

Journalism Research

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HERBERT VON HALEM VERLAG

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Editorial

The seismic shift that digitalization has brought about in the media and cultural landscape has thrown journalism into crisis - one that is transforming the way the profession has always been perceived based on its now-obsolete historic origins. As a result, the conventional concept of journalistic professionalism needs to be re-examined: What has to stay, because the role of journalism in public life remains vital for the survival of modern societies? And what has to change, or is already changing?

As it works through this crisis and renewal, professional journalism needs the support of journalism studies more than ever. Not only does this academic discipline display the intellectual breadth and bravery to produce innovation - it firmly believes that public life shaped by qualified journalism is essential if complex societies are to achieve self-regulation.

A journal of journalism studies

The English-speaking world has long enjoyed a wide range of journals for journalism studies, and even specific academic bodies for sub-topics as diverse as the history of journalism, professional ethics in journalism, and literary journalism. German-speaking countries, however, have so far failed to produce a journalism journal that brings the discipline's profile into sharper focus, so German-speaking journalism researchers are forced to rely on media studies journals with no practical relevance, or on journals on journalism practice.

It is this gap that "Journalistik" is intended to fill. The journal's launch has been made possible by funding from the Herbert von Halem-Verlag and Stiftung Presse-Haus NRZ.

Although "Journalistik" is currently intended as an online publication, it will be published on fixed dates with quotable issue numbers, just like a traditional academic journal. Together with the publisher, we are considering printing a "best of" volume once sufficient articles have been gathered.

Academic pluralism

The normative, ontological tradition of German newspaper studies meant that there was a lack of empirical, analytical research until well into the 1970s. Since the 1990s, however, the opposite has been true - a clear majority of publications in communication studies is now based on models from natural and technical sciences. On the other hand, there is also a lack of historic, hermeneutic texts shaped by a practical interest in knowledge and understanding (Jürgen Habermas) not only in society, but also in journalism and the academic study that accompanies it. Especially in the environment in which we find ourselves today, contributions like this are very important alongside empirical, analytical, variable-based research reports (Gerhard Maletzke), given the significant need

for self-understanding in professional journalism, so unsettled by the digital transformation of media and culture.

“Publisher’s principle”

Most periodicals in communication studies now use the principle of double blind reviewing. Although this selection process undoubtedly has some benefits, its hegemony is the subject of growing criticism, not least because anonymity reduces the level of care taken with appraisals and makes it unclear who is responsible for publication decisions. As a result, a journalistic insight that has been incorporated into media law – namely that named responsibility is the most effective way to ensure journalistic quality – has ceased to apply. Yet a discipline that claims to support professional journalism cannot afford to forget this doctrine. Another disadvantage of the practice is the fear that only particular friends or opponents of the person publishing have a chance of selection as external reviewers. The result is excessive care in texts that are submitted and a certain uniformity that goes against the grain of innovative academic work. In order to prevent these disadvantages from playing a role and to maintain pluralism through the decision-making processes related to academic journalism, “Journalistik” has been deliberately designed as a publisher’s journal, not linked to specific academic institutions.

Bilingualism

The vocational subject of journalism, whose relationship with communication studies is comparable with that between medicine and biology, has long been established in the English-speaking world. In German-speaking countries, however, it is newer and still relatively small. Add to this the fact that English is undoubtedly the lingua franca of science worldwide, giving German-language publications a very limited international audience, and it becomes clear that journalism studies needs a link to the English-speaking world. Research conducted in German needs to be accessible in English too in order to attract international attention, although the German-language original also needs to remain available if journalism studies is to remain part of the non-academic media world and help to prevent the erosion of cultural diversity. Our concept stipulates an English version with identical content alongside the German version in order to compensate for the lack of peer review with regard to authors’ qualification objectives.

Decision-making criteria and process

The crucial criteria for the articles chosen are relevance to professional journalism and its role in public life, and the academic qualities of innovation, inventiveness, concise questions, conclusive arguments, verifiable data, traceable sources and, last but not least, clear language. Taking this as our starting point, we aim to achieve the widest possible range of subjects and problems, perspectives and methods, theoretical approaches and practical relevance. Both empirical, analytical

and historic, hermeneutic articles and essays are welcome.

Publication decisions are made jointly by the publishers and are their responsibility. We hope that the group of publishers contains a representative mix in terms of age, gender, nationality and academic profile.

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How does constructive journalism work?

Putting a new reporting pattern to the test

by Klaus Meier

This paper will soon appear in an English-language journal. You will find the link here once it is published.

Klaus Meier, Prof. Dr., 1968, studied Journalism at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt. For some years, he has been working on constructive journalism, conducting teaching and research projects on the topic in cooperation with editorial offices and supervising theses. E-Mail to the author

How journalists can learn from Erich Kästner

The blurred line between journalism and literature in the work of Erich Kästner

by Gunter Reus

Abstract: Reading Kästner can not only also be productive for journalism as a science, but for journalism itself. Committed to a subjective view of things, features articles have always pushed the boundaries of the system (and are still seen in Germany as superficial and flighty as a result), but no other journalist in the 20th Century approached the genre as consistently as Erich Kästner.

“I wander down Johannisgasse and think: it won’t be that bad. Up there, on Augustusplatz, the black mass is standing, pressed together ... Suddenly they start to stagger! A shot! Screams! A series of shots! The crowd comes flooding into the street as if crazed. Someone falls. Others fall on top. On! On! [...] Police rush out of Grimmaische Straße on horseback: with flashing swords and tight reins they gallop across the square. The stragglers among the demonstrators run from them, screaming, their hands in the air [...] St. Jakob Hospital ... The gate is locked. We show our papers. Enter ... Smell of carbolic soap. Secretive hurrying. Stretchers carrying the wounded are squeezed up the steps. Empty stretchers come back out. They are urgently needed. [...] In the polyclinic, smaller wounds are being dressed. [...] A teenage boy is brought into the makeshift ward by a sister. He looks very frightened. Shot in the knee.” (KK: 46-48)[i]

The boy is not called Emil Tischbein, and those hurtling through the streets of Berlin are not child detectives. It is June 6, 1923, and the police are chasing unemployed men through the streets of Leipzig. Four people die in the melee. The report by 24-year-old Erich Kästner is published two days later in the *Neue Leipziger Zeitung*.

Erich Kästner as a reporter? A newspaper journalist and eye-witness working in the public interest? That certainly jars with the image of the author described in so many biographies of Kästner.[ii] In those, he is depicted as the father of children’s literature, who used his “particular access to childish directness” (Hanuschek 2010: 143) to invent characters that resonate around the world to this day; a man who advocated respect for young people and encouraged them to live free from subservience (cf. e.g. Doderer 2002). On the other hand, many biographers see him as a grey-haired narcissist with a disturbed relationship with female directness; who collected and discarded women at will, like so many ideas for his novels; who was not interested in what was happening outside, but in himself; who remained a child his whole life, fixated on his mother and unable to form any other

relationship; a classic case of Peter Pan syndrome (cf. Hanuschek 2010: 43); a “petit bourgeois with wild erotic tendencies” (Schneyder 1982: 110).

Our image of Kästner also includes that of the “useful author” (Schneyder 1982), whose focus is not merely on himself, but who placed great emphasis on morality; whose work as a satirist and comedian rails against all that is bad about humans. This Kästner is the author of pamphlets deploring war and stupidity, writing texts so sharp-tongued and morally rigorous that they take the reader’s breath away even today.

This moralist is antagonized and pursued by the political right as “divisive” and a “cultural Bolshevik” (according to Alfred-Ingemar Berndt, Head of the Literature Department of the Propaganda Ministry, in 1939, quoted in Görtz and Sarkowicz 1998: 222). And we must also remember the Erich Kästner who refused to leave Germany in 1933 despite all that was going on, preferring to struggle through the years of dictatorship (cf. Görtz and Sarkowicz 1998: 163-249 for more detail). We also remember the writer who produced comedy novels after 1933 (cf. Hanuschek 2010: 212-266 for more detail) and films (cf. Tornow 1989); a man considered so harmless and non-political that he earned the nickname “the Heinz Rühmann of literature” (quoted in Bemann 1999: 253).[iii]

As a poet, Kästner enhanced the immaculate form of his poems with a touch of ironic melancholy, achieving unparalleled sales figures. Yet the gatekeepers of post-war German philology long prevented him from entering the pantheon of literature (cf. Bemann 1999: 368; Görtz and Sarkowicz 1998: 326). The situation was not improved by criticism from the left in the period around 1968 (cf. Doderer 2002: 26). Even during the Weimar Republic, Kästner was not only hated by the political right, but also the subject of animosity from Marxist critics. Walter Benjamin, for example, claimed that his “petit bourgeois” poems would do nothing more than make “the kneaded dough of private opinion rise”. According to Benjamin, like Walter Mehring or Kurt Tucholsky, Kästner was nothing more than part of a “bourgeois sign of disintegration” (Benjamin 1980: 280): “The rumbling in this verse is less like revolution and more like a bad case of wind. [...] Kästner’s poems do nothing to improve the atmosphere.” (Benjamin 1980: 283)

All these different sides of Erich Kästner come together to form our image of him as an author. But even that is not the whole story. Erich Kästner is not just a children’s author; not just a poet and harmless humorist; not just a novelist and screenwriter; not just a satirist, pamphleteer and teacher; not just a narcissist and moralist; not just an anti-militarist and melancholic. The author is something more - something that is barely mentioned in all the treatises on his work, yet still deserves to be acknowledged. Erich Kästner is a witness of his time who wrote up-to-the-minute reports for the mass media not, like so many authors, for the money, but by conviction. Just as he wrote his literary texts in line with journalistic criteria, he also gave a literary touch to his journalism. In doing so, he went against the grain of the German tradition, in which the two genres are usually clearly separated and apportioned very different values.

Erich Kästner is the “*écrivain journaliste*” (Brons 2002)[iv] who brought together the fields of

journalism and literature through his own belief and made the principle of the public eye an axiom – not only in his work as a young reporter in Leipzig, but throughout his life. This paper aims to demonstrate this.

A useful eye-witness

Horst Pöttker (2010: 114) defined the public sphere as “the highest possible level of transparency and unrestricted communication”. Its role is to enable self-regulation in democratic societies with complex social structures and a division of labor (cf. also Pöttker 1998: 236). The public sphere is a place to freely trade and exchange information on “events and situations” that are “outside the horizon of immediate perception” for some groups (2010: 114). Pöttker describes creating and filling a space like this as the “constitutive role” (1998: 237) of journalism. It enables people to “participate rationally in political decision-making processes and free markets”, while also permitting society to subject “central governing institutions” (e.g. in politics, business or science) to “public scrutiny” (2010: 114).

Creating a public sphere thus means shedding light on situations and processes that would otherwise have remained hidden – and reaching as many people (“the public”) as possible. These two concepts can be seen throughout Kästner’s journalism.

Born into a relatively poor family in 1899[v], Kästner decides to become a teacher early on. During his teacher training in Dresden, however, he is called up to the forces in 1917. Although the war ends before he can be sent to the front, his time spent in officer training is enough to create a lifelong hatred of uniforms, drill and the destruction of personality of army life, ultimately causing him to drop out of teacher training. Yet he continues to see himself as an educator (“The satirical authors are teachers. Crammers. Masters of further education.” (WF: 129). Kästner still wants to teach, but his audience will now be the public. In 1919, he begins frequenting lectures on German and French literature at the University of Leipzig, as well as attending classes at Karl Bücher’s innovative Institute of Newspaper Studies (cf. Bemmann 1999: 48), founded just three years before. The combination of literary and journalistic ambition soon becomes clear as Kästner publishes his first poems and press articles. In 1923 he begins working as a freelance journalist, predominantly for the *Neue Leipziger Zeitung (NLZ)*, and just a year later is appointed editor at *Leipziger Verlagsdruckerei*, initially taking charge of the publisher’s entertainment magazine. Although he switches to the politics desk of the *NLZ* in 1926, having completed his doctorate, his critical comments on current events do not go down well with the publisher.

Attempts are made to get rid of him, and when a scandal is whipped up about the controversial poem “Evening song of the chamber virtuoso”, the publisher uses it as an excuse to terminate his contract. Kästner uses the incident as a springboard and moves to Berlin as a freelance theatre critic and cultural correspondent for the *NLZ*. But he has also long been working for other magazines and newspapers. His aim is clear – he wants to make a name for himself as a journalist in the Weimar

Republic; he wants to be in the public sphere. As he writes in a letter to his mother in November 1926: “When I am 30 years old, I want people to know my name. I want to be respected by 35. And even a bit famous by 40” (quoted in Hanuschek 2010: 93)

His plan works. It does not take long for him to make his name, writing for publications as diverse as *Weltbühne*, *Uhu*, *Simplicissimus*, *Tagebuch*, the *Berliner Tageblatt* and the *Vossische Zeitung*. Although he also writes reviews and essays on the day’s events, Kästner’s main focus is on poems that show the age and its people in a new light. His poems are inspired by newspaper reports and read like journalistic comments on the day’s events – particularly the poems he publishes every week from June 1928 to April 1930 in the left-wing, democratic *Montag Morgen* (cf. Hanuschek 2010: 121). Many of these newspaper poems are included in the four poetry compilations he releases in quick succession up until 1932[vi], achieving sales figures beyond the wildest dreams of modern poets.[vii]

Kästner’s aim is to reach as many readers as possible – “to please the people” (as he said in a discussion with Hermann Kesten, indirectly quoted in Bemann 1999: 346; cf. also Brons 2002: 62). Although, like any author, he is also interested in personal success, his undeniable goal is also to create a public sphere, a time reference, a space for communication accessible to everyone. He believed that literature should have a use, creating transparency around the events of its time. On March 28, 1929, he writes in the *Literarische Welt*[viii]:

“Luckily, there are a dozen or two dozen poets – I almost hope I am among them –, who are trying to keep poetry alive. The audience can read and listen to their verse without falling asleep, because it is of emotional use. It has been written down during contact with the joy and sorrow of the present day; and is intended for anyone who is professionally involved with the present day. The name ‘poetry of use’ has been coined for this type of poem [...]. Verses that cannot be used by contemporaries in any way are merely rhyming games, nothing more. [...] Poets have a purpose once again.” (ZH: 88)

Gradually, he begins to discover other media that can help him to meet his desire for poetry inspired by his own eye-witness accounts (Doderer 2002: 44), and tries to achieve “optimum multimedia use” (Schikorsky 1999: 73). The contemporary poetry that stemmed from his journalism is transformed into chansons for cabaret. In 1929, he writes the radio play “Life in these times” for the broadcaster Breslau, making use of his poems once again. Numerous theaters later stage the play. “Kästner gramophone records” (cf. Hanuschek 2010: 123) begin to appear from 1930. Kästner holds readings in department stores and libraries – a form of public performance that is quite new at the time (cf. Hanuschek 2010: 149). He also publishes his novel “Going to the Dogs” (1931) and enjoys success as a children’s author, with “Emil and the Detectives” (1929) performed in numerous theaters and made into a film. The “écrivain journaliste” has a very systematic way of keeping tabs on his success in the various fields, working regularly for a range of media and in 1928 opening his own “sales office” complete with secretary (cf. Bemann 1999: 98; on self-promotion cf. Brons 2002: 111-216). Having long become a successful author and public figure, Kästner now also takes on an official role, campaigning against censorship, the Protection of the Republic Act (Republikschutzgesetz) and the

Emergency Press Decree (Pressenotverordnung) as a member of the “Schutzverband deutscher Schriftsteller” (Protective Association of German Authors) and “Kampfkomitee für die Freiheit des Schrifttums” (Fighting Committee for Free Literature) (Görtz und Sarkowicz 1998: 146). In the lead-up to the Reichstag elections in 1932, he signs an “urgent appeal” against the National Socialist Party, which is publicized on billboards (cf. Hanuschek 2010: 212).

Despite this work, he underestimates the Nazis and their barbarity (cf. Bemmann 1999: 217; Hanuschek 2010: 212). He looks on in disbelief as his books are burned on May 10, 1933, and is arrested and interrogated by the Gestapo in December of the same year. But Kästner decides against leaving Germany, for reasons he is to explain under the heading “Shrewd but still brave” in the youth magazine *Pinguin* in January 1946. Again, his decision is based on journalistic considerations - he believes that he has a duty to report as an eye-witness (cf. also Enderle 1966: 62; Schneyder 1982: 137f.; Görtz and Sarkowicz 1998: 173f.):

“All Americans who have had to deal with me officially have asked me why I stayed in Germany even though my work was banned for almost twelve years. [...] And not all Americans who asked me officially approved of or understood my answer. I said to them: “An author wants to and must experience how the people to whom he belongs bear their fate in difficult times. Going abroad then is only justified when one’s life is in acute danger. In addition, it is a professional obligation to take any risk, if it enables one to remain an eye-witness and to make written records one day.”” (WF: 25)

But despite the best of intentions, Kästner is unable to work as a journalist in Germany between 1933 and 1945 - nor does he write about his experiences during this period later. It is a failure on his part. In the foreword to “Notabene 45. Ein Tagebuch” (1961) - a diary that contains only sporadic entries for the period between 1941 and 1945, concentrating instead on his escape towards the end of the war - Kästner admits that he has failed in his duty to report as an eye-witness:

“I can no longer remember why I broke off my work so quickly, and did so three times. Apart from all kinds of reasons that can no longer be found, the fact that everyday life is a boring affair, even during war and terror, despite the black sensations one endures, must have played a role. Simply accepting and surviving it is hard enough. Keeping accounts of it on time, year after year, required more patience than I have.” (SB: 303)

It is a strange explanation - and even stranger given the fact that, after the war, Kästner polished and edited his diary to make it an ideal basis for journalistic work (cf. in more detail Görtz and Sarkowicz 1998: 249 and afterword of SB: 710f., 794; also Hanuschek 2010: 311-317). Indeed, Kästner adjusts to life under the regime better than one would expect of such a vehement anti-fascist and anti-militarist. There is undoubtedly a shadow over Kästner from 1933 onwards as, although his work is banned in Germany, he is able to earn a decent living throughout the war from film adaptations of his work abroad and 26 translations of his books (cf. Hanuschek 2010: 225). The Nazi regime even leaves him in relative peace to work as a novelist, which he does prolifically for a considerable period (cf. Hanuschek 2010: 228). He never writes a positive work about the Nazis and is certainly courageous, writing “more than audaciously” (Görtz and Sarkowicz 1998: 223) under a

pseudonym, even within Germany. At the same time, he makes multiple attempts to be included in the Reichsschrifttumskammer (Imperial Chamber of Literature) and, in July 1942, is awarded “special dispensation for professional practice” under the pseudonym Berthold Bürger, when Goebbels is looking for a screenwriter for the film “Münchhausen”. Once his work on the film is completed in 1943, however, the Nazis ban him from working as a writer at all, including publishing abroad (cf. in detail Görtz and Sarkowicz 1998: 227-235).

Kästner allows the regime to use him more than he would later admit to himself and others. Despite this, it is to his credit that his dedication to the principles of a democratic public sphere immediately returns after 1945. Having fled through Tyrol to Bavaria, he takes on management of the culture section of the *Neue Zeitung* (a very high-circulation paper published by the US military government) that October. He is to remain in this post until 1948, and to continue as an author for the paper until 1953. From 1946, he also publishes the youth magazine *Pinguin*. In an article entitled “Everyday stuff” in July, he explains his return to journalism and once again emphasizes how important he feels it is to create a public discourse, create transparency about the happenings of the day, and make it possible for people to behave socially:

“Why do I slave away instead of simply strolling in the woods with my delicate hands entwined behind my back? Someone has to do all the everyday stuff, and because there are not enough people who want and are able to. We gain nothing from the fact that poets now write heavy novels about war. The books will be printed and read in two years’ time, if paper is available then, and until then – heavens! – until then the world, including Europe, of which Germany lies at the heart, might have burst open and been minced up. Anyone who now stands aside instead of getting involved must have stronger nerves than I do. Anyone who thinks about his Collected Works instead of his daily work must reconcile it with his conscience.” (WF: 82)

It is the start of a very prolific period for Kästner. He writes observations on culture and society for newspapers and magazines, begins working as a cabaret writer, screenwriter and playwright again, and publishes children’s books. He also enters public life again, holding speeches and taking on the role of President of PEN, honored and respected both in Germany and abroad. With even greater dedication than before 1933, he campaigns against militarization and rearmament (cf. “Retrospective preliminary remarks”, WF: 192), as well as against nuclear proliferation and burgeoning right-wing tendencies. In a speech at Zirkus Krone in 1958, he attacks Adenauer and Strauß. In another on Munich’s Königsplatz, he speaks to opponents of nuclear weapons at their Easter March 1961 (SB: 662-667). In 1968, he takes part in a demonstration against the Vietnam War. But then his enthusiasm begins to wane. “Now I sit at the window, armed with a whisky, enjoy the view of the fields and garden (roses!) and marvel.” (in a letter to Friedrich Michael, July 21, 1970, DN: 507). An alcoholic in his later years, Erich Kästner dies of cancer in Munich in 1974.

Inalienable demands

“There are no more poets,” wrote Kästner in an obituary for Rainer Maria Rilke in the *NLZ* on December 30, 1926. “There are only writers.” (SB: 52f.) Perhaps he was thinking even then of the amalgamation of literature and journalism that would characterize his life’s work. Not that belletristic authors who have a public profile and are involved in society are particularly rare – but Kästner still stands out. After all, German literary history has barely produced any other examples of authors who, in their commitment to “unrestricted communication” (Pöttker 2010: 114), orientate themselves so closely on journalistic quality criteria even in their literary works.

It is difficult to define exactly what makes high-quality journalism. It is a bundle of normative attributes with different interests behind them – the expectations of democratic theory, the expectations of the media consumers, profit expectations of the media companies, and the experience and views of the journalists (cf. Meier 2007: 225; Ruß-Mohl 1992). All these interests come together, compete with one another, and are subject to processes of transformation. However, both researchers and practitioners (cf. Wellbrock and Klein 2014) agree on a range of quality criteria that the “profession for public discourse” (Pöttker 2010) needs in order to fulfil its “constitutive role” (Pöttker 1998: 237). They include the following:[ix]

- **Topicality** = up-to-date information; also includes how useful the information is in informing the consumers’ actions and decisions (“actus”);
- **Accuracy** = statements and facts are consistent, except in satirical formats, for example, which deliberately distort them;
- **Credibility** and **authenticity** = sincerity, trustworthiness; an approach that makes every effort to reflect reality;
- **Fairness** and **consideration of personality** = individuals affected by the reporting are handled with respect;
- **Balance** and **completeness** = depth of research, accuracy of observation, all important aspects are taken into account;
- **Independence** = journalists are free from external influences and interests;
- **Impartiality, objectivity** = distance from the object in the reporting, reporting of facts, no siding with particular interest groups, except in comment pieces
- **Comprehensibility** = information is presented in a clear and concise way that everyone can understand;
- **Usefulness, value** = the information can be used in the consumers’ everyday lives;
- **Aesthetics** and **attractiveness, sensuality** = a form of presentation that attracts interest and attention and looks good;
- **Entertainment value** = presentation that is not too complex and is considered pleasant;
- **Originality** = a particular identity, creative features that make the provision stand out from other sources of information;
- **Transparency** and **reflexivity** = insight into methods and working conditions, including the fallibility and limitations of journalists; quotation of sources;
- **Interactivity** = a willingness to discuss with the media’s audience;

- **Variety and universality** = a wealth of topics and perspectives.[x]

With only a few exceptions,[xi] all these quality criteria can be found in Kästner's work as a journalist. But what makes the author truly special is the fact that they are also found in his fiction, and especially in his poetry.

The most obvious criterion is **topicality** (including **relevance**). Werner Schneyder (1982: 165) notes that, among Kästner's work, there is "barely anything that represents an occurrence of daily political or regional relevance". If at all, this may apply to his straightforward reporting, but there are examples to disprove even this. One is the report on the demonstration on June 6, 1923 (KK: 46-48), mentioned at the beginning of this article; another is a mood piece in which Kästner captures opinions on the referendum on the expropriation of the princes in front of an advertising hoarding in Leipzig in June 1926 ("Around the hoardings". KK: 252-253). Schneyder is wrong to imply that Kästner generally does not often refer to daily politics or to regional events that directly affect people. In fact, Kästner frequently does just that, right from his time as an editor in Leipzig. In more than a dozen articles for the *NLZ*, he takes on both the Mayor of Leipzig and politicians in Berlin (cf. in detail Brons 2002: 223-243). The topics he tackles during this period are as wide-ranging as the murder of a worker in Germersheim by a French officer (KK: 268-269), the ban on the film "Battleship Potemkin" (KK: 278-279), disarmament negotiations in Geneva (KK: 282-283), and Mussolini (KK: 287-289).

On July 6, 1927, Kästner begins his work for the *Weltbühne* ("Kirche und Radio"; SB: 37-38) with an article unambiguously in the style of "day-to-day journalism", as his biographer Helga Bemann (1999: 69) writes. His features from the streets and everyday life in Berlin (cf. GG 1 und Schikorsky 1999: 44f.) and his large number of reviews (cf. GG 2) on plays and films up until 1933 (cf. also Zonneveld 1991) also shine a light on the times and serve as examples of his topical journalism. Interestingly, Kästner himself recommends that theaters learn from the journalist qualities of topicality, research and **completeness**, highlighting the "advantages of reporting" ("The political melodrama", November 28, 1930; GG 2: 253) and its "authenticity" ("Dramatic reporting", December 16, 1928; GG 2: 150) on the stage (cf. Zonneveld 1991: 65-71) in the *NLZ*.

Working again after 1945, Kästner continues to track what he had once referred to as "problems of chronic topicality" ("Yesterday's dictatorship", *NLZ*, August 24, 1926, SB: 41). In the *Neue Zeitung*, he writes about the living conditions and food situation in the ruins of Munich and tackles subjects like the theory of collective guilt, the Allies' demolition policy, and cultural reconstruction (cf. Wagener 2003; Schikorski 1999: 118f.). He attends the Nuremberg Trials on November 23, 1945 ("Beams of light from Nuremberg", SB: 493-500) and, in early February, reports on the presentation of a film made by US camera teams in concentration camps ("The worth and worthlessness of man", February 4, 1946, WF: 67-71).

Kästner's poems cover just as wide a range of contemporary subjects - something that is certainly

not typical of poets. Indeed, the “contemporary and newspaper poet” (Bemmann 1999: 69) adopts the journalistic category of “topicality” (albeit with a moralistic tone) in poetry, before transferring his poetry back into the journalistic medium of the press, and finally publishing it in book form. After publication of Kästner’s fourth volume of poetry, “Singing between two stools”, the critic of *Die Literatur* magazine writes the following:

“He looks at the private life of the economic crisis, at the refuse of the bankrupt profit economy, into the bulging eyes of violence. In effective verses that set themselves to music as soon as they are read, he opens the reader’s eyes to the inconsequence of himself and others. Unremarkable newspaper notices become reporting ballads [...]” (quoted in Bemmann 1999: 195)

Many of these texts are written as “comment poems” for Leopold Schwarzschild’s weekly *Montag Morgen*. Once a week for almost two years, the paper publishes a poem by Kästner, usually based on what he has read in the news. The more than 100 texts touch on everything from sporting events to the weather and the stock exchange, from colorful events and funny stories to “Coalition talks by Imperial Chancellor Hermann Müller” (Hanuschek 2010: 121), from debates in the League of Nations to the “Chorale of the Ruhr barons” (cf. Bemmann 1999: 126f.). „Plus que toute autre collaboration, celle de Kästner au Montag Morgen ,collait’ à l’actualité“, writes Brons (2002: 167). One example of his many forays into day-to-day politics is an ironic comment poem on the Reichstag’s postponing the construction of a second armored cruiser just six days before passing its annual budget:

“Get the cruiser! We need it.

And do not threaten with the government finances.

Those who have ships, gain colonies.

We could plant the unemployed there

In larger batches.

Then we would be rid of the socialists.

We send them overseas.

There would be space there. The world is large.

Now nothing will come of it. What to do...

Farewell, armored cruiser B!”

(February 24, 1930, ZH: 345)

As another perfect example of reporting on daily politics, on October 1, 1930, *Weltbühne* publishes Kästner's poem "Singing on the far right" (ZH: 248-249), a strong attack on the National Socialists following their success in the Reichstag elections on September 14.

After the war, Kästner's comment poems are largely replaced by chansons and couplets for cabaret, still following the journalistic principles of topicality and relevance. As he writes in his song "The little freedom", the period itself holds the pen. The cabaret show of the same name opens in Munich on January 21, 1951, with the title song sung before every performance:

"The title of the program - THE LITTLE FREEDOM -

actually sounds like we know what we're talking about.

The title of the program - THE LITTLE FREEDOM -

is not ours. The title was written by - time!" (WF: 189)

In his self-characterization "Kästner on Kästner", a speech at Zurich's PEN Club after the war, Kästner talks about "the three inalienable demands" he makes of himself: sincerity of feeling, clarity of thought and simplicity of words and phrases (WF: 326f.). "Sincerity of feeling" touches on more quality criteria that Kästner adopts from journalism: **credibility** and **authenticity** - in other words, reliability, incorruptibility and trustworthy information. The extraordinarily high sales of Kästner's work during his lifetime are irrefutable evidence that his audience believes he has this quality, for a variety of reasons, some of which are further quality criteria in themselves. Firstly, Kästner always knows how to pick topics relevant to everyday people. After all, he was a member of the working class himself - his father was a craftsman who was forced to work in a factory for financial reasons. Journalists today are often accused of being members of an elite, far removed from the real lives of the people they write about, so that their work lacks credibility. But Kästner's audience trusts him. The everyday life he describes and comments on is the everyday life of millions of people.

Wagner (2003: 221f.) writes about Kästner's reports and essays from the ruins of Munich after the Second World War - a time of food shortages and homelessness. "In vivid images and clear comparisons, Erich Kästner recorded the important facts, while his readers considered his sympathy and encouragement credible and authentic, given their shared range of experiences." Kästner tries to reflect this shared range of experiences right from his first forays into journalism. In an article for the *NLZ* on February 17, 1923 he reports from the Kleines Theater in Leipzig on a Shakespeare performance with Fritz Kortner. But instead of writing a traditional review from the auditorium, he stands on the stairs outside and listens to what the cloakroom and toilet attendants, porters and carriage drivers waiting for their shifts to end have to say during the performance:

“And we hear Kortner scream once again: ‘She must be dead in a minute,’ says the porter, ‘it’s quarter to eleven already. About time too. My mom’ll be waiting for me.’ ‘You’ve got a good woman there,’ says Emil the carriage driver. ‘Haven’t you?’ asks the cloakroom attendant. Emil looks cold and shifts from one foot to the other.” (KK: 9)

Then the auditorium doors open and the well to-do of Leipzig head for home chatting about expensive operations, delivery contracts and occasionally about Fritz Kortner (“simply wonderful”). There is no question where Kästner’s sympathies lie, nor can he resist a touch of typical Saxon sarcastic humor (nor is it a coincidence that the carriage driver is called Emil). His poetry, too, is full of people that will be familiar to millions: ordinary workers, the unemployed, widows, bar ladies, drinkers, flower sellers, injured war veterans, waiters – people looking for their place in bourgeois society. Kästner the poet is familiar with them because Kästner the roving reporter knows them (cf. report “Rice with chicken at 5 am”, December 2, 1928, GG 1: 272-277). He does not depict them as heroes, but nor does he talk them down (criterion of **fairness**). Instead, he observes in detail and looks for the peculiarities and incidents around which reality crystalizes. Although he also has a slightly moralizing tone, his readers can accept his reports as the truth. Even his poetry is based on real facts and meets the criterion of **accuracy**, albeit with actual events sometimes compromised and broken down for aesthetic reasons. In his “Ballad on the instinct to imitate” for the *Weltbühne*, he describes a real-life incident in a Berlin backyard, in which seven children hanged one of their friends on a carpet pole (March 24, 1931, ZH: 207-208). In the poem “Senior in uniform” for the same publication (June 30, 1929, ZH: 139-140), he remembers the glorification of war in at his teacher training college in Dresden and gives the real name of the principal; the names of his fallen former classmates are probably also real (cf. Hanuschek 2010: 55).

Credibility comes from referring to facts, but also from **transparency** and **reflexivity**, in terms of insight into one’s own working methods, with their strengths and weaknesses. A relatively new quality criterion in journalism, it is nevertheless seen in Kästner’s work, at least in places. In the American documentary film already mentioned, featuring footage from concentration camps (“The worth and worthlessness of man”), he strives to find the facts behind the horror for the *Neue Zeitung* (accuracy):

“And like this, in these camps, the victims were not just murdered, but commercially ‘counted’ down to the last grain and gram. The bones were ground and sold as fertilizer. Even soap was made. The hair of the dead women was stuffed into sacks, shipped and turned into money. The gold fillings, crowns and bridgework were broken out of the jaws and, melted, sent to the Reichsbank. I spoke to a former prisoner who had been employed in the ‘dental laboratory’ of a camp like this. He told me about his work in detail. The rings and watches were collected by the barrelful and flogged. The clothes went into the rag mill. The shoes were piled up and sold.” (February 4, 1946, WF: 68)

At the same time, however, he admits that these facts test him to his professional limits and, indeed, that he feels he has failed as a journalist:

“I am simply not capable of writing a coherent article about this unthinkable, infernal insanity. The

thoughts flee as soon as they get close to the memory of the film images.” (WF: 67)

Kästner takes a similar approach to his report “Beams of light from Nuremberg” in the *Neue Zeitung* (November 23, 1945, SB: 493-500). He describes the arrival at the trial building and conjures up street scenes and the outdoors as if to distract himself. Once he enters the building, he goes beyond simple reporting once again to project how a man might later describe the building for tourists. He then returns emphatically to factual descriptions by passing along the row of Nazis in the dock like a cameraman, recording their clothing and attitudes, before listing the charges by the Americans and French. He turns his attention to his press colleagues in the foyer during a break in proceedings, mentions the charge made by the Soviets and British almost in passing, and then, when the session is suspended, goes home. Once again, the effect is that of a journalist trying to avoid having to record the banality of the horror:

“My heart hurts after everything I have heard ... And my ears hurt too. The headphones were a size too small. [...] Drive home on the freeway. [...] I look out of the window and can see nothing. Just thick, milky fog ...” (SB: 499f.).

Kästner never returned to the courtroom at Nuremberg.[xii] The tone of his poetry and stage writing is never triumphant, often melancholy and disappointed – a characteristic that can be considered further proof of his insight into the limits of his work.

One particularly noticeable feature of the Nuremberg report is the matter-of-fact way in which Kästner records the appearance of the Nazis in the dock – and this is not the only example of extreme distance from the object. The 1923 report “June 6”, quoted at the start of this piece, ends not by denouncing the police, but with a statement by a policeman on the violence, including that of the demonstrators (KK: 48). It would certainly be difficult to claim **impartiality** as a consistent trait of Kästner’s work. Like any commentator, features writer or satirist, he takes sides – against arrogance, stupidity and undesirable social developments. But he never loses his **independence**, thus reinforcing his credibility. Although he advocates the election of a united front of the KPD and SPD in 1932 (cf. Hanuschek 2010: 212), and becomes involved in the Bavarian SPD’s schools policy shortly before his death (cf. Hanuschek 2010: 404), he never supports a party for very long, and there is never a trace of party politics in his articles or poems. In 1930, he is invited to write an article about the achievements of the Soviet Union for *Das neue Rußland* (“Dropping in on Russia”, SB: 256-259) – a work he later finds embarrassing. He manages to avoid all parties in the Weimar Republic (cf. Görtz and Sarkowicz 1998: 167) and rejects all doctrines of salvation (cf. Kordon 1996: 109-112). The director Erwin Piscator, whom he admires as a man of the theater, is frequently accused of what Kästner calls the “communist craze” (quoted in Görtz and Sarkowicz 1998: 96). In an interview with the journalist Adelbert Reif in 1969, Kästner admits:

“I hate ideologies, whichever type they might be. I am a committed individualist. I rejoice over all social progress... In addition, I am a left-wing liberal, which doesn’t actually exist anymore. And I am a member of a party that doesn’t exist either, because if it did exist, I wouldn’t be a member.” (quoted in Hanuschek 2010: 403)

We have already seen here that Kästner aims to give his texts **usefulness** and **value**. Like any journalist, he sees himself as an observer of his age, educating his audience by providing them with information and context. We can only speculate about how else he is useful to them, but perhaps millions of readers found refreshing his admission that he struggles with the dilemma that faces all satirists: having to expose bad things in order to promote the good. Perhaps they were moved by the wishes he often attached to his poems and articles. For example, the aforementioned 1926 article “Around the hoardings” ends with the phrases: “The trembling old man asked: ‘Where is the justice?’ May 20 million Germans answer him!”, KK: 253). Or perhaps they simply found comfort in the fact that there was someone out there who was interested in how ordinary people lived.

Literature, and especially poetry, can be seen as a compact, encoded form of speaking that the reader has to decode before he can fully understand. Journalism is the opposite: with a pragmatic focus on everyday life and transferring information, it avoids codes and aims for immediate **comprehensibility**. Erich Kästner, however, never accepts this conflict between the two genres – an unusual position for a German author. He wants to achieve immediacy – or, as we would say today, accessibility – in his fiction, too: “simplicity of words and phrases” (WF: 327) is one of the aforementioned “inalienable demands” he makes of himself at a meeting of PEN in Zurich. He thus states one of the main criteria of comprehensible language that can also be found in communication research.[xiii]

Erich Kästner sticks to these principles his whole life. In all his work – in all the reports, reviews, satires, stage writing, or novels – there is not a single text that contains unreasonable sentence constructions or vocabulary that seems foreign or stilted. Needless to say, the same goes for his children’s books, which by the late 1960s are in use as set texts in school German lessons in twelve countries, including the Soviet Union (cf. Bemann 1999: 370, 319). The American Association of German Teachers praises the “comprehensibility of the texts” as far back as the 1930s (Görtz and Sarkowicz 1998: 217).

The principle of “simplicity” applies just as much to Kästner’s poetry. Just a single quoted poem – here his “Open letter to workers” from the *Weltbühne* – is enough for anyone to immediately recognize the typical Kästner sound:

“There have to be bosses.

There have to be workers.

A tidy house, a tidy mind.

Chest out and stomach in!

Bosses wear stout

Stomachs under their jackets.

Most of that mob is stout,

And they only go to bed sideways.

They are fat by conviction.

And just looking at them

forces us others to bow.

Corpulence becomes a religion!

In their round hands they

hold cigars ready to fire.

Each of their magnificent forms

looks as if it were two.

Some say (albeit rarely),

they understand our distress.

And we little workers

just eat up their garbage.

Breathing is not expensive,

they say, and nutritious too!

And then they evade taxes

and drum on their stomachs. [...]“

(January 1, 1929, ZH: 80-81)

Kästner's poetry often uses the principle of "one sentence per line". In the first stanza of this poem, he follows it to the letter. Right from the start, unmistakable satire[xiv] is combined with a language that could not be more concise and that is easy for anyone to understand. Before the barking, Prussian tone can become tired as a stylistic tool, however, the speaker's perspective changes. The line skip at the start of the second stanza, the first comma in line 7 and the first "and" in line 8 all give the trochee a little more space to breathe and a more fluent melody ("and ... and"). These features are supported by alliteration, line skips and conversational polysyndeton. Ordinary people now have their voice, and they pull no punches. The poem becomes a march, with parataxis and simple sub-clauses with everyday language ("eat up", "garbage") - simple, but with a musical rhythm. It does not take any decoding to understand; it is self-explanatory. The reader is carried along and can, indeed wants to, join in.

Kästner is not hard to read. That is one indication of **entertainment value**. The readers have always attested to this in Kästner's case. In fact, his first job was for the entertainment magazine of Leipziger Verlagsdruckerei. His friend Hermann Kesten called Kästner's style "entertaining and exciting" (quoted in Bemmann 1999: 69). According to his biographer Sven Hanuschek (2010: 161), "Kästner may still be read because he serves both the modern need for entertainment and the demand for 'weight' and 'depth'."

The few references to the "workers" poem alone are enough to demonstrate the effort the author put into the **aesthetics** of his texts, and thus their **attractiveness** and **sensuality**. This time, journalism borrows from literature: a concept that goes without saying in literature is applied to reports and essays. Another look at the quote that starts this essay reveals the rhythm Kästner gives his text on the street demonstrations in Leipzig. The alternating rhythms and scenes in his report from the court in Nuremberg is another example, as is the way he composes his report on the American concentration camp documentary in prose stanzas that all begin with the phrase "it is night", like a leitmotif (WF: 67-71).

Productive irritation

There is just one more journalistic quality on the list: **originality**. A look at everything that has already been said - and especially the specific form of the daily poem - might be enough to prove its presence. Erich Kästner makes (latently) up-to-date journalism in poetry form his trademark. In doing so, he expands the horizons of both literature and journalism. Indeed, he allows the horizons of both genres to merge and demonstrates that this need not be a detriment to literature nor to journalism. Kästner's work is miles away from the modern form rightly branded "gonzo journalism" (for example by Tom Kummer, cf. Reus 2004), in which the readers are deliberately kept in the dark

about where the facts end and fantasy begins. And it may also shake up the paralyzed, 'systemic' theory of journalism. That is exactly what makes reading Kästner so productive for the further development of journalism as a science.

But reading Kästner can also be productive for journalism itself. Committed to a subjective view of things, irony and freedom to wander, features articles have always pushed the boundaries of the system (and are still seen in Germany as superficial and flighty as a result), but no other journalist in the 20th Century approached the genre as consistently as Erich Kästner. He created templates for a type of journalism that is today under more pressure than ever from all sides, forced to fight for legitimation, appreciation and attention.

Perhaps as a sign of unspoken reverence for this great 20th Century journalist, the Berliner newspaper *tageszeitung* prints current affairs in the form of a poem every Thursday.[xv] Other media try to combine and develop art and journalism in other ways, such as in graphic novels, comic reports, newsgames and multimedia formats. Perhaps these attempts are the future of journalism, perhaps not. But Erich Kästner, the great "écrivain journaliste", must be honored as the originator of it all.

About the author

Reus, Gunter Dr., apl. Professor, born in 1950, Institute of Journalism and Communication Research, Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media. – Journalism deserves greater recognition (especially in Germany) as a cultural achievement. What has long fascinated me about the work of Erich Kästner is the natural and exemplary way in which allegedly systemic boundaries between literature and everyday journalism can be overcome. E-Mail to the author.

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Footnotes:

[i]In this essay, texts by Erich Kästner from different sources are quoted, marked with initials and listed at the start of the bibliography. Ellipses (...) are used by Kästner in his original texts as a stylistic device. Only those in square brackets "[...]" denote an omission by the author of this essay (G.R.).

[ii]The key monographs on Erich Kästner all play their part in this image, albeit with varying focuses and levels of distance. They include the highly detailed depiction by Germanist Sven Hanuschek (2003); the well-documented biography by journalists and Kästner publishers Franz Josef Görtz and Hans Sarkowicz (1998); and the easier-to-handle depictions by freelance authors Helga Bemann (1999) and Isa Schikorsky (1999), youth author Klaus Kordon (1996) and youth literature researcher Klaus Doderer (2002). The reflection by journalist and cabaret artist Werner Schneyder (1982) takes

a more critical, essay-style approach, while the illustrated monograph by Kästner's partner, journalist Luiselotte Enderle (1966) glosses over and sugarcoats many details.

[iii]Only "Going to the Dogs" (1931), much of which reads like a report from a city, stands out from a series of rather vapid light novels.

[iv]It is no coincidence that the only monograph that considers Kästner a *journalistic author* was published in France, where literature is a much more integral part of society than it is in Germany. The main topic of Brons' dissertation is not specific to journalism, but is useful as an overview and inventory of all Kästner's journalistic work. As well as Brons, Johan Zonneveld (1991) and Benjamin Wagener (2003) have also produced work on Kästner as a journalist, albeit with more limited topic areas and time scales. Zonneveld looks exclusively at Kästner's theater, literature and film reviews up to 1933, while Wagener takes a cursory look at the topics of Kästner's articles for the *Neue Zeitung* in Munich from 1945 to 1946.

[v]The following depiction of the major events in Kästner's life follows on from the relevant monographies named in footnote 2.

[vi]"Herz auf Taille" (1928), "Lärm im Spiegel" (1929), "Ein Mann gibt Auskunft" (1930), "Gesang zwischen den Stühlen" (1932).

[vii]The first volume, "Herz auf Taille", had an initial print run of 2,000 – unusually high for poetry. Yet another 5,000 copies soon had to be printed (cf. Bemann: 101). By the start of 1930, this first volume of poetry, like the second volume "Lärm im Spiegel", was approaching 30,000 copies (cf. Bemann: 121). The fourth volume "Gesang zwischen den Stühlen" from 1932 had an initial print run of 5,000. These sold out immediately, with the publisher printing a further 7,000 copies that year (cf. Bemann: 194).

[viii]Kästner added the text to his volume of poetry "Lärm im Spiegel" (1929) as a "Prosaic incidental remark".

[ix]I base this on Meier (2007: 227) and the "Consens Map" by Wellbrock and Klein (2014: 399). Neither list is exhaustive (this would not be possible given the slippery nature of the term "quality"), but they undoubtedly contain the core criteria.

[x]Wellbrock and Klein (2014: 399) also list "professionalism" and "legality" – criteria that apply to any profession and are thus not a specific sign of quality.

[xi]"Interactivity" is a comparably recent quality criterion that has only gained professional recognition through the advent of the Internet. "Variety" and "universality" refer more to the media offered in general, rather than the work of individual journalists. Although the topics Kästner was able to address were limited by his role as a features writer, he did cover a wide range of different social subjects through his observations on everyday life.

[xii]In the foreword to “Notabene”, Kästner attempts to provide insight into how he worked after the war, but fails to meet the standards of sincerity and authenticity (see above).

[xiii]In their standard reference work “Sich verständlich ausdrücken”, Langer et al. (2015) name the criteria “simplicity” (including short, simple sentences and everyday words) and “structure, order”, both of which should be used as much as possible, as well as the criteria “brevity, precision” and “inspiring additions”, which should be included in moderation. Recommendations based on the research of Werner Frühs (1980) also include clear, non-complex sentence structure and a lack of pretentious vocabulary.

[xiv]This is directed against claims and positions of power, not against people, and therefore does not violate the principle of fairness towards individuals.

[xv]Most recently three days before completion of this manuscript, on February 16, 2017, when Reinhard Umbach commented on the Federal Administrative Court’s verdict on the deepening of the Elbe with a poem on page 20 (in iambic tetrameter like Kästner): “Schierlings-Wiesenfenchel, blühe!/Du, der Flora schönstes Kraut!/Nähre weiter Elbstrand-Kühe,/weil’s auf dir sich so gut kaut. [...]”.

NB: All quotations translated by Sophie Costella.

Translation: Sophie Costella

"The future is freelance!"

The state of the freelance journalism in Germany

by Nina Steindl, Corinna Lauerer, Thomas Hanitzsch

Abstract: Journalism is increasingly characterized by freelance journalists. Although the number of studies on freelance journalism is growing, the field continues to be largely unexplored. Therefore, the present paper focuses on who the freelance journalists in Germany are, under which conditions they work and how they perceive their professional role. We use data from the second wave of the Worlds of Journalism Study for Germany. Based on 137 interviews conducted with freelancers, findings indicate that freelance journalists often work for the broadcasting sector, magazines or online media. Although they tend to work for more than one media outlet, their income is rather low. Compared to their regularly employed colleagues, freelancers perceive slightly less editorial autonomy but indicate parallels regarding political stance and professional role perceptions. However, data show that the entertainment role is of less importance for freelancers than for their employed counterparts.

1. A peek into the *black box*

"The future is freelance!" is the intriguing conclusion the German professional association for freelance journalists has come to (Freischreiber 2017). Proof comes in the form of the estimated 122,500 people currently working as freelance and amateur journalists as their main or additional job in Germany (Buckow 2011: 24; Deutscher Journalisten-Verband 2014; Meyen/Springer 2009: 18).[1] Just a few years ago, these freelance journalists were considered an under-researched "black box" (Pöttker 2008). More research in the field has since been undertaken (see Buckow 2011; DJV 2009, 2014; Meyen/Springer 2009), but the literature remains limited.

Yet the topic is hugely relevant. Globalization, digitalization, increasing competition and commercial pressures are driving outsourcing in journalism (Pöttker 2008; Weischenberg et al. 2006: 36). This approach has economic benefits for media companies, as using freelance staff allows them to reduce additional costs and to hire and fire at will (DJV 2017).

At the same time, employment conditions for freelance journalists have become increasingly precarious in recent years. With unpredictable workloads and low pay, many freelancers are unable to earn a sufficient living from journalism alone (DJV 2014). An increasing number is taking up additional work, such as in PR or corporate communication, while the number of people working as

journalists as their main job continues to fall, from 18,000 in 1993 to 12,000 in 2005 and just 9,600 today (Steindl et al. 2017; Weischenberg et al. 2006: 36). Freelance journalists also have to invest a lot of time and effort in self-promotion in order to succeed against ever-tougher competition. The main people they have to impress are the editors who commission and purchase their journalistic products (Meyen/Springer 2009: 151). This often results in conflict regarding loyalty and quality (Bunjes 2008). Nevertheless, studies show that, despite the low pay and competitive nature of the job, freelance journalists are often very happy with their work, valuing advantages such as professional freedom and the opportunity for personal fulfilment particularly highly (Buckow 2011: 66ff.; Bunjes 2008; Pöttker 2008; Meyen/Springer 2009: 97, 149ff.).

This paradox is part of what makes freelance journalism such an interesting subject for research. As freelancers gain in importance, fears grow of journalism becoming de-professionalized and losing its boundaries (Pöttker 2008; Weischenberg et al. 2006: 14ff.). This raises the question of whether and to what extent freelance journalists view their professional role differently from that of their regularly-employed colleagues, be it through their different professional socialization or through their activities outside journalism (Koch et al. 2012).

Given the move towards greater use of freelance journalists, it is worth taking a closer look at this group – and at how it has changed over recent years. This study aims to investigate who these freelance journalists are, where they work, and how they perceive their role within journalism.

RQ1: *Who is the “typical” freelancer in Germany?*

RQ2: *In which fields and positions do freelance journalists work?*

RQ3: *How do they view their role and how does this guide their journalistic activities?*

2. Method

The data on freelance journalists is taken from the second wave of the collaborative international *Worlds of Journalism Study*[2], funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). This standardized survey comprises 775 interviews with regularly-employed and freelance journalists in Germany, chosen in a two-stage random process. The interviews were conducted between November 2014 and August 2015.

Determining figures on journalists was crucial to the study. Only *professional journalists* were included. These are defined as people who are predominantly entrusted with journalistic tasks, act based on professional norms, values and rules, and are employed in journalism as their main profession at the time of the survey (i.e. earn at least 50 percent of their income from journalistic activities) – be it as freelancers or under a regular employment contract. While regularly-employed journalists can be considered employees due to their involvement in editorial processes, the DJV (2017) considers freelancers “independent journalists” who “market their texts or images like

contractors". In contrast, *regular* freelance journalists work "not as day workers", but under a "contract with monthly fixed payments and notice periods" (ibid.). The regulations regarding fixed price staff, whose pay is "guaranteed by a fixed monthly amount", are equally vague (ibid.).

The first task was to get to know the world of journalists in Germany better. This was achieved by studying the German media landscape in detail and recording the population of *editorial units* – those that present journalistic content, enjoy editorial independence, and fulfil the functions of journalistic communication, such as topicality. In an attempt to approximate the number of editorial units, the media services[3] were first examined in detail. Lists were compiled of the units, before a random, proportional sample of units was selected from each media type. The media units selected fell under the following categories: *newspaper*, *magazine*, *advertising paper*, private and public service *television* and *radio*, *online media* (divided into distinct online media and online offshoots of traditional media), and *news agencies or media providers*.

The next step was to estimate the population of *journalists*. Based on our research and with reference to the second *Journalism in Germany* study by Weischenberg et al. (2006: 36f.), we can make a qualified estimate of 41,250 people in Germany with journalism as their main job, including 9,600 freelance journalists.[4]

Next, a simple random sample of journalists was taken from the media services defined (age, gender, and position were not taken into account). Our research showed that some freelancers are listed explicitly on the homepage or in the legal information of specific media houses or services. Media that did not provide public information on freelance journalists were contacted by telephone. Some organizations were more than willing to provide information, while others did not cooperate, citing data protection reasons. Contacts from databases (e.g. Zimpel) were therefore also used and checked before data was collected.

The data was collected via a telephone and online survey. A total of 775 usable interviews were generated (combined response rate 35%). The difficulty of accessing freelancers means that they are slightly under-represented in the random sample, making up just under 20.0% instead of the planned 30.0%.

The analysis below is based on the data collected from those working as freelance journalists as their main job (n=137). The objective is to gain deeper insight into this still-under-researched group. It is embedded in the overall study in Steindl et al. (2017). The evaluation of these results in this paper compares the data on freelance journalists with that of regularly-employed journalists, discusses it, and compares its development over time.

3. Results

3.1 Freelancers in Germany: Male, graduate, low-paid

The freelancers surveyed were between 23 and 71 years old (mean=45.31; SD=10.58). The average age is lower than that of previous comparative studies (Meyen/Springer 2009: 60). The typical freelancer is likely to be male (58.5%), be politically left of center (mean=3.68; SD=1.23; scale from "0"=left to "10"=right), and have an average of 18.08 years of professional experience (SD=10.21). The percentage of females of 41.5 percent is approximately in line with that of the regularly employed (39.8%) and represents a slight fall, following a rise from 35.4 percent in 1998 (Grass 1998: 6) to 45.1 percent in 2005 (Weischenberg et al. 2006: 47).

Freelancers (82.0%) are also more likely to be university graduates than their regularly-employed colleagues (74.1%), reflecting the increasing importance of university qualifications. While just 51 percent of freelance journalists in 1998 had a degree (Grass 1998: 7), this figure had risen to around 63 percent just ten years later (DJV 2009: 19). This trend was corroborated by the latest DJV study (2014: 4), in which 75 percent of respondents had a university degree. Yet there is a gender disparity with regard to the freelancers' educational background, with 90.9 percent of the women but just 75.6 percent of the men interviewed having graduated from university. Furthermore, of those graduates (n=121), 38.8 percent stated that they had specialized in *journalism or a similar subject* (or both). There was a gender disparity here, too: The proportion of freelance male journalists who had studied a subject in the field was almost nine percent higher than the proportion of female journalists.

Previous studies have shown freelance journalists to be unhappy with their pay (Buckow 2011: 66ff.; Meyen/Springer 2009: 87ff.). The latest data gives cause to expect a change in this. While 27.9 percent of the freelance journalists earn less than EUR 1,800 per month, just 15.0 percent of regularly-employed journalists earn as little (n=599). Weischenberg et al. (2006) found a similar difference ten years ago. In addition, the proportion of freelancers earning less than EUR 1,800 is higher in local media (52.1%) than in regional (14.9%) and national (20.0%) media. Female freelance journalists were also more likely to be low earners (35.4%) than their male counterparts (23.3%).

3.2 The reality for journalists: Increasing numbers in additional jobs

Only a tiny fraction of the 137 freelance journalists works as fixed price members of staff, while the numbers of freelance journalists and regular freelancers are evenly balanced (Table 1). The majority of freelancers (88.9%) work as journalists without leadership roles, with 7.4 percent holding a partial leadership role and just 3.7 percent a full leadership role. In addition, the data confirm a trend already seen in other studies (DJV 2009: 24; Meyen/Springer 2009: 80): Freelance journalists work predominantly for broadcast media, magazines, and online media, as Table 2 shows.

Table 1: *Employment status*

	All freelancers (percent, n=137)	Male freelancers (percent, n=79)	Female freelancers (percent, n=56)

Freelance journalists	45.3	48.1	41.1
Regular freelancers	46.0	41.8	51.8
Fixed price staff	8.8	10.1	7.1

Table 2: *Type of media*

	All freelancers (percent, n=137)	Male freelancers (percent, n=79)	Female freelancers (percent, n=56)
Print			
Daily newspaper	19.7	21.5	17.9
Sunday/weekly newspaper	10.2	11.4	7.1
Magazine	31.4	30.4	33.9
Advertising paper	11.7	13.9	7.1
Broadcast			
Television	23.4	22.8	25.0
Radio	35.8	35.4	37.5
News agency and media provider	9.5	13.9	3.6
Online			
Distinct online media	12.4	12.7	10.7
Online offshoots	27.7	30.4	25.0
Total	181.8	192.4	167.9

Question: *Which type of media do you work for?* (multiple responses permitted)

Freelance journalists often work for several different media simultaneously (Grass 1998: 9; Meyen/Springer 2009: 78ff.; Weischenberg et al. 2006: 39ff.) – something that is borne out by our data. While 24.8 percent of those surveyed worked for one and 21.2 percent for two editorial departments, the majority worked for more than two (54.0%). When it comes to the media services in whose production the freelancers are involved, 18.3 delivered content to one, 27.5 percent to two, and the other 54.2 percent to more than two. In addition, 32.6 percent of freelancers whose main job is journalism also have a paid additional job outside journalism. Additional jobs outside journalism among freelance journalists have thus increased by more than six percentage points over the last twenty years (Grass 1998: 23).

When it comes to the work they are do, most freelance journalists are assigned to specific topics or department (61.3%); employees are slightly less likely to be specialists (59.6%). The latter have less of a focus on the topics of politics (14.3%), business (7.6%), and art and culture (11.1%) than their freelance counterparts (Table 3), confirming the results of previous studies (Meyen/Springer 2009: 78ff.).

Table 3: *Assignment to a department*

	All freelancers (percent, n=84)	Male freelancers (percent, n=48)	Female freelancers (percent, n=35)
Politics	23.9	29.2	17.3
Art, culture and features	14.3	14.6	14.3
Business	14.3	16.7	8.6
Service and lifestyle	13.1	8.3	20.0
Local and regional news	8.3	4.2	14.3
Sport	6.0	10.4	0.0
Science and education	3.6	2.1	5.7
Entertainment	3.6	6.3	0.0
Health	3.6	0.0	8.6

Religious affairs	1.2	2.1	0.0
Other	8.3	6.3	11.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Question: *In which department or field do you usually work?*
(open response)

As Meyen and Springer (2009: 149ff.) found, freelance journalists have more freedom in their work. Our data also shows that 68.1 percent of the freelance journalists feel they have a great deal of or even complete autonomy over *decisions regarding story selection* and 72.6 percent regarding decisions on which *aspects of a story should be emphasized*. Interestingly, the employed journalists felt they had significantly more autonomy regarding both the selection (75.3%) and the representation (83.9%) of stories.

3.3 Journalists see themselves as communicators

The focus now shifts to how journalists view their own profession. They undoubtedly see their role as a neutral communicator as key, agreeing most with the aspects *Reporting things as they really are*, *Contextualizing and analyzing current events*, and *Being an impartial observer* (Table 4). The employed journalists see this role as even more important than the freelancers do (*Being an impartial observer*: 82.8%; *Reporting things as they really are*: 91.6%).

Meyen and Springer also confirm how important the communicator role is for freelancers (2009: 97): *Explaining and communicating complex situations* (91%) and *Providing the audience with the most neutral and precise information possible* (90%) were the statements most commonly agreed with in 2009 - although our data (Table 4) indicates that these aspects may have lost some of their importance for freelancers in recent years.

The same goes for the role as provider of entertainment and advice, with more than half (57%) of those surveyed in 2009 stating that they hoped to “entertain the audience” (Meyen/Springer 2009: 97). The difference between freelance and employed journalists is larger here: While employed journalists see *Offering content that attracts the largest possible audience* (77.4%), *Providing advice, help, and orientation for everyday life* (68.0%), and *Providing entertainment and relaxation* (54.9%) as important, this is only the case for around a third of the freelance journalists, especially for the latter (Table 4). This finding is especially remarkable given that German journalists overall consider their role as providers of entertainment and advice more important than they did in 1993 (Steindl et al. 2017; Weischenberg et al. 2006: 110ff.).

Table 4: *Role perception*

	n	"extremely" or "very" important (percent)	Mean	SD
Reporting things as they really are	134	86.6	4.43	0.85
Contextualizing and analyzing current events	136	83.1	4.26	0.94
Being an impartial observer	137	81.0	4.23	0.95
Promoting tolerance and cultural diversity	136	65.5	3.75	1.17
Educating the audience	136	58.8	3.68	1.09
Acting as a storyteller for world events	136	58.8	3.55	1.17
Providing advice, help, and orientation for everyday life	134	56.7	3.57	1.09
Offering content that attracts the largest possible audience	135	55.6	3.54	1.06
Providing information that enables people to make political decisions	137	54.0	3.40	1.33
Motivating people to become involved in politics	137	45.9	3.21	1.34
Advocating social change	131	39.7	3.10	1.18
Giving people the opportunity to articulate their views	136	37.5	3.07	1.20
Providing entertainment and relaxation	136	35.3	3.54	1.06
Scrutinizing business	134	32.9	2.83	1.39
Scrutinizing the government	134	32.1	2.84	1.35
Influencing public opinion	135	25.9	2.81	1.12

Forming a counterbalance to the government	132	22.0	2.37	1.26
Supporting national development	133	15.0	1.25	0.54
Shaping the political agenda	134	12.7	2.24	1.11
Communicating a positive image of the government	135	0.7	1.25	0.54
Supporting government policy	135	0.0	1.35	0.60

Question: *How important do you consider the following aspects in your work? Scale: 5 = extremely important; 4 = very important; 3 = somewhat important; 2 = less important; 1 = unimportant.*

There are differences when it comes to the critique and scrutiny role, too. *Scrutinizing the government* (37.2%), *Scrutinizing business* (34.6%), and *Giving people the opportunity to articulate their views* (48.9%) are more important to employed journalists. In contrast, freelancers see *Shaping the political agenda* (9.2%) and *Advocating social change* (27.3%) as more relevant (Table 4).

4. Conclusion: Black box revisited

Taking another peek into the black box reveals plenty of insights into the profession of freelance journalism. Just like their regularly employed colleagues, freelancers are increasingly highly educated, politically left-leaning, and set great store by the role of classic information journalism. For those for whom freelance journalism is their main job, at least, these findings put into perspective fears of deprofessionalization and diminishing boundaries in journalism. However, any future studies should pay more attention to the over 100,000 amateur journalists and those for whom freelance journalism is merely a sideline. The field is crying out for studies that examine the prospects of those working freelance as their main or additional job. Questions include why they choose (or are forced) to work freelance, what impact this situation has on their work and their lives, and how the two groups differ, especially with regard to how they view their professional role.

One difference is that freelancers feel they have slightly less autonomy than regularly-employed journalists. This may be down to the fact that freelancers have to adapt to the needs of their clients. After all, if they are to earn money, they need to satisfy the media houses who purchase their work.

It is no surprise that most freelancer journalists serve multiple editorial offices and media services at once. However, the increase in the number of freelancers who supplement their journalistic income with additional jobs is interesting. Combined with the relatively low pay they receive from

journalism, this once again raises the question of the increasingly precarious nature of the work (Gollmitzer 2011).

The media sector today is unthinkable without freelance journalists (Buckow 2011) – a fact that goes hand in hand with the need for more research into freelance journalism. After all, despite some efforts in this field, huge deficits remain. We see an increased need for more detailed studies on the employment situation of journalists in general and freelancers in particular.

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Footnotes

[1] The unregulated nature of journalism means that the number of freelance journalists in Germany can only be estimated. This is partly due to the problem of defining exactly what makes a freelance journalist, or indeed a journalist at all. The Federal Employment Agency (2010), for example, gives

the title of editor not only to those undertaking predominantly journalistic jobs, but also to those employed to work on fictional stories or as technical writers or assistants. It is therefore no wonder that the figures vary widely. The Federal Employment Agency (2017: 120) currently counts around 200,000 people in "journalistic professions". Counting only those entrusted with journalistic activities as their main job, however, produces a figure of around 41,250 journalists in Germany (Steindl et al. 2017).

[2] The English-language questionnaire and initial descriptive results for Germany in international comparison can be found on the project website at <http://www.worldsofjournalism.org/>.

[3] In addition to these criteria and depending on the media type, the media services had to be published sufficiently frequently, achieve a minimum coverage, and have a sufficiently large editorial team. A wide range of sources was used to determine the population (e.g. information from journalists' professional associations, annual reports, media house websites, directories and databases). Non-journalistic media, such as music broadcasters and amateur and association media, were excluded from the outset. More detailed information on the methodology can be found in Steindl et al. (2017).

[4] Because the study was only interested in those for whom journalism is their main job, the number of freelance journalists quoted at the beginning is reduced to around 9,600. Those working as journalists as an additional job were not included in the study.

Translation: Sophie Costella

Why the reporting about Europe is so boring

by Friederike Herrmann

Abstract: For the lack of interest in the participation of the European elections scientists have not only held politicians and uninterested citizens responsible but also the media. [1]

„The astonishment that the things we are experiencing in the 20th century are ‚still‘ possible is by no means philosophical. It is not the beginning of knowledge, unless it would be the knowledge that the conception of history on which it rests is untenable.“ (Benjamin 1940/1974, thesis VIII)

The call for a new narrative for Europe has accompanied the debates about the European Union for ages. Even an own project of the EU commission was created for this purpose. The aim was to make the idea of Europe livelier to the citizens.

A narrative connects humans and events, it transports emotions. The wish to create a new narrative is based on the wish to charge Europe more emotionally as Europe has a communication problem.

That problem is also reflected in the media. The daily journalism with regard to subjects dealing with Europe is above all one thing, namely boring. The image of the EU as a bureaucratic monster is continued in the daily reporting. The EU appears to be infiltrated by a frenzy of regulation which reportedly wants even to dictate the curvature of cucumbers. It deals with the Eurocrats in Brussels. The audience therefore shuns reports about European policy. The TV viewers turn off the TV, the newspaper readers turn over. It is a small wonder that the editorial departments also prefer other subjects, they prefer to bring news from the inland and the big cities of the world (Fengler/Vestring 2009.74). At best scandals and crises, the Brexit or Greece achieve a greater media presence. The actual work at Brussels however is often only shabbily treated (ibid). And if reporting actually takes place the focus is on the national context, whereby the media, that's at least the reproach, contribute to the re-nationalisation of Europe (Hepp et al. 2012; 9).

Journalism fails where the subject of Europe is concerned. For the lack of interest in the participation of the European elections scientists have not only held politicians and uninterested citizens responsible but also the media (Brettschneider/Rettich 2005: 137, Gerhards 2002).

But Brussels is more than merely bureaucracy. In Brussels highly important decisions are made

which have influence into the daily life of us all, i.e. decisions concerning the economy, the job market and the refugee policy, all of which being relevant subjects which should allow for interesting reporting.

Why then does reporting about the subject Europe appear to be so boring?

Again and again there have been attempts to emotionally stimulate the European Idea. The demonstrations under the name of "Pulse of Europe" are the latest example, a grandiose project which invites participation. But how far does enthusiasm reach? Who is reached by it? Does Europe not above all remain an extremely reasonable idea which is shared by all enlightened citizens? Reason is not sexy, reason arouses no passion. The feelings remain weak, the subject remains stringy.

Boredom, so the psychoanalysts say, results from defence. If certain aspects of a subject are excluded, the emotional occupation is taken away. This produces boredom. It is therefore worth to raise the question of what remains excluded when the subject of Europe is being dealt with.

A new narrative for Europe is also therefore requested as so many people think that the old narrative of the community of peace does no longer reach the young generation. For them peace is perfectly natural, whilst fascism and war belong to the distant past. But the turning away from Europe is not primarily a problem of the young – quite the contrary. It was the older generation of voters who gave Great Britain the present of the Brexit, and it must be acknowledged that the narrative of the European peace has not very much filled the masses with enthusiasm. It was more a matter of reason than of passion. With the peace demonstrations which in the seventies and the eighties brought thousands into the streets it was not an issue.

The first narrative of Europe, i.e. the unit as a guarantor of peace, was followed by the inner-European Market as the narrative of growing prosperity for all. "Europe" said Hans-Dietrich Genscher with a hoarse voice "is our future. We have no other future" (Genscher 2003). For the moment the statement resonates with pathos which is atypical of Europe. But after the first sentence the confession vanishes already again into vagueness. No vision is connected with this kind of future. Rather the statement is followed by a negation. There is no way of showing strength in a globalised world without a community. Europe is without an alternative one would today perhaps say. Like a drug which must be taken, whether or not it tastes.

A third narrative has accompanied the EU since its foundation. This narrative is expressed in a concept which is again and again cited: The United States of Europe. Said concept is the attempt to respond to the might of the USA by achieving the unity of Europe and thus creating a counterpart and becoming a strong partner. Thanks to Donald Trump this narrative was given a strong boost in the last months and culminated in Angela Merckels' recent speech in Trudering with its demand that "we Europeans have to take our destiny really in our own hands". It sounded a bit as if a child in puberty had at last to grow up. Joschka Fischer celebrated this speech in a guest article for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* as an approach for the strengthening of Europe and requested the courage for

a Franco-German leadership in Europe (SZ, 9.June 2017, p. 2).

Such leadership is obviously only possible with a dual chairmanship. Germany alone cannot take that role. The concern that a mighty Germany would dominate the Euro zone is too great (Miskimmon 2015). In that concern something comes up that does not appear in the narratives which address the topic of Europe: The traces of the past which become visible when Angela Merkel is portrayed by Greek demonstrators as Hitler.

Who in the last decades after the war travelled to France could make the experience that initially friendly people would radically and angrily turn away when they learnt that one came from Germany. Too painful were the memories of the atrocities committed by the Nazis. The starting points of Europe were fascism, war and fierce hostility between the peoples. That had left wounds the impact of which is still felt today.

The narratives with regard to the EU do not deal with those problems. They only briefly touch the topic of the past, if at all. They describe the past as a time of strife and focus on the future and a new beginning. Also the EU has its zero hour. The question of guilt and responsibility was not asked. A real dispute as to how history has its continuing effects in a unified Europe has never taken place. Europe is our future but it has no past.

Narratives normally have a threefold time dimension. They name the themes or topics of the present, explain their genesis in the past and make prognostications in respect of the future (see Herrmann 2017). They can create an identity as a pre-condition of a community. In the narratives about Europe, however, there is a gap. A dispute about the history which still sticks Europe and the EU in the bones, is missing. Unity was proclaimed without examining the ground on which Europe is intended to stand.

Sociopsychologically this defence of a dispute about guilt and responsibility requires the withdrawal of feelings which is why the idea of Europe appears to be so lifeless and the journalistic reports about it so boring. The EU is looking ahead. It is therefore caught in the belief in progress.

The orientation on the future, the idea of redemption through a unified Europe reminds one of Walter Benjamin's criticism of the messianic concept of history of the historic materialism as he has described it in the famous picture of the angel of history. The angel sees the rubble of the past and "would like (...) to piece together what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise, it has caught itself up in his wings and is so strong that the Angel can no longer close them. The storm drives him irresistibly into the future, to which his back is turned, while the rubble-heap before him grows sky-high. That which we call progress, is this storm." (Benjamin 1940/1974, thesis IX). The narratives of Europe are focused on progress. The question of the origins of the problems remains open: Why did the Europeans not take their fate in their own hands? Why were they not able to accept responsibility? Why did their visions of the future not fire like the American dream? And why does the Community of Peace degenerate in national egoism? In present Europe the states do not seek the community but their own advantage. The economic gradient is immense, juvenile

unemployment frightening and the refugee policy has failed and is extremely unjust. The causes lie in the past. It has not been possible to heal them by a new narrative. Nor will it be possible to devise narratives with regard to the unity of Europe. They must be found and anchored in the memory of the people (Miskimmon/O'Loughlin/Roselle 2013:5). To that aim the look back would be needed.

It would be a task for which critical journalism could provide the impetus.

About the author

Prof. Dr. Friederike Herrmann, 1960, Professor of Journalism and Communication Studies, Journalism, Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt. Narratives often unintentionally preform public discourse and thus media reporting - it is important for journalists to reflect on these narratives. E-Mail to the author

Footnotes

[1] Thoughts and theses of this essay emerged from an exchange with sociologist and psychoanalyst Prof. Dr. Ilka Quindeau. The author wishes to thank her for important impulses.

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When should the nationality of criminals be disclosed?

Anti-discrimination rules in journalism and the discourse on migration in Germany and Austria

by Petra Herczeg and Horst Pöttker

Abstract: Using the migration and refugee crisis as an example, this text describes, comments on and analyzes the German Press Council's (Presserat) regulations on dealing with anti-discrimination rules from a German and Austrian point of view. These issues of professional ethics are relevant in terms of both integration policy and media policy. The article aims to enhance sensitivity to the problem of discrimination against migrants in public life and to highlight the effect different case law practices can have on public discourse. The authors take turns to react to a chapter.

Figure 12 and Directive 12.1 of the German Press Council's "Journalistic Principles"

Horst Pöttker

Figure 12 of the German Press Code (Pressekodex) stipulates that: *"No-one may be discriminated against for reasons of their gender, a disability, or their membership of a particular ethnic, religious, social or national group."* Until recently, Directive 12.1 on this stated:

In reporting on criminal offences, the membership of the suspect or perpetrator of a religious, ethnic or other minority shall only be mentioned if this justifiably aids understanding of the incident being reported on. Particular attention should be paid to the possibility that such mention could fuel prejudices against minorities.

Starting in 2015, Germany saw an increase in the flow of refugees into the country - the problems of which initially saw only muted coverage by journalists. This and the critical public discussion about their usefulness led the German Press Council to revise Directive 12.1 in Spring 2017. The following has been in force since March 22 this year:

In reporting on criminal offences, the membership of the suspect or perpetrator of a religious, ethnic or other minority shall not lead to discriminatory generalization of individual misdemeanors. The

background should not usually be mentioned unless such mention is justifiably in the public interest. Particular attention should be paid to the possibility that such mention could fuel prejudices against minorities.

This essay examines the two versions of this specific anti-discrimination rule, which differ in their wording, but little in their meaning.

Origin and development

Directive 12.1 goes back to the period between 1956 and 1973, when the Press Council did not yet have written rules. Since the Federal Republic of Germany had joined NATO, its allies included the USA, some of whose soldiers were African American. The German-American friendship clubs that emerged as a result began to complain that reports on offences by occupying soldiers mentioned the color of their skin. The Press Council responded on December 7, 1971 with a “*Resolution on combatting racial discrimination and prejudice*”:

Owing to a suggestion by the Association of German-American Clubs, the German Press Council recommends that, in reports on incidents involving US soldiers, the race of those involved shall not be mentioned unless of compelling pertinence. (German Press Council 1974, 84)

This later formed the basis of Directive 12.1. The original wording stated that membership of a minority could only be stated if it was “*of significance*” to understanding of the crime (Support Association 1989, 16f.). The version that applied until Spring 2017 originated from a 1993 report by former Federal Constitutional Court judge Helmut Simon, compiled on behalf of the “Central Council of German Sinti and Roma” (cf. Simon 1993, author not named).

Since the early 1970s, the Press Council has made the ban on discrimination ever tighter and more specific. This trend has seen academic support in the form of a wealth of literature in media education that addresses the formation and functions of discriminatory prejudices.

Investigations into the acceptance and effectiveness of Directive 12.1

There is, however, little communication studies literature that looks at the content and effects of anti-discrimination rules. References to my own studies are unavoidable.

Firstly, I have noticed considerable inconsistency in the Press Council’s decision-making when it comes to complaints about homophobic discrimination in letters to editors: some complaints about letters in which homosexuals are referred to as “abnormal” lead to a reprimand, while others are dismissed as unfounded.

My next study was a full analysis of the Press Council’s decisions on complaints regarding discrimination (cf. Pöttker 2005a), with the inconsistency of rulings affecting the quality here, too. Complaints about identifying the ethnicity of offenders were dismissed, even though the information was of “compelling pertinence.” Where the nationality was relevant, there were discriminatory

effects; where it was not, there was no consideration of how prejudice could be fueled. In addition, it became clear that failing to mention the minority membership of criminals can also be discriminatory[1].

The Press Council received a large number of standard complaints based on Directive 12.1 in which merely the newspaper name and publication date had been entered into a ready-to-use form. In terms of figures, the Press Council is less likely to accept complaints based on Directive 12.1 than those relating to the more general Section 12 (cf. Pöttker 2005a, 202). This could indicate that journalists are not as accepting of this Directive, as it gives them less room to maneuver.

This hypothesis was examined using a representative random sample of journalists (cf. Pöttker 2009), which showed that editors are more likely to accept anti-discrimination rules that address the meaning of the rule - like Section 12 - than those that merely prohibit specific wording, as the first sentence (the second in the new version of March 2017) of Directive 12.1 does.

Using regional newspapers, Daniel Müller examined whether and how often journalists mention the background of criminal suspects where there is no "compelling pertinence" (cf. Müller 2009). He came to the conclusion that "*in many articles, the effort made to avoid discrimination was clear to see*" (Müller 2009, 213). A report on a court hearing, however, showed the flipside of these efforts when made merely in order to comply with the rules: Because the defendant's Kurdish background was not mentioned, the back-story and trial were almost impossible to understand (cf. Müller 2009).

Such adherence to the letter of the law can cause readers to mistrust information media - a problem investigated by Cornelia Mohr et al. in a survey on how reports on criminality in the local news section are received (cf. Mohr/Bader/Wicking 2009). They found that:

Directive 12.1 on anti-discrimination largely does not serve its purpose. Recipients fill in missing information mostly through inferences based on prejudices or experience. The fact that these additions can often be incorrect, i.e. incorrectly attribute a migration background to perpetrators, may even directly counteract the purpose of the Directive. (Mohr/Bader/Wicking 2009, 231)

A team of researchers in Mainz conducted an experiment to examine the effects of reporting that obeys Directive 12.1 (cf. Hefner/Klimmt/Daschmann 2007). Their results contradict the assumption that stating criminals' backgrounds fuels negative prejudices. "*For the Turkish perpetrator, explicitly mentioning his Turkish background actually led to a more positive reception*" (Hefner/Klimmt/Daschmann 2007, 587) than was the case for a German perpetrator. This backs up the finding that, when the background is not mentioned, the audience often draws its own conclusions, which can fuel prejudice just as much.

Anti-discrimination rules and journalistic professionalism

The role of a journalist is to create a public sphere. Because disclosing information is the norm, they need to be able to justify those cases in which they do *not* disclose something. Directive 12.1 turns

this situation on its head, making non-disclosure the norm and disclosure an exception that needs justification. Not only that - it only warns journalists to consider the consequences of disclosing facts, exempting them from any concern about the consequences of non-disclosure.

If journalists are to fulfil their role, they need what Art. 5 of the German Basic Law describes as "*freedom of the press and freedom of reporting in broadcast and film.*" In Art. 5 Para. 2, the Basic Law also states the limits of media freedom, which lie "*in the provisions of the general laws, in the statutory provisions on youth protection, and in the right to personal dignity.*" None of these necessary limits on press freedom covers Directive 12.1; nor is journalists' obligation to tell the truth relevant here, as non-disclosure of *relevant* membership of minorities is meant.

The last sentence of Directive 12.1 accuses the audience of harboring "*prejudices against minorities.*" It is not the role of journalists to combat prejudice. A highly-complex society needs to be able to rely on journalists to concentrate on their own role, namely to reflect and explain the world as it truly is. Conversely, the fact that youth protection is named as a limit on press freedom indicates that journalists can generally assume their audience to be mature and responsible.

In an earlier version of Directive 12.1, the last sentence read: "*Particular attention should be paid to the possibility that such mention could fuel prejudices against groups in need of protection.*" Of course police protection is needed for migrants in places where homes for asylum seekers are subject to arson attacks, just as it is for politicians. But neither group deserves protection against journalists or public discourse.

The delay in reporting the events in Cologne on New Year's Eve 2015 showed that criticism of Directive 12.1 is more than just a pastime for academics. In fact, the rule can block the kind of public discourse that allows problems to be recognized and solved. Furthermore, in a world of digital media in which nothing can be kept secret for long, holding on to a general rule of secrecy like Directive 12.1 can do nothing to enhance the media's credibility.

It is crucial that, taking the circumstances into account, journalists are free to make their own decisions on what is reported and what is not, and to take responsibility for the consequences. The ban on discrimination provided by Section 12 is sufficient to allow them to make these judgement calls.

What is the alternative?

Despite this, if we accept that a concrete rule is necessary in order to sensitize journalists to the problem of discrimination, it would be a good idea to *reverse the burden of proof*. Directive 12.1 could recommend not stating criminals' minority background where it is *irrelevant* to the clarity of the report. This would make reporting the norm.

Code of Honor for the Austrian Press, Point 7 - Protection against blanket defamation and discrimination

Petra Herczeg

7.2. Any discrimination on the basis of age, disability or gender or for ethnic, national, religious, sexual, political or other reasons is impermissible.[2]

This is the only point in the Code of Honor for the Austrian Press that addresses ethnic and other forms of discrimination. Point 10 states that information is in the public interest if it serves to “solve serious crimes, protect public safety or health, or prevent deception of the public.”

Development

The Austrian Press Council was founded in 1961 by publishers’ associations and representatives of the journalists’ union. In 2001, the Association of Austrian Newspapers (VÖZ) terminated its involvement with the Press Council, arguing that self-regulation cannot be conducted by interest groups like the journalists’ union themselves, but must be initiated by the media themselves (cf. Förderl-Schmid 2008)[3]. In 2007, the VÖZ attempted to set up a new organ of self-regulation through the newly-founded Association of Chief Editors (Verein der Chefredakteure), based around a readers’ advocacy group in which respected journalists would examine letters received from readers. However, this form of self-regulation did not work, as “even chief editors of newspapers that played a leading role in the Association did not feel obliged to react to inquiries from readers’ advocates. They possessed neither the infrastructure nor any methods of sanction” (Förderl-Schmid 2008, 324).

Alexandra Förderl-Schmid, Chief Editor and Publisher of *Der Standard*, worked together with all the stakeholders involved to set up a working Press Council again. The Press Council took up its work in 2010.

The supporting organizations behind the Press Council are the Association of Austrian Newspapers (VÖZ), the Austrian Trades Union Confederation, represented by the journalists’ union[4], the Austrian Newspaper and Journal Association (ÖZV), the Association of Regional Media in Austria (VRM), the Association of Chief Editors (Verein der Chefredakteure) and Presseclub Concordia (PCC)[5]. It is the senates, rather than the supporting organizations, that decide on complaints and announcements.

The large tabloids such as *Neue Kronen Zeitung*, *Österreich* and the free paper *Heute* are not members; alternative media like *das biber* (a transcultural magazine) and *Bum Magazin* (aimed at “people with roots in the former Yugoslavia”[6]) are actively involved. A problem is immediately obvious here: the media that most frequently violate the press code – the tabloid papers – are not involved and thus do not feel bound by the rulings of the Press Council senates.

Gamillscheg documented around 300 letters and complaints received between 1979 and 1989, and compiled them into three fields: “Errors in research and method; failure to observe boundaries; trends” (Gamillscheg 1990, 11), in addition to violations relating to images. Politicians were most likely to make a fuss about journalistic reporting.

Section 4 of the Code of Honor at the time read: “Any discrimination for racial, religious, national or other reasons is impermissible” (Gamillscheg 1990, 43).[7]

Complaints relating to this were mainly in connection with antisemitism in reports by *Kronen Zeitung* and the *Tiroler Tageszeitung*.

Designations of ethnic origin in Austrian media

In contrast to the German studies quoted by Horst Pöttker, there are no systematic studies or analyses on the Austrian Press Council. The discourse here is largely conducted in and about the media. Austrian regulation and the way journalists deal with designations of ethnic origins are explored and described below.

The 2015 ECRI report on Austria includes the following recommendations:

(i) the addition of further media to the Press Council, (ii) adherence to and publication of its decisions by non-members, (iii) the expansion of the Press Council’s mandate to include all media or the establishment of similar committees for other types of media, including radio and television, (iv) the principle that media only disclose the ethnic background of suspected perpetrators where this is absolutely necessary and serves a legitimate purpose. (ECRI 2015, 24)

This recommendation clearly highlights the deficiencies of the newly-founded Austrian Press Council and explicitly states that “clearly racist content” (ECRI 2015, 24) is published and “the ethnic background of suspects is often” (ECRI 2015, 24) stated in traditional media in reporting on crimes.

Some media are accused of producing xenophobic content that was not properly researched; prejudices are fueled and Roma, asylum seekers and other groups in need of protection are depicted as criminals. (ECRI 2015, 24)

On April 25, 2014, the Managing Director of the Austrian Press Council, Alexander Warzilek, wrote an article in the *Wiener Zeitung* entitled “When Southern Europeans make headlines” (Warzilek 2014, no page reference). In it, he examines the Austrian media that discriminate against people and the question of where the boundaries of reporting lie. He goes on to highlight the role of the Press Council, whose primary role, he says, is to “reprimand and call for change” (Warzilek 2014, no page reference) and demands “ethically correct and responsible journalistic behavior” (Warzilek 2014). Later in the article, Warzilek describes the Press Council’s ruling that a short piece in the Vorarlberg edition of the *Kronen Zeitung* about a robbery was unacceptable because the unknown

perpetrator was described as a “Southern European” who was just one of the many foreigners causing security problems in Austria. Conversely, he says, the use of the terms “Eastern gangs” and “Eastern criminals” in the *Kronen Zeitung* was considered justifiable, as this kind of criminality from “the East” does exist (Warzilek 2014, no page reference).

No concrete anti-discrimination rules for reporting on criminality

The Austrian Press Council examined 253 cases in 2015. 44 cases were ruled to have violated the Code of Honor, 35 of them committed by tabloid newspapers. The *Kronen Zeitung* was reprimanded in 19 cases, *Österreich* nine times and *Heute* seven times (cf. Tätigkeitsbericht des Österreichischen Presserats).

The Austrian Press Council’s Code of Honor does not contain any specific rules about stating the origin of perpetrators; unlike in the German Press Code, the criteria of “compelling pertinence” to the crime does not exist.

The Austrian view of the events in Cologne

The Austrian media also reported on the events of New Year’s Eve 2015 in Cologne, with follow-up reports exploring the question of whether, and if so, how, the ethnic background of suspects and perpetrators should be reported. In a letter to the Chief Editor of the *Kronen Zeitung*, Klaus Herrmann, on February 9, 2016, Warzilek gives his thoughts on an article by Herrmann in which the Chief Editor quotes from the ruling of Senate 2 of the Press Council on stating the nationality of criminals (article dated 20.10.2015) without mentioning a key point: That stating the origin is not in itself an ethical violation, but that the important factor when stating the origin is to weigh up when this is appropriate in a specific case, and when it is not. In his opinion piece in the *Krone*, Herrmann writes that the Press Council demands that the *Kronen Zeitung* “view everything through rose-tinted spectacles” (Hermann 2016, no page reference) and that although the *Kronen Zeitung* is “obliged” not to name the ethnic background, the *Krone* would not withhold this information. He concludes:

We will not have rose-tinted spectacles forced before our eyes so that we can pretend that asylum seekers do not cause problems in our country. Nor will we allow ourselves to be insulted as the pessimistic “lying press” who conceal the truth. (Hermann 2016, no page reference)

In his thesis, Rusch showed that the ethnic background of “foreign” perpetrators was stated disproportionately often and more prominently than the “domestic” origin of perpetrators. Furthermore - highlighting the problem faced - letters to the editor pick up on this reporting and use it to “construct realities in which “the foreigners” are threatening, violent and criminal” (Rusch 2007, 139).

Kronen Zeitung readers constantly use these attributions to legitimize their views and to reinforce

their existing prejudices with further “facts.”

Attitudes among Austrian journalists

The open letter from Warzilek goes beyond the case in question and also refers to the incidents in Cologne. Excerpts from the relevant passages are quoted in order to make the arguments clearer and as the basis for discussion about how the Austrian approach can be evaluated.

Warzilek writes:

Merely mentioning the ethnic background is – in the view of our Senates – not in itself an ethical violation. (...) Nevertheless, in our opinion, journalists should weigh up whether naming the ethnic background is necessary on a case-by-case basis.

We advocate a responsible approach on the part of the media, so that no resentment or prejudices can be fueled. Journalists have a measure of discretion when it comes to the question of stating the nationality – as well as prudence and objectivity, they especially need sure instincts. In a short piece about a pickpocketing incident, for example, it is questionable whether the nationality of the perpetrator needs to be mentioned. Stating it is not relevant to the readers’ understanding. (Warzilek 2016, no page reference)

Journalists’ role is to report fairly and to be conscious of the fact that “*they themselves, too, are actively involved in constructing realities*” (Bonfadelli 2015, 9).

Albrich (2013) conducted an online survey of chronicle and local journalists[8] who report on criminal cases. One of the research questions related to the importance of information about suspects for the journalists (cf. Albrich 2013, 76). Most of those questioned considered ethnicity and background of little relevance. But closer questioning showed that the journalists surveyed make more sophisticated decisions on when to state the nationality and ethnicity: They considered this information unnecessary in standard criminal cases, but essential in cases of organized crime and gang-related incidents. When reporting on racially and ethnically motivated (political) conflicts, “*or ‘honor’ crimes, the information was undoubtedly important in the view of those surveyed*” (Albrich 2013, 83). Some consider stating the ethnicity as part of comprehensive reporting. After all, they said, “*the nationality is factual information that can/should be provided if known*” (Albrich 2013, 83). The journalists certainly weighed up when to state the ethnic background and what effects this information might have on the audience. In this context, they argued that the audience may themselves come to the conclusion that the suspect is a migrant or someone with a different ethnic background, based on other information (cf. Albrich 2013).

In the letter to Herrmann quoted above, Warzilek goes on to specify when stating the ethnic background is in the public interest:

A similar example is when a refugee or asylum seeker is involved in IS terrorist activities. It goes

without saying that, here, it is in the public's interest to know that an IS terrorist entered Europe as a refugee. (...) In contrast, our Senates see the publication of mere rumors and blanket defamation (as is often the case on social media) as a clear ethical violation. (Warzilek 2016, no page reference)

Public perception struggles to differentiate the various aspects. The topics are difficult to understand in detail, nor is there any reflection on the actions of journalists - especially in the tabloid press. Increasing ethnicization in reporting is clear to see, and there is a lack of consciousness-raising processes and public discourse that delves deeper in interpreting causes and proposing solutions *"that attempt to assert interpretational sovereignty in the controversial discourse"* (Bonfadelli 2015, 11).

Although Austria does not have an equivalent to Directive 12.1, there is plenty of discussion about stating the people's ethnic background in reporting, especially in the *Kronen Zeitung* and on social media. Ethical responsibility in the media is not only essential on the part of journalists, but requires a level of trust in the maturity of the public. Journalists need to be able to rely on an audience that is interested in comprehensive, informative reporting.

The fact that Austria was without a Press Council for so long, and that politicians and the public displayed so little interest in founding one, demonstrate a lack of desire to examine the role of journalists in society here. Anti-discrimination rules in journalism are not discussed generally, but only casuistically based on specific cases.

Comment on Austrian discrimination protection in crime reporting

Horst Pöttker

Comparing the situations in Austria and Germany reveals similarities in the underlying structure:

- There are general rules for journalistic work that are intended to protect ethnic, national or religious groups (among others) against discrimination.
- Although self-regulation is intended to help assert anti-discrimination rules in the media, it is not entirely effective.
- Many journalists are sensitive to the issue of discrimination.
- There is vigorous public discourse about stating the ethnicity or nationality of (suspected) criminals, which has intensified following the delayed reporting of the events of New Year's Eve 2015 in Cologne.

As well as these fundamental similarities, there are also differences:

- The Austrian Press Council's Code of Honor does not include a rule that specifically prohibits naming the minority background of criminals.
- Unlike in Germany, the *Kronen-Zeitung* and other Austrian tabloids consider themselves

outside the remit of the Press Council.

- While the German Press Council has developed relatively consistently over time, the Press Council in Austria lay dormant for many years. Journalistic self-regulation has a stronger institutional base in Germany, which also makes it more bound by tradition and less flexible.
- Germany has at least a limited body of research on the requirements, content and effects of anti-discrimination rules in journalism – something that is almost entirely lacking in Austria.

Comparing the perspectives

The two versions share a normative background: Both attempt to make an academic contribution to protecting migrants against discrimination in the media. This is reinforced by the principles of equality that are established in the constitutions of both countries.

However, both constitutions also specify the principle of freedom of the press and communication – a concept that is crucial to the capacity of modern societies to work through problems and remain cohesive. The fundamental right to protection against discrimination on the one hand, and to freedom of expression and information on the other, can contradict one another. My account emphasizes this more, while Petra Herczeg's is based on the premise that true, intelligent interest in comprehensive and informative reporting on the part of the audience is essential if journalists are to be able to provide all the facts appropriately without having to justify themselves.

Options and recommendations for reform

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) recommends the following:

- The admittance of further media to the Press Council. Tabloid newspapers, which cater to a mass market and are thus at particular risk of fueling stereotypes, do not recognize the authority of the Austrian Press Council – an extremely important recommendation.
- Adherence to and publication of the Press Council's decisions by non-members. This recommendation must be endorsed as a possible substitute for the admittance of further media to the Press Council.
- Expansion of the Press Council's mandate to include all media or the foundation of similar committees for other types of media. This is also sensible, as discrimination can take place in any type of media. Online media should not be forgotten either.
- The principle that media only disclose the ethnicity of (suspected) perpetrators when this is absolutely necessary and serves a legitimate purpose. I do *not* endorse this recommendation, because the role of journalists in creating a public sphere is a legitimate purpose in itself. I would be more likely to support a rule that prohibits journalists from disclosing the minority background of criminals where, taking all circumstances into account, this appears discriminatory (reversal of the burden of proof).

Adding a rule to the Austrian journalists' Code of Honor that generally prohibits stating the minority background of criminals is not recommended. Here, Austria has the opportunity to prevent problems that contribute to the media's loss of credibility from the outset.

There is an alternative to self-regulation by journalists that could enhance its effectiveness - even where discrimination against migrants is to be prevented. It lies in the innate journalistic method of providing wide-ranging and detailed information to the public - including about the principles and problems of journalistic ethics and the editorial decisions made. The public then provide their own informal yet effective sanctions: They switch off the television, leave the newspaper on the shelf, or do not click on a link.

Comment on discrimination protection in German crime reporting

Petra Herczeg

In his comparative analysis, Horst Pöttker documents both German and Austrian case law practice and thus demonstrates often heterogeneous access. His idea of journalistic work and the public sphere is dominated by normative ideas. Pöttker believes that journalists have a social duty to explain, but no educational function. Despite this, he says that journalists play a crucial role in communicating ideas of "otherness" by describing, reporting, and depicting unfamiliarity. As Rath puts it, journalism can be seen as a "monitoring representative of the citizen towards his politically active representatives" (Rath 2014, 51) - one who acts in line with professional criteria and the ethics of his profession. In doing so, journalists should conduct investigative work, scrutinize input that contradicts the facts, and edit information - again, all normative requirements. The qualifications of journalists need to be better tailored - both to the challenges facing society and to the question of a deliberate approach to anti-discrimination rules. Professional journalists in both Germany and Austria still have work to do here. Thanks to processes of social transformation and diversification, it appears that even more time needs to be spent dealing with the resulting tension. I believe that the German and Austrian Press Councils need to play the role of adjudicator between adhering to the rules of good journalism on the one hand and dealing with unwanted developments in journalism on the other. Journalists are not teachers; their role is not to train their audience - that would be a rather autocratic view of the profession. Instead, as Horst Pöttker has explained, their role is to act professionally and adhere to the ethical standards of their profession. Difficulties arise, however, when the public's idea of journalism differs too widely and connotative phrases like "lying press" become part of the discourse. Journalists are often powerless in the face of such developments.

Skepticism towards the public sphere

As Pöttker repeatedly emphasizes, discussion about the journalistic principles of independence and freedom of information, expression and criticism must be conducted as widely as possible in the public sphere. Self-regulation does not mean that the Press Councils seal themselves off and operate as a kind of alternative judiciary, as is the case in Austria:

In the complaints procedure, the complainant signs a declaration in which he undertakes to recognize the Austrian Press Council as court of arbitration in the given case and thus to waive the right to appeal to the ordinary courts. In particular, this means that no compensation claims can be asserted before the court regarding the object of the complaint. (Press Council 2016)

When a complaint is accepted by the Press Council's court of arbitration, the participating media are obligated to publish the decision: "Publication is mandatory for the media that has submitted to the arbitration of the Press Council" (Press Council 2016). However, the decisions in specific cases do not trigger a general debate about, for example, how to deal with discrimination, the extent to which the public can be involved in this, and how specific countermeasures can be taken.

The non-participating media, i.e. those that are not subject to the Press Council's jurisdiction, often publish polemics against the decisions - as examples have shown. This demonstrates the dilemma of voluntary self-regulation - those media that do not participate avoid sanctions, distance themselves and use the situation to generate even greater loyalty among their audience.

There is also a general lack of thought about journalistic professionalism when it comes to sensitization to discrimination. A range of developments in society, such as social change, processes of transformation and diversification, and the way resources such as diversity are dealt with, present a real challenge for journalists. They have to consider how to provide context and how interested the public is in a story, background reporting and explanation - as well as how the media can bolster cultural exchange.

Social tension also has an impact on journalism and how it is seen. Voluntary self-regulation should be viewed as an opportunity for democratic scrutiny that enables free media to monitor their own work independent of the state (cf. Baum 2010). However, this would require broad public discourse and "*the critical solidarity of the widest possible public sphere*" (Baum 2010, 211). I do not believe that this critical solidarity on the part of the public currently exists. Instead, unlike Pöttker, I see a public that is uninterested in explanation or education - and that is a real problem. Journalists are not the only ones with ethical standards to meet - the public plays a crucial role. Funiok describes a concept of 'audience ethics', "*because media consumers participate in the sphere of public life as communicated by the media*" (Funiok 2010, 233). This must be the starting point. After all, as Funiok continues, there is a link between responsible media use and the ability to deal competently with media (cf. Funiok 2010, 240f) - a skill that has to be learned. This includes audience awareness of the wide range of journalistic access. The public shares responsibility for maintaining standards in journalism. To do this, they need to be offered lifelong media education that generates awareness of the importance of taking part in critical public life. Pöttker describes this as "necessary for civil society" (cf. Pöttker 2005b).

The differences highlighted between the German and Austrian Press Councils show that there is undoubtedly a need for further discussion, both to prevent legislators from limiting press freedom and to establish more robust strategies to combat discrimination.

Social media in particular is home to a dynamic of arguments that spread in different directions, often generate further discussion in an affirmative and emotional way, and are thus diametrically opposed to the aim of achieving an enlightened public. Quite apart from questions of self-regulation in professional journalism, a separate debate remains to be had about the extent to which the dynamic on social media is enticing professional journalism away from its aims of producing reporting that is true to the facts, unbiased and non-discriminatory - especially in fields with high levels of audience participation.

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Horst Pöttker, Univ.-Prof. Dr. phil.-hist., born in 1944, TU Dortmund University (retired)/Hamburg University (Senior Professor), investigated the effectiveness of journalistic anti-discrimination rules as part of a DFG project on the medial integration of ethnic minorities in Germany and North America. E-Mail to the author

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Footnotes:

[1] e.g. when the membership is not the one the reader would expect given the circumstances described.

[2] This wording was composed in 2013. According to the Managing Director of the Austrian Press Council, Alexander Warzilek, the amendment was made in order to omit and re-word relics from the 1960s such as “racial discrimination.”

[3] Note that, although no sanctions were available, the journalistic code of honor essentially continued to exist in the form of the collective agreement for journalists.

[4] GPA-DJP: Union of Private Employees, Print, Journalism, Paper.

[5] The Press Council is funded by membership fees paid by its supporting organizations and by press promotion funds (cf. § 12a PresseFördG).

[6] cf. www.bummedia.at (accessed on 2.8.2016).

[7] As mentioned before, this clause was amended in 2013.

[8] In his thesis, Albrich (2013) describes the journalists as criminal reporters. His random sample

consists of 94 journalists (print and online), of whom 68% stated that they worked as criminal reporters.

Translation: Sophie Costella

Uwe Krüger: *Mainstream. Why we no longer trust the media.*

reviewed by Guido Keel



There is a problem with journalism in Germany - this forms the starting point of the latest work by Leipzig-based journalism expert Uwe Krüger. In it, he examines the question of why people have increasingly lost trust in and become more critical of the media in recent years - a phenomenon seen not only among those who complain loudly about the “Lügenpresse” [liar press], but across the political spectrum.

Following his 2013 dissertation that examined and denounced the influence of elite networks on the alpha journalists in Germany, Krüger’s new book “*Mainstream. Warum wir den Medien nicht mehr trauen*” (2016) focuses on the question of how and, above all, why the range of opinions represented in the German media appears to have decreased. However, the author does not investigate whether the variety really has shrunk. Instead, Krüger quotes a study from the 1990s and uses reporting on selected events - predominantly the Ukraine crisis, which he sees as the point around which mistrust in the media crystallised - to illustrate the finding that the media of record largely share the same choice of topics and assessment thereof. He also refers to various opinion polls that have repeatedly demonstrated the falling level of trust the public places in the media and especially in their lack of bias.

Starting from the observation that journalism is suffering from an existential crisis of credibility, Krüger goes in search of the causes of this “synchronisation” (p. 7) of the media of record. He finds them at various levels, with the influence of the elite networks appearing as a topic once again. In addition, Krüger believes that the phenomenon of media mainstreaming in reporting (cf. p. 27) is motivated both by the increasingly precarious production conditions in journalism and by the origins and professional socialisation of journalists, who are increasingly drawn from a specific socio-cultural and economic background (“liberal intellectual”, p. 79) and thus represent certain opinions and networks. This brings Krüger to the alarming conclusion that the media and journalists are gradually chipping away at their own basis for existence, as they are becoming increasingly alienated from their audience and are thus unable to fulfil their core purpose of providing

information and guidance for society.

Krüger closes by suggesting how this development could be stopped (p. 140-144), making a plea to both journalists and the public in a chapter appropriately titled "Relaxation Exercises". Firstly, he states, journalists need to do more to address the ambivalence caused by their close relationship with decision makers in business and politics – however useful this link may be. Krüger also appeals to journalists to find long term ways to deal with the consequences for their profession of the changes to the world of public communication brought about by social media. This also means clearly facing up to dialogue with the public and placing more trust in the audience. Secondly, Krüger demands that the public demonstrate greater interest in and understanding of the production conditions to which journalism today is subject and of the environment in which it struggles to be heard.

The topics covered in *Mainstream* do not stray far from those in the author's dissertation. However, this latest work is presented as a very different type of book. *Mainstream* is a grippingly-written essay on a development in journalism and is not primarily aimed at experts in academia, but will surely be easily comprehensible and enlightening to the interested layperson. Despite this, the 38-year-old author frequently refers to academic findings that give the book relevance and transform it into more than merely a personal opinion piece. The unpretentious way in which literature, research and even concrete examples from the media are woven into the text, serves to make his arguments more credible and persuasive, without disturbing the flow. For example, he illustrates his thoughts with the way the Wulff affair [a scandal involving the then German President] and the TTIP trade agreement were reported, the failure of the international press in the run-up to the property and economic crisis in 2008, and the noticeably pro-American stance of leading German journalists. The successful way in which he navigates the tightrope between academic rigour and current affairs makes Krüger's book more than just yet another repetition of prejudices and subjective opinions by an indignant contemporary.

He thus makes a contribution to the ongoing discussion on the media in a form that is familiar from the English-speaking world, but that remains all too rare in German-speaking countries. In addition, the author succeeds in communicating a clear message without appearing to excessively simplify or moralise. Some of his arguments are certainly vehement. For example, he explicitly accuses German broadcasters ARD and ZDF of deliberately "clearly biased" (p. 119) reporting on the economic crisis in Greece and describes developments in Germany as a "regression" (p. 127) towards the kind of consensus journalism seen after the Second World War. However, he also demonstrates understanding of this kind of problematic development and remains constructive in his approach. In doing so, he highlights various dilemmas faced by journalists in their day-to-day work, such as whether to always provide the audience with all the information or instead to weigh up responsibly which information is helpful in understanding a situation and which is more likely to lead to false conclusions or over-interpretation.

By moving away from the rigid and often inaccessible form usual in academic texts, Krüger also exposes himself to criticism. His view that the Russian perspective was deliberately neglected during

the Ukraine crisis, or that those responsible for the financial disaster in Greece received excessively negative press in Germany, will not be to everyone's taste. Some contradictions also emerge. For example, he writes that journalists increasingly see their role as that of conformist communicators of information who make no attempt to critique or monitor (p. 39), only to later criticise them for taking too great a responsibility upon themselves for dividing the world into good and evil (p. 105f). The author must, however, be given credit for having the courage to come down from his ivory tower and address these attacks, which nevertheless do nothing to dilute the urgency of his key arguments.

This review is based on the first edition of the book published in March 2016. A revised and updated version appeared in August.

This review first appeared in rkm:journal.

About the reviewer

Dr. Guido Keel is a lecturer at Zurich University of Applied Sciences' Institute for Applied Media Studies. The focuses of his research include quality in journalism; change in journalism; and journalism in non-European contexts.

About the book

Uwe Krüger: *Mainstream. Warum wir den Medien nicht mehr trauen.* Munich [C.H. Beck] 2016. 170 pages, EUR 14.95.

Irma Nelles: Der Herausgeber. Erinnerungen an Rudolf Augstein [The publisher. Memories of Rudolf Augstein]

reviewed by Beatrice Dernbach



It begins with a goodbye. Rudolf Augstein is lying in Hamburg's Israelitisches Krankenhaus with severe pneumonia on October 31, 2002. He dies a few days later on November 7, just after his 79th birthday. On the way home in the taxi, she begins to cry. "Has something terrible happened?," asks the driver. "No, something normal." "Your boyfriend?" She thinks for a moment. "In a few, brief moments, I suppose we were friends" (p. 11).

Born in 1946, Irma Nelles joined the *Spiegel's* Bonn office in Summer 1973. She began as a secretary, before reducing her hours to train as a primary school teacher between 1976 and 1983. After graduation, Nelles moved to Hamburg, where she edited the magazine's letters page. In 1993, she finally moved to the twelfth floor of the *Spiegel* building to manage the publisher's office, which she did until his death. At the encouragement of friends, she has now written down her memories of the time for *Aufbau Verlag*.

The author talks a great deal about herself in this book. She grew up in a rectory on the North Frisian island of Nordstrand. Her father brought the *Spiegel* home from visits to Hamburg twice a month. "I found the texts in the *Spiegel* complicated and difficult to understand. Also, they were almost always about men and rarely about dancers or actors" (p. 13). Her father was a big fan of the magazine and its publisher, saying "He finds out everything and does not put up with any nonsense." Daughter Irma noticed "this Augstein (...) because he seemed to be a kind of Kalle Blomquist, master detective, who sometimes takes the big guys to task" (p. 14).

Nelles married at the age of 22 and moved to the banks of the Rhine in Bonn with her husband and two children. Five years later, she spotted a job advertisement in the *Bonner Generalanzeiger*, applied and joined the *Spiegel's* Bonn office as a secretary. In late Summer 1973, the publisher Rudolf Augstein announced that he would be visiting the office. "I couldn't wait. Rudolf Augstein in

person! You could tell immediately when he was there. On those days, the editors seemed to be more clean shaven and have neater hair than usual, and wore neat suits and even ties" (p. 24f.). Nelles sensed how the normally relaxed atmosphere in the offices changed. "It was almost as if God himself was at the door. Something like fear spread throughout the office" (p. 25).

Nelles did not meet the publisher very often in the first few years, and fills these gaps in the book with a lot of irrelevant biographical elements. Having never worked as a journalist, Nelles is not practiced in assessing and filtering out the important information. Political turmoil caused by events like the Günter Guillaume affair and the resignation of Willy Brandt in 1974 are mentioned, but do not play a significant role. Instead, she provides a great deal of detail on how the publisher regularly summons her to join him on holidays in Switzerland and France, where she gets to know her boss on a more personal level. However, these stories are rarely amusing and are often repeated over the 300 pages. Nelles clearly is not a natural author, and is unable to weave her everyday observations into an exciting story. The book is more boring than enlightening.

The author does succeed in reinforcing the image of the man outlined in other reports (such as the biography *Augstein* by Dieter Schröder, 2004) in a more private, almost intimate, level of depth. Yet this very direct, almost diary-like record is still a long way from the "genre picture of German media history from the 1970s" promised in the publisher's PR text. It is a personal portrait of a strange man who was undoubtedly important in German media history - no more and no less.

The closer Irma Nelles' relationship with Augstein becomes over the decades, the more others appear to turn away. The editors seem annoyed when he announces a visit, and he is not particularly welcome at headquarters in Hamburg, either. His few real friends are worried. Television and radio producer Henri Regnier and his wife Antonia spend a lot of time with Augstein and watch as he becomes more and more reclusive, appears almost "manically depressed" and begins to drink excessively. "A rich and famous man like that: Why does he have no-one and why does he not know what to do?" asks Nelles (p. 49). Antonia Regnier describes Augstein's relationships with women as "Don Juanism" (ibid.), and the couple attempts to persuade Nelles to take more care of Augstein. "He needs a woman to cook him soup" (ibid.).

But his secretary never permits sexual or intimate approaches. Although she does not say in as many words, it is clear that she does not want a relationship with this man who appears so powerful, rich and famous on the outside, but is also so sensitive, self-pitying, depressive, alcohol-addicted, often surly, uncommunicative, aging - in short, contradictory man. She repeatedly lives close by or even under the same roof, but his approaches come to nothing.

This is no wonder given his rather unchivalrous strategy. He once listened to a speech by the certifiable Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis, who apparently had a prenuptial agreement amounting to millions of dollars with widow Jacqueline Kennedy, "who would give him nothing, absolutely nothing, in return." Afterwards, Augstein says to Nelles, "Well, how about this: Twice a week." Faced with her stunned silence, Augstein continues defiantly, "Twice (...). It can't be that difficult" (p. 139f.). His closest employee thinks about her job and her partner living far away in

Bonn and gently rejects Augstein's advances. "Can't we just wait and see how we get along? Maybe something will develop over time" (p. 141).

But nothing like that does develop. Irma Nelles never succumbs to Augstein's advances, despite remaining by his side. He began to write fewer and fewer opinion pieces and title stories, and was rarely seen in his office. At 78, Augstein was physically frail and living in the past. He was now "placid and conciliatory" (p. 313), even towards former rivals. In this "almost childish gentleness, close to death, it seemed as though Rudolf Augstein now wanted to show how vulnerable he really was. The tough, protective exterior that had always made him seem so pugnacious had vanished" (ibid.).

The review first appeared in rkm:journal.

About the author

Dr. Beatrice Dernbach is a Professor of Practical Journalism in the Technical Journalism/Technical PR program at Nuremberg Tech. Her focuses include specialist journalism; sustainability and ecology in journalism; narration and trust in journalism; and scientific communication.

About the book

Irma Nelles (2016): *Der Herausgeber. Erinnerungen an Rudolf Augstein*. Berlin: Aufbau. 314 pages. EUR 22.95.

Lorenz Matzat: Datenjournalismus. Methode einer digitalen Welt [Data-driven journalism. Method of a digital world]

reviewed by Holger Müller



What does the future hold? Academic writing about journalism in the digital age often contains a remarkably similar range of terms: cross-media, communities and data-driven journalism. Each of these approaches is essentially a method of using the internet as a platform for generating attention in the short term and profit in the long term. But before profit comes hard work, as Lorenz Matzat hopes to show using examples in his book *Datenjournalismus. Methode einer digitalen Welt*, published by UVK in the *Praktischer Journalismus* series.

Lorenz Matzat will be a familiar name to those who follow developments in digital journalism. He is co-founder of the agency *OpenDataCity*, which works with media houses to implement data-driven journalism projects. One example is “Verräterisches Handy” [The treacherous mobile phone], an analysis of Deutsche Telekom’s data retention on the Green Party politician Malte Spitz for *Zeit Online*. This work won the project partners the Grimme Online Award, the Lead Award and the American Online News Association Award in 2011. In 2013, Matzat left *OpenDataCity* to concentrate on his software company *Lokaler*, which develops location-based services. He also maintains a blog on datenjournalist.de about data-driven and interactive journalism.

Talking of interactivity, the greatest advantage of a blog over printed media is the opportunity to include links to courses or additional information. In his book on data-driven journalism, Matzat attempts to bridge the divide between print journalism and the world wide web. Counting just under 100 pages, the book is limited to the key points of data-driven journalism: A brief introduction (p. 7-13) is followed by sections on the basics of data-driven journalism (p. 15-33), methods (p. 35-65) and publication (p. 67-92). Since Matzat also includes 64 links to essays, examples, tools and datasets that can be accessed on his [website](http://datenjournalist.de) it makes sense to read the book while sitting at a computer.

In his [blog](http://datenjournalist.de), Lorenz Matzat states that his book is aimed at beginners looking for a place to start. He

thus begins with a page of introduction, two pages of definitions and a brief historical overview. Unusually brief perhaps, but those who read his blog will know that Matzat is a man of few words – his explanation of how he views data-driven journalism as a method also takes just a handful of sentences. In his view, the dataset is at the heart of journalistic interest (p. 9). The role of data-driven journalists is two-fold: working with the data (recording, sanitizing and researching) and journalistic presentation – ideally in the form of an interactive graphic or application (p. 10). After a few definitions, the structure of the rest of the book also builds on this logic.

Matzat then asks a rhetorical question: Does a journalist who works with data need to learn how to program (p. 31)? His answer is a resounding ‘no’, as data-driven journalism demands team work and specialization (p. 31). But a common language is still needed if this team is to be able to communicate when working on a project. Here, too, the author focuses on the key points: Data is ultimately anything that can be measured or counted (p.17); structure comes from the interpretation of quantitative data using statistical methods (p.18-20); and the amount of information statistics provide depends on why they are used and how they are presented (p. 27-30).

The most useful chapter for those new to data-driven journalism are the explanations of processing (p. 40-65) and presenting data (p. 68-91). Readers will be hoping for answers to key questions: How do I research my data? Where does my dataset lack coherence? Which methods can I use to present the data? How do I prepare my project for final publication? Matzat does answer these questions, but a list and brief outline of possible solutions and examples is as far as he goes. The way he lists ‘scraping’ as a method of gathering data is one example: Although he describes how a computer program is used to mine data from a website automatically and save it in a machine-readable form (p. 46), he does not illustrate this with a specific case study. Instead, he provides a link to ten files of course material on [“Web Scraping Without Programming”](#) by the National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting. The reader feels as though he is being sent from pillar to post – and the four-page document contains almost 30 further links. From a didactic point of view, this is a missed opportunity. Instead of merely listing methods and tools, the author could have used a concrete example to explain how to work with and present data, not least in order to demonstrate the amount of labor involved and how it is distributed in a team.

Matzat does not promise “to turn the reader into an expert in data-driven journalism in an instant” (dust cover text). But with this book, his readers are unlikely even to become beginners. The author lists the key principles, steps and techniques of data-driven journalism, but does little more than touch on each point. This approach demands a certain level of prior knowledge on the part of the reader, contradicting his own aims. The layout gives precedence to extensive quotes printed in white capitals on a blue background, some of which take up almost an entire page (p. 41). The print template also fails to take the bleed into account: The side register has been cut off.

This review first appeared in rkm:journal.

About the reviewer

Holger Müller (M.A.) is a Research Assistant and Academic Counsellor at Bamberg University's Institute for Communication Studies, where he also runs the training radio station *friedaFM*. His teaching and research focuses on practical journalism and journalism research.

About the book

Lorenz Matzat (2016): *Datenjournalismus. Methode einer digitalen Welt*. Constance/Munich: UVK. 102 pages. EUR 17.99.

Lars Bauernschmitt, Michael Ebert: Handbuch des Fotojournalismus [Photojournalism handbook] reviewed by Evelyn Runge



Some icons of 20th Century photojournalism need no introduction: Joe Rosenthal's image of soldiers hoisting the American flag in Iwo Jima (1945); Malcolm Browne's photo of the monk Thich Quang Duc setting himself alight in Saigon (1963); and Nick Ut's film of terrified children fleeing in Vietnam (1972) are all etched in our collective memory. But war and crisis are not the only situations that give rise to iconic photographs - science and even paparazzi images can be just as memorable. The product of twelve years' preparation, Lennart Nilsson's "legendary photostory on the development of human life in the womb" (p. 268) was published in *LIFE* magazine in 1965. It was made possible by Karl Storz Endoskope - a company based in Tuttlingen, Germany, that worked with the photographer to develop the necessary camera systems (p. 268, 274f.). The "King of the Paparazzi" (*White/TIME*, no date), Ron Galella, even lost his lower front teeth while working as a photographer when actor Marlon Brando broke his jaw - making Galella himself the story. Next time, he approached Brando wearing a helmet (p. 216f.).

These images and many more form the basis of the *Handbuch des Fotojournalismus*, which provides a broad overview of the profession's history, forms, applications and practice. The practical expertise of its authors Lars Bauernschmitt and Michael Ebert is in evidence throughout the book. Both have decades of experience in the German photography sector: Bauernschmitt's roles included Managing Director of the VISUM agency (1993-2008), while Ebert has been a photojournalist for media, companies and as a member of Bauernschmitt's former agency since 1979. Both also teach photojournalism at Hanover University of Applied Sciences.

The authors kick off their 17 chapters by examining the history of photography, modern photojournalism and specific means of expression in chronological order. Chapters 5 to 11 each focus on a different subject, including local journalism (p. 169ff.), sport photography (p. 183ff.), paparazzi (p. 217ff.), politicians (p. 229ff.), and the role of photojournalism in public relations (p. 245ff.) and in nature and science photography (p. 267ff.). The book closes with information on equipment (p. 281ff.), hardware and software (p. 297ff.), the image market and photographers' rights (p. 305ff.).

Unlike the many recent publications that equate image and photojournalism with war or crisis photography (e.g. Pensold 2015), Bauernschmitt and Ebert have deliberately chosen a broad-ranging

approach. This perspective enables them to portray the complexity of photojournalism in a huge variety of ways – be it by reflecting on the change in forms of publication through digitization and equipment requirements (cf. e.g. p. 137, 297ff.) or by providing tips on how photographers can find their niche(s) and create their brand (e.g. p. 305ff., 316ff., 327ff., 335ff.). The authors emphasize the expanding market for photo agencies that are not explicitly for journalistic purposes. Using Getty Images as an example, they describe the enormous extent to which photos have become commodities (p. 305ff.) – through payment forms like micropayment (p. 307f.), licensing models like royalty-free (p. 311), and the increasing use of stock photos (p. 325; cf. also Glückler/Panitz 2013, Runge 2016).

Each chapter also touches on the working conditions of photojournalists, although rarely those of picture editors. The authors state that around 4,000 people in Germany earn their living “directly or indirectly through journalistic photography” (p. vi). Despite falling sales and wages, and the fact that photoreporters are expected to take on more and more work, it remains an attractive job (p. vii) – the 500 new graduates who join the profession every year are testament to this (p. 306): “To a certain extent, our profession is a ticket to other worlds. You are constantly sent to a huge range of other people in order to take photos. You are always immersed in new situations and lives to which a normal mortal has little access”, says Rolf Nobel, Professor of Photography at Hanover University of Applied Sciences (p. 401).

As well as presenting theoretical and historic principles, each chapter also includes numerous interviews with practitioners from a huge range of photojournalistic fields. Women in positions of leadership also have a chance to speak – commendable given that their work remains barely recognized in the otherwise male-dominated world of photojournalism (cf. Isermann 2015, Pensold 2015). The interviewees report on their everyday work, including their pay and the effort involved. Although conscious of the stiff competition in the sector, Haika Hinze, Art Director of the weekly newspaper *Die Zeit* (p. 133ff.), claims that *Die Zeit* pays fees that are “decent compared with the rest of the market” (p. 133), although “it is painful to know that we cannot pay the photographer the non-material value of his work” (p. 133). Ruth Eichhorn, who was responsible for photography for *Geo* magazine from 1994 to 2005, explains how the magazine conducts large reports – including extensive on-site research by the editorial office “together with the photographer” (p. 144).

Chapter 10 on “Photojournalism in PR” (p. 244ff.) is particularly worthy of note, with Bauernschmitt producing an excellent exploration of corporate publishing’s increasing reliance on photojournalistic storytelling. Falling pay in the press sector is pushing photojournalists to take on work for company and society publications. Photojournalism-style images appear more authentic than advertising photography – a quality that companies use to enhance customer loyalty (cf. 246, 250), but that makes it even more difficult for consumers to differentiate journalism from advertising (cf. also p. 397).

Bauernschmitt and Ebert make frequent references to their own university, be it in interviews with photographers who also teach at Hanover University of Applied Sciences (e.g. p. 261, 379) or in repeated mentions of the *Lumix* photography festival, which is held in cooperation with the

University (e.g. p. 100, 152, 155, 157). This focus is undoubtedly rather one-sided, with other respected schools such as Lette-Verein Berlin, Bielefeld University of Applied Sciences, the Staatliche Fachakademie für Fotodesign in Munich and Dortmund University of Applied Sciences not getting so much as a mention. Although their names do not include 'photojournalism', these institutions play a vital role in training and educating photographers in Germany. An information section listing some of these addresses at the back of the book would have gone some way to preventing the *Handbuch des Fotojournalismus* from resembling covert advertising for Hanover University of Applied Sciences.

The book is richly illustrated with photographs, including historic images and a relatively large number of reproductions of double-page spreads and front pages from magazines such as *LIFE* and *Spiegel* (e.g. p. 101, 106, 107, 196). Although the authors emphasize the importance of detailed image captions to provide context (p. 341f.), they do not always follow their own advice. One series of six photos by Pete Souza, former Chief Official White House Photographer, shows US President Barack Obama in various interview situations (p. 236-238), as well as the famous image from the White House situation room showing Obama and his closest aides watching live images from the raid on Osama bin Laden's compound (p. 235). Although this photograph was so widely reported, the book does not mention the debate. Another point of criticism is the lack of academic sources. The authors do include a reading list (p. 405 ff.) that provides a solid overview of standard works on the basics of photography, photojournalism and their history, techniques, image design, market and legal situation, but the text itself lacks direct references and source information - a real downside for academic readers.

All in all, the *Handbuch des Fotojournalismus* has an attractive design. Its key plus points are its broad remit and the authors' expertise in the history and practice of photojournalism. The book also demonstrates the enormous potential for research in photojournalism that goes beyond the art history perspective - for example relating to the media economy, the importance of visual communication in science, and the production and effectiveness of digital storytelling.

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Tim Kukral: Arbeitsbedingungen freier Auslandskorrespondenten [Working conditions of freelance foreign correspondents]

reviewed by Julia Lönnendonker

Many new journalists dream of one day taking up a prestigious position as a foreign correspondent. But what are the working conditions really like for freelance foreign correspondents, who do not have the luxury of being employed by a public service broadcaster? And how has the situation changed as a result of the media crisis and the economic pressures it has produced? Are freelancers benefiting from the reduction in full-time correspondent positions by filling the gaps? Or are they also feeling the pinch of shrinking budgets for foreign reporting (cf. p. 36)?

These questions are the subject of Tim Kukral's thesis *Arbeitsbedingungen freier Auslandskorrespondenten*, written as part of the master's program in Journalism and Communication Studies at Hamburg University. He begins by looking back, albeit briefly, at the research already conducted into the point of intersection between foreign correspondents and freelance journalists. The author believes that freelance foreign correspondents are particularly highly motivated and describes them as "working by conviction... [journalists] whose work gives them a satisfaction that overrides the difficulties of dealing with certain adversity" (p. 37).

For the empirical part, he surveyed 15 freelance foreign correspondents from all over the world - all members of the journalists' network *Weltreporter* - about their work and how they see their role. The results are categorized into general information about those surveyed; an account of the features of each reporting area (such as infrastructure, cost of living and security situation); and a description of the correspondents' daily lives, including their clients, working processes and working relationship with editors in the home country. The author also describes the correspondents' motivation and includes a short section on the *Weltreporter* network itself. In demonstrating that a correspondent's working conditions fundamentally depend on the area they work in, the information on how the correspondents work and how they see their role does not differ significantly from earlier studies. Both the situation in the region (such as the security situation, infrastructure and culture) and the German public's interest in that country or region impact the way it is reported on.

One fascinating aspect that is yet to be researched in detail is the correspondents' view on public relations services. While most of those surveyed vehemently reject the option of working in PR (even as a sideline), many of them earn some of their income from corporate publishing - writing for customer magazines and journals. The journalists describe their work for this kind of magazine as a pleasant kind of work, so different from their everyday lives as freelance correspondents, with

“interesting topics, detailed research, convenient travel, freedom of structure, full expenses and generous pay” (p. 106).

All in all, the book provides an absorbing overview of the work of the correspondents in the *Weltreporter* network. A notable point of criticism, however, is that the author fails to highlight how atypical the journalists in this network are: As the top German freelance correspondents, studying them enables little useful comparison with other freelance foreign reporters. Instead, Kukral merely writes that the *Weltreporter* network provides a balance for the “solitary” (p. 112) nature of the average correspondent’s work and guarantees a “certain ‘presence on the market’” (p. 112). Despite this having a significant impact on the results regarding working processes and topics covered, he also fails to mention the fact that the journalists surveyed all work in print, radio or online – not a single television journalist was interviewed.

In examining existing research, Kukral complains that previous studies have so far failed “to link the data collected to overarching contexts” (p.34) – a claim that could unquestionably also be made about his own work. Except in a few cases, he does not compare his results with those of earlier investigations, nor does he look into how the working conditions of freelance foreign correspondents differ from those of their regularly-employed colleagues. Responding to the opening question about how freelance correspondents fare economically, Kukral writes that “media are continually reducing spending on foreign reporting” (p.119), with more and more topics being covered by agencies and pay “ever lower” (ibid.). “Many of those surveyed stated that, in order to earn the same amount, they have to produce more today than at the start of their careers” (ibid.). Yet this situation is arguably the same for freelance foreign correspondents, who also complain about increased workloads and are constantly forced to prove their expertise and sell their topics to the editorial office at home. They, too, are fighting for their share of falling travel budgets and the tendency of many editors to use agencies or reports from other media to cover topics, without on-site research.

Future research should take a closer look at comparing the activities of freelance and employed foreign correspondents. It would also be interesting to examine a larger and more varied number of freelance correspondents, which would enable a typology of freelance foreign correspondents to be developed.

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About the reviewer

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reporting about Turkey's potential accession to the EEC/EC/EU since the 1950s.

About the book

Tim Kukral (2016): *Arbeitsbedingungen freier Auslandskorrespondenten. Eine qualitative Befragung von Mitgliedern des Journalistennetzwerks Weltreporter*. Cologne: Herbert von Halem Verlag. 150 pages. EUR 16.00.

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