German discourses of demographic change are characterized by alarmist scenarios. Especially since the turn of the millennium, a growing number of publications address population aging and shrinking by depicting mostly dystopian future scenarios. The rather old “fear of population decline” (Teitelbaum & Winter 1985) found its application in contemporary neo-liberal governmentality, focusing on activation and entrepreneurship of the self in a ”neo-social society” (Lessenich 2008; Bröckling 2007). Although most demographers alert to the fact that population projections should not be interpreted as prognoses, there are several ”experts” mispresenting the discourse as irrefutable knowledge. Their hegemonical discourse (mis-)uses demography in the mass media in order to prompt individuals to react on ”objective” scientific facts. It often includes the figures of ”experts” and ”prophets” that Foucault (2011) developed in his late-works as types of ”veridiction”, as a Foucaultian discourse analysis of a corpus consisting of 2900 press articles from 2000-2011 has shown (Messerschmidt 2014). The ”prophets” misinterpret population projections as ”objective” statements about the future of society and camouflage their own normative positions. According to their statements, the state will soon no longer be able to provide social security systems and the society will suffer under a ”generation-conflict”. Migrants would replace ”the Germans”, who doubtlessly ”will become extinct in 6 generations”, as the major tabloid BILD wrote already in 2006, referring to Prof. Herwig Birg as a demographic ”expert”, whose questionable but powerful writings (2001, 2005) follow a strong apocalyptic tendency. This tendency is shared by the influential ”spin doctoring” of lobby organizations and think tanks, which expects citizens to care about private pension-, health-, and care-insurances as well as ”correct” their reproductive behavior towards fulfilling the national conservative expectations of national-conservative pro-natalists like Birg. The careful empirical discourse analysis of such veridiction regimes opens up a space for alternative post-alarmist discourses.

Keywords: Demographic Change, Veridiction, Foucaultian Discourse Analysis.