

#Pepe #völkisch #mega

Memes as Vehicles for New Right Ideology: Re- and De-contextualization as
a Digital Strategy



Dietz





Gebaut im Jahre 2018 ...

Alternative für Deutschland

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Young
alternative for
Germany:

*No fence is
illegal! #30
percentAfD
#BtwWahl2017
#Elections2017*

AGAINST UNLIMITED IMMIGRATION!

-Sitting Bull would vote for the AfD-



HOMELAND OR DEATH!

-Che Guevara would vote for the AfD!



outline



1. Theoretical
Background
2. Method
3. Findings of case
studies:
 - a. PEPE+ Alt-right
(US)
 - b. *new right*/AfD
— (Germany)

1. Theoretic interdisciplinary approach

V. BAZIL (2010:4) regarding the “clash with words over words”:

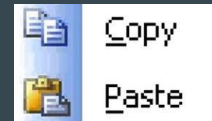
- labeling, euphemisms and occupation (= “a new interpretation of the denotation of the term together with its 'emotional charisma' (connotation)”)

L. SHIFMANN (2014) Meme features:

- content, form, and (stance) -macro proposition (meaning the overall topic/theme,)

M. SCHWARZ-FRIESEL/ M. CONSTEN (2014:217) Re-contextualization:

- separation of a word or a sentence from its initial context of meaning and its transference into another context. Thereby the original meaning is subject to a semantic constriction or extension or a fundamental alteration (for example via processes of attribute-transference)



2. Method

Explorative qualitative analysis of linguistic semantic and formal attributes of internet memes of:

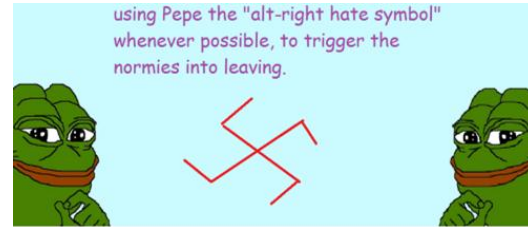
- a) alt-right (US)
- b) new-right (G)

Research Questions:

How are internet-memes (multimodals) used as vehicles for new right ideology in the US/ in Germany?

How does re- and decontextualization as a digital strategy function in order to evoke a shift in meaning?

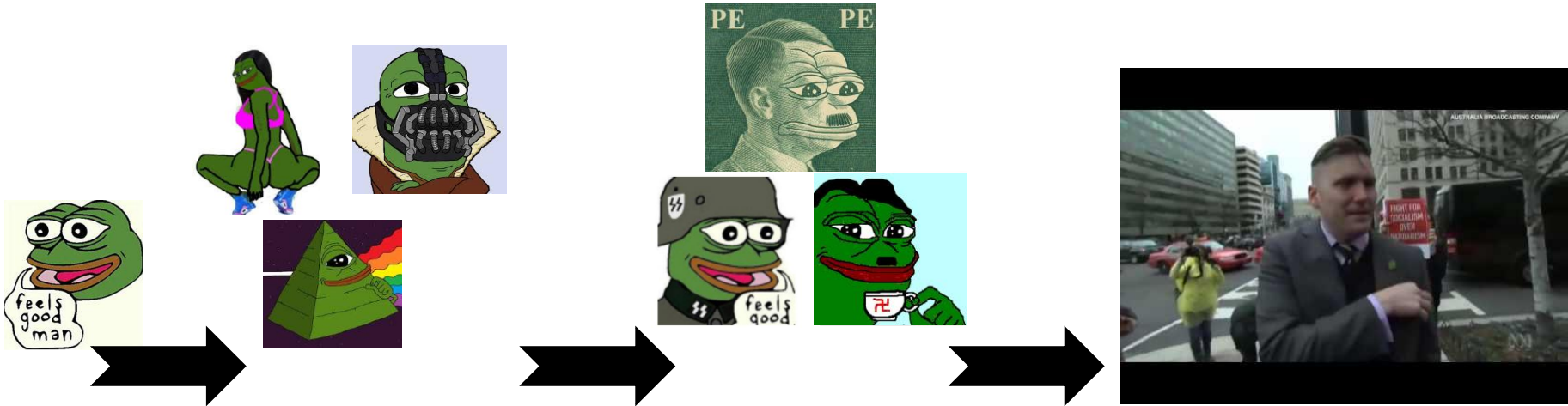
3.a) Findings: PEPE as a vehicle to convey ideology



3.a) Findings: □ PEPE the frog chronology



3.a) Findings: Special features of PEPE



Pepe as *exploitable* meme

→ semantic extension with intact form/content, changed macro proposition

hate/alt-right Pepe

→ conceptual shift with intact form/or macro proposition, changed content

Pepe=alt-right symbol

→ semantic constriction with intact form, changed macro proposition (changed connotation)

= successful revaluation of the denotation

(Pepe now occupied by new meaning=sign of the alt-right)



“Always hijack existing cultural memes in any way possible.”

Hijacking Culture

Always hijack existing cultural memes in any way possible. Don't worry if the meme was originally Jewish. It doesn't matter.

Cultural references and attachment of entertainment culture to Nazi concepts have the psychological purpose of removing it from the void of weirdness that it would naturally exist in, due to the way it has been dealt with by the culture thus far, and making it a part of the reader's world.

Through this method we are also able to use the existing culture to transmit our own ideas and agenda.

“Cultural references and attachment of entertainment culture to Nazi concepts have the psychological purpose of removing it from the void of weirdness [..] making it a part of the reader's world.”

“...we are able to use the existing culture to transmit our own ideas and agenda.”

3.b) Findings: *New right* in Germany (jAfD-twitter)

“You are not yourself when you’re not nationalist/folkish”



pop-cultural reference: SNICKERS Diva Ad (2013)

form: 4 picture comic PEPE

content: Sad Pepe surrounded by woman with headscarf and coloured man, eats AfD-bar= sky clears up, F. Petry laughs

original MP: **YOU ARE NOT YOURSELF WHEN YOU ARE HUNGRY**

de-contextualized MP: **AFD MAKES YOU TRUE TO YOURSELF BY MAKING YOU NATIONALIST**

source:

<https://twitter.com/alexfromg/status/779394355576573952>

result: Conceptual shift with attribute-transference

3.b) *New right* in Germany (4chan/pol/), reddit/r/germany)

"loving your homeland is not a crime"

pop-cultural reference: the Smurfs, anti racist quote

form: anti racist stencil ("no one is illegal"), party logo, AfD Papa Smurf

content: intertextual reference "Fascism is not an opinion, but a crime." B. Brecht (original MP)

de-contextualized MP: **AFD STANDS FOR THE LOVE OF ONE'S HOMELAND, THAT IS THREATENED BY THE EVIL IN THE WORLD (Gargamel)**

result: Conceptual shift with contrary statement of the anti racist slogan and the intertext. Brecht reference



source:

<https://archive.4plebs.org/pol/thread/113314270/>

3.b) Findings: New right in Germany (AfD-fb, twitter)

“Sophie Scholl would vote for the AfD”



cultural reference: antifascist german resistance-fighter

form: political campaign poster

content: Quote on a blue background, portrait photo, slogan

original MP: RESISTANCE AGAINST NATIONAL SOCIALISM

de-contextualized MP: AfD STANDS FOR JUST RESISTANCE

result: Fundamental alteration of the MP via attempted attribute-transfer, NS-comparison

source: <http://www.endstation-rechts.de/news/kategorie/afd/artikel/bitte-zerfleischt-euch-afd-verbaende-streiten-ueber-sophie-scholl-propaganda.html>

4. Conclusion

The analysed german *new right* memes seem to lack on various levels:

- not finding **exploitables** with a certain degree of popularity, and without salient **(pop-)cultural reference** for re- and decontextualisation.

Memes are well suited as vehicles to convey ideological content, enabling a shift in meaning (successful revaluation of the denotation) due to the inherent feature of replication via remix (re- and decontextualisation).

- ideological content is reproduced in a **trivialized and normalizing** manner due to a “humorous” viral dissemination of some explicit and possibly tabooed contents.



source:

https://www.reddit.com/r/The_Farage/comments/6ljn3q/brexit_pepe_meme/

Thank you for your
attention.

r.rocha.dietz@gmail.com
@r3cur4



source: <https://i.redd.it/fmebixq91bpy.png>

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https://www.reddit.com/r/The_Donald/comments/5oe3q9/enjoy_the_last_hope_for_every_german_frau_kek/

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<http://www.civilgamers.com/forum/m/18343296/viewthread/29369031-german-afd-party-using-pepe-memes/page/1>

Pepe in Politics



USA:
Donald
Trump,
11/2016



Russia:
Wladimir
Putin,
2018



Nether-
lands:
Geert
Wilders,
03/2017



France:
Marine
LePen,
05/2017



Germany:
Frauke
Petry,
09/2017

source:
<https://archive.4plebs.org/pol/thread/113314270/>