ‘declining’ because of immigration to voting for extreme right parties and attacking foreigners, which would suggest that Neo-nazis were only spearheading more widespread xenophobia. The band Atemnot refer to this wider acceptance of Neo-nazism by referring to the pogroms in Hoyerswerda (1991) and Rostock (1992) which lasted for days and were enabled by a passive police force who failed to clear the space in front of the asylum hostels from the Neo-nazis and by the growing crowd of applauding onlookers – ordinary (‘un-anomalous’) Germans that were not un-normal, but part of the society and sharing a more widespread xenophobic consensus:

Germany, united fascist land that’s what our country will be called soon, nearly every night a hostel is set on fire, guarded by the green pigs [the police – in green uniforms – MS], un-anomalous Germans help the Nazi mob along (Atemnot, *Menschlichkeit* 1994). (XX)

The reluctance to look closely at and tackle developing Neo-nazi scenes and networks and to acknowledge the detrimental effects of the pejorative political discourse about immigrants and immigration arguably revisited Germany from 2011 onwards, when it turned out that the police turned a blind eye to the right wing terrorist activity of the National Socialist Underground and instead tried to criminalise its victims (see e.g. *Zeit online*, 11.7.2013; *Spiegel online*, 23.2.2012).

Some of the punk lyrics attempted to undermine this discourse by 1) exposing the connection between the political discourse about the ‘pressure of numbers’ and the violent attacks on immigrants, 2) ridiculing the fear-instilling Neo-nazi and 3) pointing out that Neo-

nazi activities need to be seen not as mindless brutality fuelled by social deprivation and alcoholism, but as part of a chosen ideology within a network of radical right infrastructure and as the result of a process of radicalisation.

### *Germany's brown sludge*

The marginalisation of Neo-nazis was also exculpatory in another respect since the freshly unified Germany was reluctant to admit in the face of the international community that it had an apparently growing problem with racism and xenophobia. Unification meant that Germany became bigger, more powerful and self-determined in its foreign and military affairs. Even though Germany did not meet strong international opposition to unification and even though it was largely congratulated on the 'peaceful revolution' in East Germany that brought about the fall of the Iron Curtain, there was a degree of resentment in the international community to see Germany grow and rise to more power and influence. This fear, which was inherently reminiscent of two World Wars and in particular Nazi Germany, is epitomised in a meeting by Margaret Thatcher with ministers and historians. Secret notes taken during this meeting by Charles Powell, foreign policy advisor and former British ambassador to Germany, were leaked and published not long after the meeting. They include references to discussions about German 'national characteristics', some of which

(...) were cited as reasons for concern about the future. First, a capacity of excess, to overdo things, to kick over the traces. Second, a tendency to over-estimate their own strength and capabilities ...(...) It still had to be asked how a cultured and cultivated nation had allowed itself to be brain-washed into barbarism. If it had happened once, could it not happen again? (...) While we all admired and indeed envied what the Germans had achieved in the last 45 years, the fact was that their institutions had not yet been seriously tested by adversity such as a major calamity. We could not tell how Germans would react in such circumstances. (Jarusch & Grasnow 1994, 129f.)

In the light of such existing apprehensions abroad, politicians would refer to concerns over Germany's international image rather than a) reassure immigrant communities that they were an integral part of the German society and that the perpetrators would be persecuted in a tough manner, and b) target the developing infrastructure of the radical right. Similarly, Graef (2014) finds that in 2011, when the extreme right terrorist group NSU was discovered, concern over preserving a positive self and other image within the European Union, including a successful dealing with its Nazi past, prevailed over concerns about the victims. In the 1990s, punk bands reacted to this with torpedoing the concerns over image by voicing head-

on the impression which politicians desperately tried to avoid: that Germany saw the reawakening of Nazism, that the German past was not over but always dormant just beneath the surface. They deliberately and repeatedly compared the political climate of the early nineties to Nazi Germany and suggested that Nazism was a chronic disease in Germany. Hence, the renewed violent outbreaks did not come as a surprise according to punks. According to Slime, “Germany pukes up its old brown sludge“ (Slime: *Schweineherbst* 1993) (XXI.), and brings to mind the line “Death is a master from Germany“ from Paul Celan’s *Death Fugue* (composed 1944/45) (Slime: *Der Tod ist ein Meister aus Deutschland* 1994). Toxoplasma picture brown shadows emerging and taking war to the streets again in Germany (Toxoplasma, *Krieg* 1992), and Abwärts envisage Hitler’s rebirth (*Hallo ich heiß Adolf* 1991). Slime comment on overlooking the emergence of Neo-nazis

I look out of the window and the hypocrisy makes me sick, Germany, everyone looks around and has no idea why and in which holes the rats have hidden that now march and strike, but they were not in their holes, we saw them on the streets quite often, and they would greet you with their arms stretched out, you just looked away (...) and while they set more and more people on fire you are still talking and differentiating (Slime: *Schweineherbst*, 1993). (XXII.)

In *Sascha*, Die Toten Hosen also draw a parallel between the situation in the early nineties and the Third Reich (“well over fifty years ago, someone tried the same thing, it went wrong, Sascha didn’t get it“) (XXIII.). Toxoplasma name the colours black, red and brown in a title of their song, reminiscent of the black, red and gold in Germany’s flag, suggesting that the ‘gold’ in Germany’s national flag is rather brown, leaving it with the black and red of the Third Reich flag and adding the symbolic colour of fascism, perhaps suggesting that black and red lead to, or merge, to result in brown. They, too, picture the reawakening of the old spirit of National Socialism and state their own resistance:

The world has an old enemy that is reawakening, the ghost of Hitler and his Reich holds you [Germany, MS] in his power, the old chants, the old slogans and the old grandeur, Germany, the horror awakens to new life...black red and brown are the colours of your flag (...) and you have learned nothing from it, (...) the clock runs backwards not forward (...) when right turns illegitimate, resistance becomes an obligation – Germany, you may be strong, but you won’t get us (Toxoplasma: *Schwarz Rot Braun*, 1992). (XXIV.)

The impression of Germany's 'nationalist reawakening' was fuelled by the national euphoria surrounding unification and football world championship, hence the notion of *80.000.000 hooligans* (Die Goldenen Zitronen, 1992), of "Germany, united Fascist land" [an allusion to the former East German national anthem which referred to 'Germany, united Fatherland', MSJ] (Atemnot: *Menschlichkeit* 1994) and of an "overdose of Germany" (Normahl: *Keine Überdosis Deutschland* 1994), whereby "Normahl" refer to their experience of growing up with two Germanies and when these two states joined through the narrative framework of one nation, the result is

Turks beaten to death, Vietnamese killed, killing commandos who call themselves Skinheads out at night, Jewish cemeteries soiled with Nazi graffiti and still proud to be German (Normahl: *Keine Überdosis Deutschland*, 1994). (XXV.)

Slime criticise the fact that, in Germany, widespread political and public concern about xenophobic violence only gained ground out of fear of losing international esteem: "Then the liars that distance themselves from everything, for fear of losing face abroad" (Slime: *Gewalt* 1994) (XXVI). Die Goldenen Zitronen also project a critical remark in that direction by pointing to 'the talk outside of the German planet' (see below). They critically view the response to the violence by mocking the style of the mass demonstrations against xenophobic violence – silent, holding a candle – which evolved in particular after the arson attack on the home of a Turkish family in Mölln at the end of November 1992 and which were reminiscent of the Christmas season rather than of protest.

Well, and then (...), it made the German team start; it had to be, because the talk grew louder and louder outside of the German planet; so come on and take your chain of lights, take your little sister by the hand and keep silent against hate in the beautiful Christmas season (Die Goldenen Zitronen: *Das Bißchen Totschlag* 1994). (XXVII.)

### *Good/useful vs. bad/usesless foreigners*

It is notable that widespread public protest only occurred after the arson attacks in Mölln. It seems that two red lines were crossed here. Firstly, it happened in West Germany. It had been relatively easy for West Germans to project racism as a problem onto the 'civically immature' East Germans which, following the fall of the Berlin Wall, had just emerged as a largely homogeneous society from the politically repressive regime of the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Even though early attacks on asylum seekers happened in the

West, too – such as in Hünxe, October 1991, the pogroms in the East German towns of Hoyerswerda (1991) and Rostock (1992) arguably constituted events unseen and more unthinkable for West Germans, therefore supporting the projection of the problem onto the East Germans. Secondly, the victims were members of a Turkish family of (former) guest workers who had resided in Germany for a long time. Slime (*Gewalt* 1994) and Die Goldenen Zitronen sarcastically observe that foreigners were sorted into good ones (former guest workers) and bad ones (asylum seekers):

We don't fail to clearly tell apart those who are useless and those who are useful for us. Useful for us no doubt are those who graft for the standard of living of the superior race. Useless the others, not even genuinely prosecuted, feasting off the pockets of the honest hard working people (*Die Goldenen Zitronen: Die Bürger von Hoyerswerda* 1992). (XXVIII.)

In recent years, Germany had paid verbal tribute to the former guest workers' contribution to the country's high living standards by providing the workforce which sustained the economic miracle – a development mirrored in the film *Almanya* (2011, directed by Nesrin and Yasemin Samdereli). In contrast, asylum seekers in the late eighties and early nineties were considered largely as fraudsters who were not persecuted but “Wirtschaftsflüchtlinge”, ‘economic refugees’ aiming to live off the pockets of honest hard-working Germans, with little consideration as to whether the wish to flee poverty and misery was really so essentially illegitimate.

An anonymous hate ‚poem‘ (the text is rhymed and features incomplete syntactic structures), which found wide circulation in the early nineties<sup>vi</sup>, assumes the voice of a fictitious asylum seeker who enjoys a good life of leisure paired with ingratitude, while the Germans need to work hard for their standard of living:

I don't have to go to work because luckily the German asshole grafts in the factory, I can watch cable TV, lie in bed and put on weight again, don't pay for rent nor electricity nor waste disposal, that's only for stupid Germans (...) I love Germany – where else in the world will you be rewarded for asylum fraud? Once Germany's pockets are empty, I'll go back home and say “Farewell you Nazi pig”. (XXIX.)

Interestingly, the text indirectly acknowledges poverty by picturing asylum seekers as regaining weight, i.e. recovering from past misery. However, the perception of asylum seekers had become so negative through repeated reference to ‘bogus asylum seekers’, ‘asylum fraudsters’ and ‘economic refugees’ that the German word “Asylant” in the course of



a few years underwent such pejorisation that it could be used as a swear word (Wengeler 1993) and has since been avoided in mainstream politically correct discourse. The much employed metaphorical conceptualisation of immigration as FLOOD has been used with more caution afterwards so that the weekly magazine *Die Zeit* wrote in 1994

In year one after the change of Article 16 of the Basic Law, everything seemed to have changed in Germany. “The boat is full” sounds like a cry for battle from times long gone by. “Streams of asylum seekers” no longer flow over the front pages. (*Die Zeit*, 01/07/1994, cf. Jung et al 2000, p. 49) (XXX.)

Die Goldenen Zitronen observe that (toothless) protest against the violence only developed a) out of concerns of losing face internationally, b) after more than seventeen casualties and c) when former guest workers were attacked: “given they were decent foreigners, tax paying citizens of Mölln, almost like you and I” (*Die Goldenen Zitronen: Das Bißchen Totschlag* 1994) (XXXI.). It seems that threatening and attacking asylum seekers was easier to condone. It is also Slime and Die Goldenen Zitronen who comment on the issue of global inequalities which was otherwise not a dominant aspect in the discourse of the Left (cf. Herbert 2003, 273), especially given that the globalisation discourse and, following from that, anti-globalisation discourse, was just about to arrive in Germany.

It is very simple and obvious, too, these people come to our country because we deprived them of theirs, we robbed it from them and sucked it empty, they follow their stolen lives that have made us rich and affluent (...) the rest of the world digs it because now as ever the superior race rules. (*Slime: Goldene Türme* 1994). (XXXII.)

This observation challenges the denunciatory potential of referring to asylum seekers as „Wirtschaftsflüchtlinge“, refugees for economic reasons, and reverses the victim-perpetrator relation; it is not the Germans whose generosity is exploited by ‘bogus’ asylum seekers, but it is the asylum seekers and their poor countries of origin who have been exploited by the rich countries of the north with bad deals for their goods, resources and (wo-)manpower. The asylum seekers were presented as feeding off the pockets of honest hard-working Germans like parasites. Die Goldenen Zitronen (*Die Bürger von Hoyerswerda* 1992) shift the perspective and resituate the matter in a global context, arguing that Germany (or the so-called ‘first world’) is a parasite on the rest of the world (the so-called ‘third world’ or ‘developing countries’):

Our world here is an overweight parasite and it is only as fat as it is because now as much as then it continues to fuck the rest of the world (Die Goldenen Zitronen, *Die Menschen von Hoyerswerda* 1992). (XXXIII.)

References to the ‘superior race’ in these quotes make it clear that racism as well as the global inequalities in the distribution of wealth have their roots in colonialism and that a continuing sense of entitlement of some countries to wealth generated on the backs of others has emerged from and continues beyond colonialism. In this light, Germans and others have been feeding off the pockets of the poor for decades and centuries. Once the poor turn to them in the desire to improve their situation, they face outrage, delegitimization, discrimination and violence.

### **Conclusion**

The author is aware that this article could in itself be read like part of an exculpatory discourse by framing punks’ voices in the asylum debate as the voices of ‘good Germans’ who duly criticise its racist premises. While it is indeed a proposal to include in CDA attention to voices that ‘we might like to hear’, contrary to discriminatory discourse, its intention is slightly more pragmatic: In CDA, criticism of hegemonic, discriminatory discourse is reasonably established, but it tends to identify ways of framing and wording associated with sufficient power so that they are likely to have detrimental and limiting effects on groups of people – those victimised by it, but also those exposed to and buying into it. Most of such critique tends to be ‘socio-diagnostic’, i.e. it “is concerned with demystifying the – manifest or latent – persuasive or ‘manipulative’ character of discursive practice.” (Reisigl & Wodak 2009, 88).

The underlying proposal of this article is not to turn to punk most of all, but to invest more interest in various niches of counter-discourse as sites of resistance and alternative thinking, framing and talking. This poses a number of new questions, e.g. where and how we can locate niches of sustained counter-discourse as well as instances where counter-discursive strategies have been successful, such as in the appropriation of negative labelling by stigmatised or discriminated groups. It would also be interesting to ask if there is anything to learn from examples regarding effective strategies to undermine the pervasive power of hegemonic discourse and to what extent we can or want to include examples of such strategies in teaching towards critical language awareness. A more sustained interest in these

questions might help, in the long run, to formulate more “prospective critique, [which] seeks to contribute to the improvement of communication” (Reisigl & Wodak 2009, 88).

Punk’s potential for discursive defiance – as one example – in a specific historical situation and with regard to a specific political issue has been outlined above, and it has been examined in this article. Given punk’s general alignment with the political Left, and a tradition of antifascist political engagement within the Left and (parts of) the punk scene, it could be expected that punks would have something to say about this. Indeed, there are (possibly more than) twenty songs from the years 1991-1994 featuring lyrics that comment on the events and the way asylum seekers were portrayed in public and political discourse. They comment on the discrimination and violence towards alleged ‘fraudsters’ in the light of global inequalities, the ‘othering’ of racist perpetrators and thereby the denial of racism and xenophobia as more widespread ideologies – and on the public discourse that officially condemned but effectively condoned violence against asylum seekers as well as its concern with Germany’s image abroad.

It is also worth noting just how important it was for punks to contribute to this debate. Die Toten Hosen and Die Ärzte were certainly aware of their influence and scope for reaching out to young audiences and produced their position statements mainly with this in mind. While a band such as Slime was never reluctant to air explicit political statements, Die Ärzte sidestepped their own insistence on being an apolitical fun punk band. This, together with the relative popularity of the band, underlines the significance of the xenophobic climate for bands who allowed themselves to be identified as or subsumed under ‘punk’, i.e. the urge it created to position themselves against the xenophobic climate. For Die Goldenen Zitronen, among other factors, the events of the early nineties marked their turn away from being a fun punk band, and the beginning of their continued ‘reporting on Germany’ with a view on migration discourse: “Our reaction after the Neo-nazi riot in Rostock-Lichtenhagen was to keep the reporting on Germany going”. (*Jungle World* 24, 2006) (XXXIV.) They subsequently commented for instance on German multiculturalism (*Flimmern, Das Bananenlied* 2001) and global migration (about the free movement for goods, but not for people in *Wenn ich ein Turnschuh wär* 2006). Other bands, including newer ones, continue to take issue with German racism and Neo-nazis, for instance the band Alarmsignal, who – in an ironical reversal of the widespread stereotype that foreigners take jobs from the ‘natives’ – maintain: “But one thing really makes us quail, why it is that we and our foreign friends don’t have any jobs, Nazis take away our jobs, it’s not foreign workers but the brown front who’s

aboard here” (Alarmsignal: *Nazis nehmen uns die Arbeitsplätze weg*, 2006). (XXXV.) Contrasting punk discourse with the hegemonic discourse about immigration and asylum seekers shows that the study of subcultural discourse should be of interest to Critical Discourse Analysts if seen as attempts at undermining and countering hegemonic discourse.

Finally, not only could the study of subcultural and defiant discourse enrich CDA in the ways outlined above, but the study of punk subculture might also profit from CDA. Firstly, as argued above, CDA would be interested in what is ‘critical’ in punk with regard to shared concerns over power and ideology. In my view, this works particularly well when contrasting punk discourse with the discourses they react to. Secondly, and related to this, with its tools for investigating recurring patterns in language use or other modes of discursive representation – such as conceptual metaphor, collocations, topoi – CDA could help carve out in more detail typical traits of punk discourse such as those sketched at the beginning of this article and thereby add to the study of this subculture (e.g. Schröter 2014). Thirdly, with an increasing interest in multimodality (e.g. Machin 2010), CDA could contribute to a broader picture in of style and stylisation in punk, understanding image, sound and text as intertwined and in this interplay constituting punk discourse.

### Songs and Albums quoted

Band	Song	Year	Album/Label
Toxoplasma	<i>Krieg</i> <i>Schwarz Rot Braun</i>	1992	<i>Gut und Böse</i> (Album)/Agressive Rockproduktionen
Die Goldenen Zitronen & Easy Business & IQ	<i>80.000.000 Hooligans</i> <i>Die Menschen von Hoyerswerda</i>	1992	<i>80.000.000 Hooligans</i> (12“ Maxi Single)/Sub-Up-Records
Die Goldenen Zitronen	<i>Das Bißchen Totschlag</i>	1994	<i>Das Bißchen Totschlag</i> (Album)/Sub-Up Records
Die Goldenen Zitronen	<i>Flimmern</i> <i>Das Bananenlied</i>	2001	<i>Schafott zum Fahrstuhl</i> /Buback
Die Goldenen Zitronen	<i>Wenn ich ein Turnschuh wär</i>	2006	<i>Lenin</i> /Buback
Slime	<i>Mensch</i>	1992	<i>Viva La Muerte</i> (Album)/Aggressive Rockproduktionen
Slime	<i>Gewalt</i> <i>Goldene Türme</i>	1994	<i>Schweineherbst</i> (Album)/Indigo

	<i>Schweineherbst</i> <i>Der Tod ist ein Meister aus</i> <i>Deutschland</i>		
Atemnot	<i>Menschlichkeit</i>	1994	<i>Sie Oder Wir</i> (Album)/Red Rosetten Records
Normahl	<i>Keine Überdosis Deutschland</i>	1991	<i>Blumen im Müll</i> (Album)/SPV
Abwärts	<i>Hallo, ich heiß Adolf</i>	1991	<i>Nazis Raus</i> (various Artists, Sampler Album)/Weird System
Die Toten Hosen	<i>Sascha... ein aufrechter</i> <i>Deutscher</i>	1992	<i>Sascha – Ein Aufrechert Deutscher</i> (7" Single)/ Virgin
Die Ärzte	<i>Schrei nach Liebe</i>	1993	<i>Schrei Nach Liebe</i> (7" Single)/ Metronome
Alarmsignal	<i>Nazis nehmen uns die</i> <i>Arbeitsplätze weg</i>	2006	<i>Nazis nehmen uns die Arbeitsplätze</i> weg (Album)/Nix Gut Records

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### **Acknowledgements**

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### **Appendix: Quotes in the Original German**

- I. Das Recht auf Arbeitslosigkeit bei vollem Lohnausgleich!, Die Balkanisierung Deutschlands in den Grenzen des Heiligen Römischen Reiches Deutscher Nationen von 1237!, Die Totale Rückverdummung der Menschheit! (APPD, Anarchistische Pogo-Partei Deutschlands <http://www.appd-gdnk.de/>, last access 30-06-2014).
- II. (...) die Zuwanderung von Asylbewerbern als Teil einer globalen Migrationsbewegung, deren Ursachen in den klaffenden und zunehmenden ökonomischen Unterschieden zwischen den reichen Ländern im Norden und den armen im Süden der Welt lagen. (Herbert 2003, 273)
- III. Schließlich wähten sich gewaltbereite Minderheiten – in absurder Fehlinterpretation der Situation und ihrer eigenen Position - als Vertreter einer empörten, aber schweigenden Mehrheit. (Bade & Oltmer 2004, 108)
- IV. (...) daß im vergangenen Jahr zusätzlich 440 000 Menschen unter Berufung auf das Recht auf Asyl zu uns nach Deutschland gekommen sind, von denen die allermeisten nicht tatsächlich politisch verfolgt sind (...). (...) daß Monat für Monat in diesem Jahr 1993 50 000 unter Berufung auf das Recht auf Asyl, obwohl sie ganz überwiegend nicht politisch verfolgt sind, Aufnahme in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland suchen und für einen zu langen Zeitraum finden. (Wolfgang Schäuble (CDU), Deutscher Bundestag WP12/160, 13505)
- V. Dennoch gibt es bei vielen Menschen eine zunehmende Angst vor Überforderung und Wohlstandsverlusten durch die massenhafte mißbräuchliche Inanspruchnahme des Asylrechts. Und wer wollte bestreiten, daß es die gibt? (Hans-Ulrich Klose (SPD), Deutscher Bundestag WP12/160, 13508) (...) 438 161 Asylbewerber waren es im vergangenen Jahr, allein in Hamburg 20 460. Das sind etwa so viele, wie im vergangenen Jahr in Großbritannien Aufnahme gefunden haben – woraufhin dort das Asylrecht verschärft wurde. (Deutscher Bundestag WP12/160, 13509)
- VI. Wir alle wissen, daß die Kommunen es nicht mehr schaffen. Es gibt keine Wohnungen mehr, keine leerstehenden Häuser, keine Hotel- oder Heimplätze. (...) Von den Folgen aber muß geredet werden, die das alles für die eigene Bevölkerung hat. Wer z.B. in Hamburg in einem Stadtteil mit hohem Asylbewerberanteil lebt, spürt die Auswirkungen sehr direkt und sehr konkret. Die Menschen dort sind nicht etwa ausländerfeindlich, aber ihre Lebensverhältnisse verschlechtern sich oft in bedrückender Weise; sie fühlen sich bedroht, persönlich und sozial. (Hans-Ulrich Klose, Deutscher Bundestag WP12/160, 13509.)
- VII. Die Unsicherheit nimmt zu. Dies ist der Nährboden, auf dem Aggression und Protest wachsen und Fremde oft zum Sündenbock gemacht werden. (Wolfgang Schäuble, Deutscher Bundestag WP12/160, 13506)
- VIII. Wenn dies so ist, dann müssen wir diesen Nährboden bekämpfen, indem wir dieser Verunsicherung entgegenwirken. Wir schulden unseren Bürgern (...) eine Ordnung, die das friedliche Zusammenleben der Menschen sicherstellt. Nur wenn wir unseren Bürgern das Gefühl geben und bewahren, daß dieser (...) Staat in der Lage ist, eine solche Ordnung des Zusammenlebens zu garantieren, schaffen wir die notwendigen und unverzichtbaren Grundlagen für Toleranz und für entspanntes Miteinander von Deutschen und Ausländern in diesem Land. (Wolfgang Schäuble, Deutscher Bundestag WP12/160, 13506)
- IX. So kam man zu dem grotesken Schluss, die armen Teufel das Problem das gelöst werden muss. Ohne Scheinasylant folglich keine Gewalt, der Bürger wehrt sich doch nur, selber schuld (Die Goldenen Zitronen: *Die Bürger von Hoyerswerda 1992*).
- X. Unerwartet gab es den Kursus 'Gewalt sinnlich erleben' Nazis? Fast. Autonome, sogenannte selbsternannte Menschenfreunde, und schon fühlte man sich auch ein bißchen fremdenghaßt, sie hatten nämlich Angst, denn es flogen nein, keine Brandsätze, aber Eier, und die nicht zu knapp, aber sie blieben tapfer, sie würden



sich nicht beugen vor welchem Mob auch immer, und übrigens auch nicht vor Mißbräuchern oder Schmarotzern, der, wie sagt man, Flut eben – Letzteres sagten sie anderntags nicht zu laut und im sachlichen Ton, und mit vereinigten Kräften brachten sie ihr Gesetz durch (Die Goldenen Zitronen: Das bißchen Totschlag 1994).

- XI. Die wenigsten dieser Halbwüchsigen seien in rechtsextremen Parteien oder Verbänden organisiert, behaupten Verfassungsschützer. Die meisten gehörten zu den rund 6500 „schwachköpfigen, unterbelichteten Skinheads“, die, so Verfassungsschutz-Präsident Eckart Werthebach, als „Saufkumpane spontan ihre schrecklichen Taten begehen“. Typisch für das Abgleiten in die Glatzen-Szene seien, so Verfassungsschützer Uhrlau, (...) drei Voraussetzungen: ungünstige häusliche Verhältnisse, Alkoholismus oder Arbeitslosigkeit der Eltern, zerrüttete Ehen; mangelhafte Bildung durch niedrige Schulabschlüsse oder Lernschwierigkeiten; begrenzte Perspektiven im Arbeitsleben, Chancen allenfalls in handwerklichen Berufen. (*Der Spiegel*, 23/1993)
- XII. Der Sascha, der ist arbeitslos, was macht er ohne Arbeit bloß, er schneidet sich die Haare ab und pinkelt auf ein Judengrab (Die Toten Hosen: *Sascha... ein aufrechter Deutscher*, 1992).
- XIII. Er kennt sogar das Alphabet, weiß wo der Führerbunker steht. Nein, dieser Mann, das ist kein Depp, der Sascha ist ein deutscher REP. Er ist politisch informiert und weiß, daß jeder Fremde stört (Die Toten Hosen: *Sascha... ein aufrechter Deutscher*, 1992).
- XIV. Du bist wirklich saudumm (...) Alles muss man dir erklären, weil du wirklich gar nichts weißt (...) du hast nie gelernt dich artizukulieren (Die Ärzte, *Schrei nach Liebe*, 1993).
- XV. Im Kopf ist nicht viel und in der Hand liegt ein Stein und alle sind stolz Deutsche zu sein (Abwärts: *Hallo ich heiß Adolf* 1991).
- XVI. Du gehst nachts durch die Straßen, hast Angst, weißt auch warum, braune Schatten folgen dir, die Angst, die macht dich stumm, Parolen an den Wänden, die reichen längst nicht mehr, Es sind jetzt schon so viele und es werden immer mehr, und sie wollen Krieg (Toxoplasma, *Krieg* 1992).
- XVII. Deine Springerstiefel sehnen sich nach Zärtlichkeit (Die Ärzte, *Schrei nach Liebe* 1993).
- XVIII. Ja, der Sascha, der ist Deutscher, und deutsch sein, das ist schwer, und so deutsch wie der Sascha wird Abdul nimmermehr (...) Denn der Sascha, der ist Deutscher, und deutsch sein, das ist schwer, und so deutsch wie der Sascha ist man nicht nebenher (...) Ja, der Sascha, der ist Deutscher, und deutsch sein, das ist schwer, wer so deutsch wie der Sascha ist, der ist sonst gar nichts mehr (Die Toten Hosen: *Sascha... ein aufrechter Deutscher*, 1992).
- XIX. Ein jeder tut halt, was er kann, beim Thema ‚deutsche Gründlichkeit, da weiß er voll bescheid (Die Toten Hosen: *Sascha... ein aufrechter Deutscher*, 1992).
- XX. Deutschland einig Fascholand wird bald unser Land genannt, fast jede Nacht brennt bei uns ein Heim, bewacht von grünen Bullenschweinen, unanormale deutsche Leute helfen zu der Nazimeute (Atemlos, *Menschlichkeit*, 1994).
- XXI. Deutschland (...) kotzt sich aus, seinen alten braunen Brei (Slime: *Schweineherbst* 1993).
- XXII. Seh ich aus dem Fenster wird mir übel von dieser Heuchelei, Deutschland, alle schau sich hilflos um und wissen nicht warum und welchen Löchern die Ratten lagen, die hier marschieren und losschlagen, doch sie lagen nicht in Löchern rum, of sahn wir sie auf der Straße gehn und sie grüßten dich mit gestrecktem Arm –

du hast einfach weggesehen (...) und während sie immer mehr Menschen anzünden bist du noch immer am Reden, am Differenzieren (Slime: *Schweineherbst* 1993).

- XXIII. Vor gut fünfzig Jahren hat's schon einer probiert, die Sache ging daneben, Sascha hat's nicht kapiert (Die Toten Hosen: *Sascha... ein aufrechter Deutscher*, 1992).
- XXIV. Die Welt hat einen alten Feind, er ist wieder aufgewacht, der Geist von Hitler und seinem Reich hat dich in seiner Macht, die alten Parolen, die alten Sprüche und die alte Herrlichkeit, Deutschland, der Horror erwacht zu neuem Leben (...) Schwarz Rot Braun sind die Farben deiner Fahne (...) und du hast nichts dazugelernt (...) die Zeit läuft rückwärts statt nach vorne (...) wo Recht zu Unrecht wird, wird Widerstand zur Pflicht, Deutschland du magst stark sein, doch uns kriegst du nicht (Toxoplasma: *Schwarz Rot Braun*, 1992).
- XXV. Türken totgeschlagen, Vietnamesen umgebracht, Mordkommandos die sich Skinheads nennen, ziehen durch die Nacht, Judenfriedhöfe voll mit Nazischmierereien und darauf auch noch stolz ein Deutscher zu sein (Normahl *Keine Überdosis Deutschland* 1994).
- XXVI. Dann die Lügner, die sich von all dem distanzieren, aus Angst, im Ausland das Gesicht zu verlieren (Slime: *Gewalt* 1994).
- XXVII. Ja und dann (...) ging ein Ruck durch die deutsche Mannschaft; muß ja, das Gerede wurde lauter und lauter außerhalb des deutschen Planeten, also nichts wie: pack die Lichterkette ein, nimm dein kleines Schwesterlein, schweigen gegen den Hass in der schönen Weihnachtszeit (Die Goldenen Zitronen: *Das Bißchen Totschlag* 1994).
- XXVIII. Man versäumt auch nicht sauber zu unterscheiden, welche nutzlos und welche uns unnütz sind. Nützlich für uns sind, keine Frage, jene die schufteten für den Wohlstand der Herrenrasse. Unnütz die andern nicht mal verfolgt, fleddern sie die Taschen vom redlichen Volk (Die Goldenen Zitronen: *Die Bürger von Hoyerswerda* 1992).
- XXIX. Muss nicht zur Arbeit denn zum Glück schafft deutsches Arschloch in Fabrik, hab Kabelfernsehen, lieg im Bett, werd langsam wieder dick und fett, zahl weder Miete, Strom noch Müllabfuhr, das müssen dumme Deutsche nur (...). Ich liebe Deutschland – wo sonst auf der Welt gibt's für Asylbetrug noch Geld? Ist Deutschland pleite, fahr ich heim und sag: „Leb wohl du Nazischwein“ (taken from: <http://www.luebeck-kunterbunt.de/Justizelend/Volksverhetzung2.htm>).
- XXX. Im Jahre eins nach der Änderung des Grundgesetzartikels 16 scheint alles anders geworden zu sein in Deutschland. „Das Boot ist voll“ klingt inzwischen wie eine Kampfparole aus vergangenen Zeiten. „ASYLANTENSTRÖME“ fließen nicht länger über die Zeitungsseiten. *Die Zeit*, 01/07/1994, taken from: Jung et al 2000, p. 49.
- XXXI. (...) zumal es waren ja anständige Ausländer, steuerzahlende Möllner, fast wie du und ich (Die Goldenen Zitronen: *Das Bißchen Totschlag* 1994).
- XXXII. Es ist sehr einfach, es liegt auf der Hand, diese Menschen kommen hier in unser Land, weil wir sie um das ihre betrogen, es ihnen abgenommen und ausgesogen, sie folgten ihrem gestohlenen Leben, was uns reich gemacht und Überfluss gegeben (...) der Rest der Welt kriecht weil nach wie vor die Herrenrasse regiert (Slime: *Goldene Türme* 1994).
- XXXIII. Unsere Welt hier ist ein Parasit mit Übergewicht (...) Diese Welt ist nur ein Teil und ist nur deshalb so fett weil sie gestern wie heute den Rest der Welt fickt (Die Goldenen Zitronen: *Die Bürger von Hoyerswerda* 1992).

- XXXIV. Unsere Reaktion nach dem Neonazi-Riot in Rostock-Lichtenhagen war, die Deutschlandberichterstattung am Laufen zu halten. (*Jungle World* 24/2006).
- XXXV. Doch eine Sache die lässt uns echt verzagen, Warum unsere ausländischen Freunde und wir keine Arbeit haben, Nazis nehmen uns die Arbeitsplätze weg, keine Fremdarbeiter die braune Front is hier an Deck (Alarmsignal: *Nazis nehmen uns die Arbeitsplätze weg*, 2006).

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<sup>i</sup> Title of a song by the Hamburg-based punk band Die Golden Zitronen (1992).

<sup>ii</sup> Documentations list many more occurrences and victims of Neo-nazi violence in the early nineties: ‘Todesopfer rechter Gewalt seit 1990’, <http://www2.opfer-rechter-gewalt.de/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/opferinfo.pdf> (last access 17/05/2013). See also Erb & Kürthen 1997.

<sup>iii</sup> There may be more material that the author is unaware of: material which is less well documented, such as song lyrics by smaller bands who were influential more locally and whose song lyrics are not entered by a fan into a user-fed online song lyrics forum.

<sup>iv</sup> Note, though, what is described as ‘positive punk’ (straight edge, most influential in the USA) by Moore 2004, 320f.

<sup>v</sup> All translations are mine, MS. The original texts of quotes from German are provided in the appendix. The original quotes in the appendix are enumerated with Roman numbers which are indicated following the translation in the body text.

<sup>vi</sup> The author herself came across the text when in 1992 her mother found a copy of it in her pigeonhole at work (a big steel company) and brought it home – apparently a colleague at work had made copies and distributed them. A similar incident regarding this text is mentioned in *Der Spiegel* (49/1992), and two court trials in 1993 dealt, under the charge of incitement, with individuals who copied and distributed the same text, cf. <http://www.luebeck-kunterbunt.de/Justizelend/Volksverhetzung2.htm> (website includes citation of the full text, last access 08/07/2014 – the author does not share the opinion about the sentences issued by the courts which is stated here).

**Melani Schröter** is Associate Professor in German Linguistics at the Department of Modern Languages, University of Reading. Her main area of research is political discourse analysis as well as silence and absence in discourse and communication (see: *Silence and Concealment in Political Discourse*, John Benjamins 2013). She is also interested in the contrastive analysis of key words in public and political discourse across different languages and discourse communities. Her more recent interest in subcultural and defiant discourse manifested itself in a chapter about discourses of normality and denormalisation in German punk lyrics (volume ed. by *The Subcultures Network*, Manchester University Press 2014). Department of Modern Languages and European Studies, University of Reading, Whiteknights PO Box 218, Reading RG6 6AA, [m.schroeter@reading.ac.uk](mailto:m.schroeter@reading.ac.uk)