

Journalism Research

Edited by Bernhard Debatin, Gabriele Hooffacker, Horst Pöttker,
Tanjev Schultz and Martina Thiele

2019 | Vol. 2 (2)

www.journalistik.online

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Journalism Research
(Journalistik. Zeitschrift für Journalismusforschung)

2019, Vol. 2 (2)

<http://www.journalistik.online>

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Abs. 2 RStV)
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Acknowledgement

Stiftung Presse-Haus
Wir danken der Stiftung Presse-Haus NRZ in
Essen für die freundliche Unterstützung.

Publisher

Herbert von Halem Verlagsgesellschaft
mbH & Co. KG
Schanzenstr. 22
51063 Köln
Telefon: +49(0)221-9258290
Telefax: +49(0)221-92582929
E-Mail: info@halem-verlag.de

Vertreten durch:

Herbert von Halem Verlagsges. mbH
Geschäftsführer: Herbert von Halem
Registergericht: Köln
Registernummer: HRB 25647

Registereintrag:

Eingetragen im Handelsregister.
Registergericht: Köln
Registernummer: HRA 13409

Umsatzsteuer-ID:

Umsatzsteuer-Identifikationsnummer nach
§27a Umsatzsteuergesetz:
DE 172 714 183

Editorial

How did journalists from around the world work together on the Paradise and Panama Papers? Julia Lück and Tanjev Schultz have been finding out. In their paper, they publish the key results from their study on the work of journalists in the *International Consortium of Investigative Journalists* (ICIJ), who were involved in uncovering criminal financial activities on a global scale. One of the biggest challenges they faced was enabling the enormous quantity of data to be analyzed and trawling through it to find the stories about people, companies and their activities that would be relevant to the public. Read on in this edition of *Journalistik* to find out how they did it.

Global data journalism would probably have looked like a work of science fiction to Joseph Roth (1894 to 1939). Although he is best known as the author of novels like »Job« and »Radetzky March,« the journalistic work he left behind is just as extensive. In her paper, Petra Herczeg examines how he dealt journalistically with the rise of National Socialism and discusses Roth's significance for journalism today.

In the essay in this edition of *Journalistik*, Marcus Maurer investigates interaction between journalism and the party *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD), discussing three potential strategies and their consequences. Maurer calls for the AfD to be treated not uncritically, but professionally.

The debate piece in this edition is all about social bots. An investigation of Twitter debates presented by Tommy Hasert and Gabriele Hooffacker suggests that the significance of social bots has been exaggerated. The data is carefully collected and presented. However, in order to measure the effect of bots, it would also be important to find out to what extent they have contributed to confusion and fake news, and to what extent content from bots has been taken up and further distributed by others. This would require a network analysis investigation.

Another aspect that we consider worthy of debate is the interpretive context in which this data is placed. »Only« 7.68 percent of the addresses involved in online discussions on politics and consumption can be identified as bots. Can we therefore conclude that they do not present a threat to democracy – especially if we consider how tight the election results that led to Brexit and Trump's presidency were, or when we take into account the finding that, in the US mid-term elections in particular, the bots had a relatively negative outlook and a large reach?

Surely commenting that, although bots present a threat in theory, there is no clear evidence of their impact, is to downplay the risks associated with bots? It is useful to accuse journalists of professionally exaggerating the attention paid to such risks? Is a small snapshot of the situation in summer 2018 even enough to relativize the problematic potential of the bots?

Does comparison with factors such as commercial television or the mass media, whose damaging influence on democratic culture has sometimes been the subject of very intense research and discussion in communication studies, make bots harmless? Is the demand for recognizable responsibility for public information, which has long been enshrined in press law, an illegitimate limit on freedom of communication?

Perhaps, instead of considering media phenomena themselves, one should take society's experience of the »transformation of democracy« (Johannes Agnoli) – which has gradually been taking hold for years and is now undeniable – as one's starting point and only then ask what role commercial television, tabloid newspapers, and bots and other phenomena play in the digital media transformation?

Questions like this provide food for thought. By placing this paper on bots in the »Debate« section, we invite readers to put together contradictory or supplementary opinions. You can leave your comments directly under the papers, the essay, and the debate pieces, or send us an email at redaktion@journalistik.online.

We are also always pleased to receive topic suggestions, offers of manuscripts, and critique. Discussion is the lifeblood of academia.

And why not follow *Journalistik* on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/journalistik.online/>.

Translation: Sophie Costella

Papers

Julia Lück / Tanjev Schultz

Investigative Data Journalism in a Globalized World

A Survey Study on ICIJ Journalists

Abstract: The study explores the work of journalists who were engaged in the Panama and Paradise Papers investigations of the *International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ)*, which uncovered dubious financial transactions on a global scale. An online survey was conducted in March 2018 (N=67). It comprised aspects of working routines, division of labor, personal networks, challenges, and obstacles, as well as assessments concerning journalistic methods and anonymous sources. Quantitative and qualitative answers give descriptive insights into the mechanisms of global investigative data journalism. Despite diverse backgrounds (42 countries, different types of media), the journalists have much in common when it comes to professional norms and working routines. At the same time, the strict rules of the organization and a lack of access to material and knowledge also pose challenges for members of the network.

Due to far-reaching political deregulation, financial transactions now flow independently of geographical borders and nation-states. The need for journalism that acts as a global watchdog, holding the powerful accountable – not only in the political but also in the business world – therefore appears greater than ever. At the same time, technological developments support new forms of digital investigative journalism and enable journalists to process huge amounts of (leaked) data (Felle 2015). Two of the most famous and recent examples of this kind of global disclosure are the *Panama* and *Paradise Papers* by the *International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ)*, which publicized tax avoidance strategies and criminal financial activities (Obermayer /Obermaier 2016; Bernstein 2017; Woodall 2017).

These projects are highly relevant examples of a global investigative data journalism that facilitates the emergence of a vigilant transnational public sphere. Such projects and organizations like the ICIJ are examples of new forms of journalistic collaboration that make it possible to carry out cost and time-intensive investigative research despite the tense economic situation of many media companies. To comprehend how these collaborations work, we ask: How is the work organized in a transnational network such as the ICIJ? What are the working routines and practices? And finally, which challenges and limits to their work do ICIJ journalists face? To answer these questions, we contextualized the work of the ICIJ within the scholarly literature on investigative data journalism and conducted an online survey among those ICIJ journalists who participated in the *Panama* and/or *Paradise Papers* projects. Our results give an insight into the current state of global investigative data journalism.

Developments in investigative journalism

By its own account, the ICIJ is a »unique organization, [a] US-based non-profit [...] global network« in which »249 of the best investigative reporters from more than 90 countries and territories [...] collaborate on groundbreaking investigations that expose the truth and hold the powerful accountable, while also adhering to the highest standards of fairness and accuracy.¹⁾ It positions itself in the field of investigative journalism and emphasizes its purpose as a watchdog. This notion of journalism's watchdog role is deeply embedded in Western journalism culture (Hantzsch 2011) and closely connected to the idea of ›the press‹ being the Fourth Estate that controls those in power and holds them accountable (Ettema 2007; Hampton 2012). There are, however, different conceptions of how journalism can achieve this, as pointed out by Starkman (2015), who distinguishes between access reporting and accountability reporting: »Access reporting emphasizes gaining inside information about the actions or intentions of powerful actors before they are widely known. [...] Accountability reporting, in contrast, seeks to gather information not from but about powerful actors« (Starkman 2015: 10). Investigative reporting (such as the work of the ICIJ) is an example of accountability reporting and, according to Abdenour (2018), can be characterized by three main attributes: (1) It comprises original work that (2) reveals concealed information that is (3) of public interest.

Compared to the regular news business, investigative reporting usually requires more time and resources (Stetka/Önebring 2013) and is, therefore, often considered economically risky (Abdenour 2018; Hamilton 2016). With the collapse of advertising revenues and a decline in the numbers of full-time journalists, many news

1 <https://www.icij.org/about/> [June 14, 2019]

organizations struggle to maintain the quality of their journalistic products. At the same time, digital technologies create new opportunities for journalists. They offer numerous ways to cooperate and communicate and also allow for efficient analyses of big data volumes. In this context, associations such as the ICIJ can help to carry out elaborate investigative projects despite low budgets in single newsrooms.

The potential of the connected society for investigative journalism

The connected society holds huge potential for investigative journalism (Gearing 2014). Journalists benefit from the use of web-based communication in many ways: It makes it easier to find stories, get into contact with sources, and collaborate with other journalists. These opportunities have facilitated the rise of investigative networks on an international level. The various forms of such networks differ from one to another, e.g., according to the degree of organization and control, or the degree of collaboration within the network (Heft/Alfter/Pfetsch 2017). Following this distinction, the ICIJ is a highly structured organization with fairly intense collaborations.

Working in international organizations and teams like this can help to address the problems resulting from increasing interconnection between causes and effects around the world (Alfter 2017). The digital media environment enables a shift from competitive single newsroom investigations to a collaborative model in which multiple newsrooms from different countries and regions share information (Carson/Farhall 2018). International networks can be especially helpful for journalists from countries with weak journalistic structures, e.g., when there are only very few investigative reporters in a country. Team members with different national backgrounds may contribute context and inside knowledge for specific parts of the world. Technical skills may also vary, which can initiate a professional division of labor (Alfter 2017; Matzat 2016).

However, working in international teams also presents challenges. Diverse journalistic cultures, political traditions, and economic systems shape the working conditions and routines of journalists and can lead to different perceptions of how work can or should be done (Alfter 2017; Higgins Joyce et al. 2017). Besides, investigative journalism and the notion of a watchdog role are closely tied to liberal media systems that offer sufficient freedom of the press and journalistic autonomy (Gerli et al. 2018; Svensson 2016). Gerli et al. (2018) identify three main forms of interference that journalists face in non-liberal media systems: the influence of partisan publishers, state influence (e.g., on advertising), and intelligence operations. It is particularly challenging to work under constraints of press freedom, but participation in international networks may help to overcome (or at least attenuate) limits imposed by national political systems (Kaplan 2013).

The spread of data journalism

A second important development is the rapid spread of data journalism and, specifically, the possibilities for handling, investigating, and visualizing large quantities of data (Coddington 2014; Boyles/Meyer 2016; Felle 2015). Investigative journalists are especially interested in classified or otherwise concealed data provided by leaks or whistleblowers (Wahl-Jorgensen/Hunt 2012). Using such data has certain advantages for investigative reporters. Woodall (2017) argues that journalists are usually highly dependent on official sources, which can jeopardize their autonomy. Woodall speaks of a »media capture«: journalists may hold back information or report less critically because they do not want to fall out with their sources. Woodall took a closer look at the three »megaleaks« by Chelsea Manning (and WikiLeaks), Edward Snowden, and »John Doe« (Panama Papers), concluding that they were able to disrupt »media capture.« The Panama Papers followed a leak of 11.5 million documents by an anonymous source to the German newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* in 2015. The Paradise Papers were based on another leak of 13.4 million financial and legal documents to the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* in 2016.

Of course, most day-to-day data journalism is not based on such exceptional leaks and still relies heavily on official sources (Stalph 2017). Nevertheless, Castell et al. (2018) showed that many data journalists are highly engaged within a wider data community. They work with experts outside of journalism (like scientists and software programmers) and are in constant contact with journalists from other media organizations. This way, data journalists can be seen as pioneers of journalistic networks and new styles of collaborative newsroom work.

Our study contributes to the understanding of how networks such as the ICIJ operate and how they facilitate high-end investigative data journalism. Specifically, we will go into detail on how the work is organized within different teams, what networks are formed within the greater network, and which purpose they serve, along with what kind of challenges journalists face in their work.

Method

We directed an online survey at journalists on the ICIJ mailing list who worked on the Panama and/or Paradise Papers. Journalists who contributed to these projects did not necessarily have to be official members of the ICIJ. The mailing lists, therefore, contained more people than the actual number of ICIJ members. The study was conducted between March 13 and April 10, 2018 using the platform *soscsurvey.de*. The initial invitation was forwarded by ICIJ headquarters, who approved our request. Two reminders were sent via members of the mailing list who were known personally to the authors.

The questionnaire was split into two parts. This preserved anonymity in the part that concerned assessments and attitudes, while enabling identification by name for the other part (personal network). The first part covered the journalists' personal and professional background, division of labor, working routines, assessments concerning challenges and limits of their work, and perceived threats and harassment (open questions). Several items were drawn from the Worlds of Journalism project (Hanusch/Hanitzsch 2017), such as role perceptions, as well as attitudes on the handling of sources, ethical standards, and appropriate research methods. Other questions were drafted according to our research interest, e.g., whether journalists had faced threats. Several questions allowed open text input, e.g., for thoughts about leaks and sources, threats, and harassment. We use these qualitative data to further contextualize the quantitative answers and quote parts to illustrate and highlight either typical or special aspects that we came across.

The second part of the questionnaire could be reached via an external link at the end of the first questionnaire. In this part, people were asked to identify themselves by name, country, and media organization and then name up to five people with whom they worked together closely during the Panama/Paradise Papers investigation. Respondents were also asked to attribute countries and media organizations to every person named and provide specifics on how the cooperation looked.

We gathered 67 completed datasets for the general part and 50 datasets for the network part. There were 569 email addresses registered on the Panama and Paradise Papers mailing lists, which means a response rate of 11.78 percent for our survey. This does not seem particularly high, but since journalists are generally a difficult group to get a hold of for research (investigative reporters are even more suspicious of sharing information on themselves), we find that 67 completed datasets will at least give us some meaningful insights. Beyond that, our respondents come from 42 different countries, which is a fairly good share of the countries involved in the investigations (about 90 in the Panama Papers and about 70 in the Paradise Papers). Since we allowed respondents to comment freely on several aspects in the questionnaire, we also gathered insightful qualitative data.

Results

In the general part, 22 of the respondents are female, and 42 are male (3 people did not respond to this question). Respondents are 43.8 years on average and have an average of 18.9 years of professional experience (min: 4 years, max: 52 years). About 39 percent of the journalists in the sample work for a daily newspaper, followed by online outlets (20.9 percent) and television (19.4). When asked for their position in the newsroom, most respondents (41.8 percent) indicated that they were reporters, followed by senior editors (13.4 percent), department heads

(11.9 percent), and editors in chief (7.5 percent). Most of the respondents work in investigative departments (80.6 percent). They could check more than one answer, so we know that usually they are associated with other beats as well: About 37 percent work for political beats, 35 percent for economy, business, finance, followed by news/current affairs (29.9 percent), law and crime (28.4 percent), foreign politics (22.4 percent), and domestic politics (19.4 percent).

55 people worked on both projects; 7 worked only on the Panama Papers, 5 only on the Paradise Papers. Most respondents have experience of investigative reporting: 54 indicated that they had worked on other projects before (most of them in more than one), of which Offshore Leaks, Swiss Leaks, and Lux Leaks were the ones most often named. About one third of our respondents indicated that they were not ICIJ members (as mentioned, journalists participating in ICIJ projects do not necessarily have to be members). 60 percent are (also) members of other investigative organizations or networks on a national level (e.g., Brazilian Association for Investigative Journalism, Asociación de Periodismo de Investigación, Bulgarian Center for Investigative Reporting) or an international level (e.g., European Investigative Collaboration, Global Investigative Journalism Network, Watchdog Asia). Two-thirds had received special training in data journalism.

Teamwork and division of labor

One of the key interests of this paper is to offer more insights into how the investigative data journalists organized their work within their network, – which, after all, comprises hundreds of people. Working in teams on investigations like the Panama and Paradise Papers is clearly the rule due to the great amounts of data that must be processed. However, team sizes vary a lot: between 2 and 30 people are involved within one media outlet. According to the answers we received, the most common group size was between 3 and 5 people working together in one media outlet. Some respondents explained that team sizes grew during the investigation. About 70 percent responded that they had some kind of division of labor in their teams. In their open answers, we detect two patterns: teams that divided work (1) by stories, and those that use (2) (technical) tasks and aspects. Those that divided teams by stories usually split the team according to people or businesses or according to countries/regions.

Division of work according to different tasks that arise throughout the process is common, too, for example doing »research, writing, editing, fact-checking, infographics, video, podcast.«

Two very important tasks are emphasized by several respondents, independently of from a division of work by (technical tasks) or subjects/stories. The first is »digging up stories.« Obviously, this is one of the most important tasks. Several respondents pointed out that they had coworkers responsible for finding people

in the data and revealing connected misbehavior. To do so, the data had to be made accessible – a typical task of data-driven journalism:

»I am a data journalist and my job was to 1) gather and run lists of people through the system, 2) work with the structured part of the data, and 3) find other small parts of the data and structure those.«

One important first step in digging up stories is to compose lists of potential people to find in the data, e.g., political and economic elites or celebrities of a country. Here, the international network has a clear advantage since journalists from different countries can bring in their expertise when composing such lists. Working with these lists of names required utmost care, accuracy, and double-checking:

»Three other colleagues checked every name I had provided through Italian companies' databases, in order to match dates of birth and managers' positions or ownership of companies. Our aim was to avoid coming across homonyms.«

Finding people in the data is one thing. Getting further proof from outside the data and collecting people's statements is another important part of the investigative work:

»[...] confront the facts found in the data with local financial and business information related to the names that appear in the papers leaked.«

»[I] found experts, conducted interviews, confronted the subjects of our investigations.«

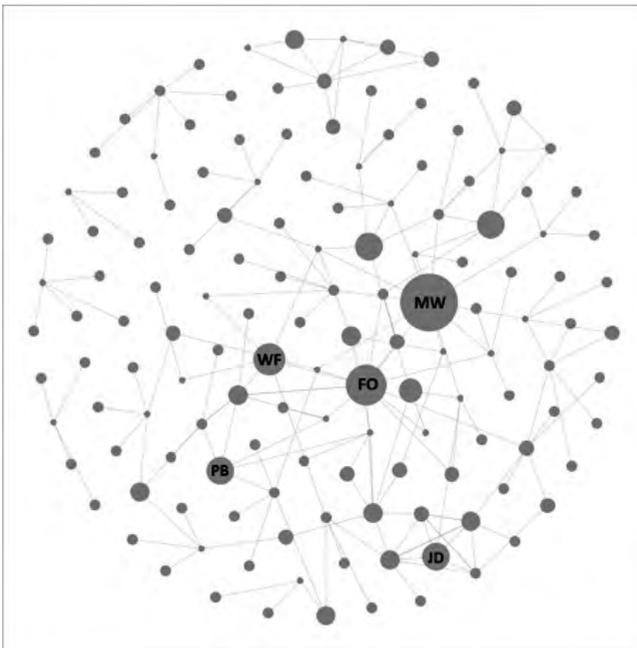
Several respondents indicated that they were responsible for the whole investigation process as lead investigator or coordinator. This job is usually all-encompassing and also includes maintaining contact with other project partners and especially with ICIJ headquarters, as this example illustrates:

»I was the main reporter on the Panama Papers and one of the main reporters on the Paradise Papers [...]. I spent months in the data digging up stories, did the research along with my colleagues, found experts, conducted interviews, confronted the subjects of our investigations, wrote TV documentaries, TV and radio news stories, long form online features, did dozens of live broadcasts in English and French, and was the main liaison with the ICIJ and other colleagues.«

Roles within the network

The importance of the ICIJ as a central instance of coordination becomes even more obvious when people are asked for the most important contact partners they had during the investigation. Figure 1 outlines the network of our respondents. The size of a node indicates a person’s importance based on how often they have been named.

Figure 1
Network of ICIJ journalists



Note: 55 ICIJ journalists, directed network (people were asked to name up to five of their most important contacts in the network); node size according to income degree (the bigger the node the more often the person was named as a contact by others)

Five people stand out in particular. (1) Not surprisingly, Marina Walker as the ICIJ’s Deputy Director had a central role in the network. Respondents indicated that coordinating articles and the exchange of information is her main contribution besides collaborative writing. In addition to Walker, (2) Will Fitzgibbon and (3) Petra Blum were also important contact persons for the ICIJ. Both support

people in their research and facilitate the exchange of information. (4) Frederik Obermaier from the German newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* – that was the first newspaper to be approached by the leak offering the data to start the Panama Paper investigations – also holds a central position in the network. His role is more content related. People emphasized his importance for exchanging information and collaborating on research. As one person put it: He contributed »high level exchange of information and context, guidance.« At *Süddeutsche Zeitung* a larger team was involved, however. Obermaier worked closely together with Bastian Obermayer, who had the first contact with the Panama Papers' anonymous source. The German paper decided to share the data with the ICIJ. Finally, (5) Joachim Dyfvermark from Swedish Television was an important partner for several respondents who worked closely with him researching a specific aspect or person and exchanging the information gathered.

Journalistic research methods

Working with whistleblowers and leaked data is a sensitive affair. We wanted to know what investigative journalists think about various research methods. Table 1 shows the approval of certain methods and highlights where the respondents particularly agree.

Respondents are unanimous in their strict rejection of altering quotes and photographs, but also in the rejection of accepting money from sources or publishing unverified content. Another interesting agreement is that most respondents strictly disapprove of paying people for information. Although investigative reporters depend on explosive information, they only accept this when a source offers it without seeking personal enrichment (which does not exclude the possibility that a source may also try to sell information to other actors).

Some methods meet with partial approval. Most of the respondents agree that, under certain circumstances, it is acceptable to make use of personal documents such as letters and pictures without permission, to gain employment at a firm or organization to gain inside information, or to use hidden microphones or cameras. These three situations are typical methods of investigative journalism.

Other methods are more controversial, e.g., whether or not using confidential business or government documents without authorization is always justified, or only under certain circumstances. Half of the respondents would not give their absolute approval to that method, showing that they tend to think about what kind of information to use for investigative purposes. Whether or not it is acceptable to use unauthorized material (e.g., from interviews) or to give information to NGOs is also a controversial aspect for many.

Table 1
Approval of research methods

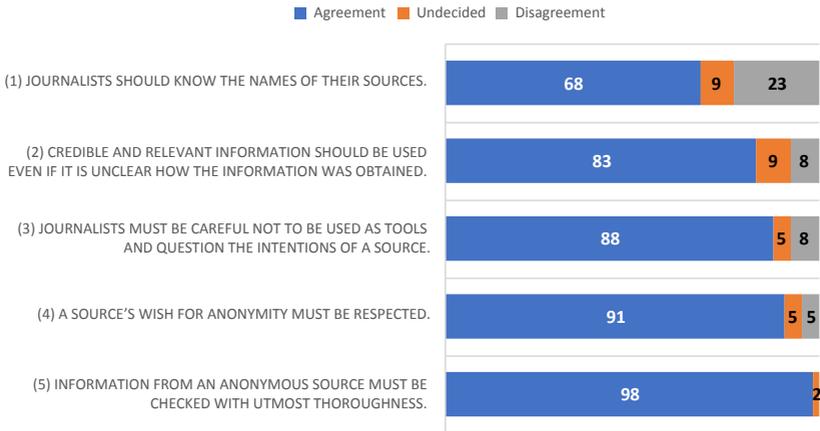
	Always justified	Justified on occasion	Not approved under any circumstances	n	M	SD
Paying people for confidential information	0	15	50	65	2.77	.43
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	26	36	3	65	1.65	.57
Claiming to be somebody else	0	41	24	65	2.37	.49
Exerting pressure on unwilling informants to get a story	1	23	41	65	2.62	.52
Making use of personal documents such as letters and pictures without permission	3	48	14	65	2.17	.49
Getting employed in a firm or organization to gain inside information	2	41	18	61	2.26	.51
Using hidden microphones or cameras	0	59	6	65	2.09	.29
Using re-creations or dramatizations of news by actors	2	33	23	58	2.36	.55
Publishing stories with unverified content	2	4	60	66	2.88	.41
Accepting money from sources	2	0	64	66	2.94	.35
Altering or fabricating quotes from sources	2	1	63	66	2.92	.36
Altering photographs	2	1	63	66	2.92	.36
Use unauthorized material (e.g. from interviews)	2	37	24	63	2.35	.54
Give sensitive information to NGOs	4	29	27	60	2.38	.61

Note: absolute frequencies, means and standard deviation of item agreement on a 3-point scale, shading of cells indicate the strength of the agreement: the darker the coloring the more people coincide in their assessment.

Working with leaks and sources

Figure 2 displays the journalists' views concerning the handling of leaks and sources. More context information about how the respondents deal with leaks and sources can also be drawn from the open responses.

Figure 2
Leaks and sources



Note: N = 66, relative agreement (rounded figures, numbers may add up to more than 100 percent due to automatic rounding), items displayed were phrased in more detail in the questionnaire and people were asked to respond on a 5-point scale from 1 = completely disagree to 5 = completely agree. Agreement and disagreement answers were combined for reasons of clarity.

The answers reveal a high sensitivity towards working with anonymous leaks and sources. Though it is mostly undisputed that leaked information should be used if it is credible and relevant (item 2), it is clear to almost everybody that this information needs rigorous checking (item 5). Sources' wish for anonymity is widely accepted (item 4), although most of the respondents still prefer that the source is at least known to the journalist (item 1). The two sides of working with anonymous sources are shown in the following quote:

»You can even see it is an advantage when you do not know the identity of the source, because then you are sure not to reveal the source, even if there is a gun pointing at your head. The disadvantage is, of course, that it makes it much more difficult to guess the source's motivation for revealing the stuff, and thus you have to work even harder to make sure that the data are genuine, that they are not distorted or sorted out from a larger bundle to alter the understanding.«

Journalists are aware that sources and whistleblowers may have their own agenda, which journalists have to take into account when working with that source (item 3). Several respondents have commented on this issue of sources' own motivations and emphasized that it is necessary but difficult to always retrace these motivations.

»Any source has a motivation; the specificity of journalism is to check and cross-check the information revealed by the source. The sources often speak to a journalist because they have an interest in doing so. Others have also spoken to us because of some idea of the common good, to help us in a case that we consider serious. My purpose as a journalist is to understand the interests of the sources, but what matters to me is whether the documents are authentic. Then see if what they say is of public interest or not.«

However, some journalists would even accept unknown or bad intentions when the information that is disclosed is relevant to the public:

»Sometimes sources have a personal interest in providing documents but I don't care. For me it's important to cover a story in public interest.«

»We are used by people all the time with either good or bad intent. I can't police their intentions. I also deal with organized crime. I have to take and use information from people who are bad. I just have to mitigate the harm.«

The public interest element is emphasized in several comments and therefore seems to be a leading principle against which other aspects such as source anonymity must be weighed. But, as one respondent put it: »Journalistic cooperation is based on trust [...] and we have to have a basic trust in each other.« How mutual trust between source and journalist is gradually established in a mega leak case such as the Panama Papers is described well by Obermayer and Obermaier (2016), who were the first to be approached by John Doe, the anonymous source that leaked the Panama Papers. In this case, upholding the anonymity of the source is vital, not only for reasons of trust but also for safety reasons. Obermayer and Obermaier admit that, of course, they would have liked to know the source and how it got a hold of such a huge amount of data. They also emphasize that, in the end, it is more relevant that the data is of public interest and can be proved valid and credible (Obermayer/Obermaier 2016: 69).

How journalists deal with leaks and sources also distinguishes their own role perception from that of other actors, such as the platform WikiLeaks and its founder Julian Assange. Asked whether they agreed that WikiLeaks makes an important contribution to society on a scale from 1 (=completely disagree) to 5 (=completely agree), respondents mostly agree ($M=3.85$; $SD=1.06$), but they also see Julian Assange as a

political activist ($M=4.39$; $SD=.81$) and clearly not as a journalist ($M=1.69$; $SD=.93$). They do, however, agree that Assange should not be punished for his revelations ($M=4.16$; $SD=1.16$). The open answers that respondents gave regarding Assange point to important aspects: Many wrote that they do not approve the unfiltered publication of leaked information because not all information is of public interest (and it is the journalists' task to reveal what is of public interest). Besides, many criticize that certain people are needlessly endangered or harmed by publishing all kinds of private information. Also, some respondents suspected Assange of having dubious interests and questioned his selection of material.

»Under JA [Julian Assange], WL [WikiLeaks] slowly morphed into a dangerous tool used to misinform/propagandize. As a reporter, I personally met with some people whose lives were directly threatened when WL released the State Department cables unredacted. It should be noted that the same cables redacted and curated by reporters were of great interest without having the same very negative consequences.«

For investigative reporters, the distinction between journalism and activism is subtle and controversial. Some argue that the boundaries have become porous (see Russell 2016: 109-142), but the label »journalist« is still crucial if one wants to be protected against prosecution for treason or something similar.

Most ICIJ journalists in the survey perceive Edward Snowden differently than Assange. Respondents agreed unequivocally that he made an important contribution to society ($M=4.71$; $SD=.68$). They perceive him slightly less as a political activist ($M=3.87$; $SD=1.02$), but not as a journalist either ($M=1.63$; $SD=1.02$). They also agree more strongly that he should not be punished for his revelations ($M=4.63$; $S=.87$). Snowden's work is highly appreciated by those commenting on the case in our study:

»Edward Snowden seems to be the classic whistle blower who acts in the interest of the public. He did a very radical and brave thing by leaking data from the NSA at a high personal cost.«

Challenges and obstacles

To get a better understanding of the work of the investigative data journalists, we also wanted to know what it is that they struggle with and what they perceive to be the greatest obstacles to their work. We also asked if the journalists had experienced any threats or harassment and let them describe their experiences. When asked about the challenges of working within a project such as the Panama or Paradise Papers, several aspects frequently came up:

- Large amounts of data

The first and most frequently mentioned challenge by far was handling the complexity of the issue and the data. »Finding the needle in the haystack« – that means finding those hidden stories about people, businesses, and activities in the data that are most relevant to the public. Reducing complexity also requires digging into the convoluted offshore structures that had to be built up to hide activities in the first place. Journalists had to understand this system themselves and then explain it to their audience.

»In both cases the main challenges were the size of the leaks and the difficult content – it was even more difficult to understand in Paradise Papers. In fact, some of the schemes were so complicated that not even the experts we consulted could help.«

Concerns that something important could be missed or overlooked always play a role when dealing with such a large amount of data.

- Secrecy

The ICIJ's strict rules for secrecy were a challenge for several journalists, who had to refrain from approaching experts to help them understand what was hidden in the data. Furthermore, the reporters had to wait patiently until they were able to confront people with findings from the leaks.

»The high level of secrecy was the main challenge – it was weird to be uncertain what was going to work as a story until very near to the end of the project – I found it difficult that I couldn't approach lots of people at the outset to get comment and context.«

- Finding a way to publish

It is not inevitable that highly relevant information such as the Panama and Paradise Papers find their way to the public of a country. Not every journalist involved in the investigation had a natural medium to publish his or her stories. This could especially be the case for journalists from countries with a lack of press freedom.

»Finding a medium that would publish the stories. Found one! Had to change jobs though...«

»For the Panama Papers, the major challenge was to find a medium to publish my investigations. The newspaper where I worked had backtracked and I had to find another, just five days from the agreed date with the consortium colleagues to publish the investigations. I published them in a foreign medium. I resigned from the newspaper where I worked just after the publication of the first Panama Papers.«

Both examples show how the work could have personal consequences for the journalists.

- Time pressure and late start

It is not unusual in journalism to have a strict deadline. The central deadline for releasing all publications was, nevertheless, a challenge for several people in our survey. People who were not part of the Panama Papers investigations but joined the Paradise Papers later, for example, had to quickly learn the trade of handling the data and catch up with the knowledge others had gained before.

»I was invited to join Panama Papers much later than the team had started. This deprived me of months of valuable research. At the end I was working 16 hours per day to catch up before the deadline and the parallel international publications.«

Several respondents also commented that they were either not included in the first rounds of data releases or struggled to get information relevant for their investigations released at a later point. The time pressure to meet the deadline of the publication date was especially tough for them:

»Another big problem was that the material was uploaded in parts, so we got lots of new data to investigate just a couple of months before publishing. This happened in the Paradise Papers, where the best stories for us came from a list of names in a business registry – this data came just a couple of months before publishing. At that stage we changed our previous plan radically and started on new stories.«

- Coordination with other journalists

About 400 people were involved in the Panama Papers and Paradise Papers projects. They were all working with the same data pursuing a similar goal: finding stories in the data and exposing the wrongdoings of the powerful. Everyone had their own focus, but they also had to keep track of what others in the network

were doing so that they did not miss important developments or lose sight of the big picture. As we have seen above, the ICIJ headquarters in Washington, D.C. did a great deal of coordination work. Still, not losing the oversight over who was working on which aspect could be quite a challenge. Sharing all the findings and checking the work of the colleagues was a tedious task.

The second aspect of coordination plays an important role: Direct collaboration with journalists from outside one's newsroom can be particularly challenging. When journalists have to not only keep track of what others are doing but work together on a specific story, even more aspects must be considered:

»Maintaining good communication with partner journalists was always a challenge, especially how/whether to approach people in question, when/whether to publish particular stories, etc. Each newsroom has its own values and, more than that, its own culture.«

- Finding additional information and people/experts as sources to use beyond the data

For stories to unravel the whole picture, information beyond the data had to be collected. First and foremost, journalists needed credible sources that could explain and classify what was found in the data, e.g., experts for financial transactions, tax evasion or fraud.

»We had to find credible experts willing to take several days to look into the thousands of pages of documents linked to specific cases – and agree not to say anything about it until publication. They had to be willing to go on the record raising questions about powerful billionaires.«

Beyond that, information from the data did not always speak for itself. More context was required to draw a complete picture. Information from the leaks had to be complemented with and compared to external sources and databases (e.g., land charge registers).

Lack of resources and access to information

Several aspects were mentioned frequently when asked about obstacles for investigative reporting. The most frequently mentioned was a lack of financial resources. This underlines what we know about the financial difficulties facing media organizations and the specific difficulty of investing in investigative journalism as one of the most expensive and time-consuming beats. Lack of money

often comes with a lack of staff that would be needed to handle projects comprehensively. Accordingly, time is generally a profound issue for many respondents.

Access to information is another critical point for investigative journalists. Open government policies are not yet standard in most countries. On the contrary, non-transparent government activities and a lack of freedom of information laws hinder the work of many journalists. If they try to get the information anyway, journalists can face legal threats and even persecution. Libel suits have been mentioned by several respondents as an example of legal threats with which they have been confronted.

Threats and harassment

29 people in our survey reported that they have faced threats or harassment during or due to their work. One respondent's statement reminded us how real the danger is; not long before, a colleague from Malta, who was associated with the ICIJ and worked in the Panama Papers project, had been murdered.

The journalists who indicated the experience of threats and harassment mentioned various aspects. One was pressure from legal authorities against the publishing media outlet.

»We were threatened by the tax authorities in our country. They demanded the Panama Papers and our editorial material. The authorities threatened to raid our offices and homes after publishing. The case went to administrative court. We won the case in autumn 2017, but the authorities took it to the last resort. That process is still ongoing.«

In another case, media outlets could also be threatened with the withdrawal of advertising money. Fear of such repercussions may have also been the reason why some had such trouble finding an outlet to publish their work about the leaks in the first place.

Closely connected to the obstacles and challenges, journalists also mentioned the threat of legal proceedings or prosecution. Some journalists have had personal experience of this, for example:

»I have been criminally prosecuted for more than two years by the Luxembourg authorities, along with my sources in the Lux Leaks story.«

Threats of violence or even death threats (not always directly connected to their Panama or Paradise Papers investigations) were also mentioned by a couple of journalists in our survey. They have received such threats by email, mail, phone,

or social media (e.g., Twitter or WhatsApp). One respondent indicated that not only he but also members of his family were threatened.

Finally, respondents gave several examples of how they became victims of smear campaigns and public defamation:

»I was lynched by media close to personalities compromised by investigations based on the Panama Papers. These media accused me of working on behalf of a foreign power that aims to destabilize the country and its government.«

»One of my subjects in the Paradise Papers has been running a discreditation campaign against me for months. It included writing to the ICIJ and [the media outlet] to kick me out of the network. He is spreading lies, falsehoods, and complete fabrications.«

These examples emphasize that working on projects such as the Panama and Paradise Papers can put journalists at personal risk and – according to the respondents' comments – this is even true for people working in countries that would be considered to have full freedom of the press. The 29 people who reported experiences of threats and harassment come from countries all over the world, including Western and Northern Europe (e.g., Germany, France, Spain, Sweden, Norway, Finland). Those journalists mostly complain about raids at their homes and offices, and about authorities that try to enforce legal measures to reveal sources and material, but they also face harassment via social media, for example. Experience of violence against them is mostly reported by journalists from outside Western Europe.

Discussion and conclusion

From our combination of quantitative survey data and qualitative supplements, we were able to gain insights into the work of journalists who were engaged in the in-depth investigations of the Panama and/or Paradise Papers projects of the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ). The ICIJ is a remarkable network of investigative journalists worldwide and an interesting object for journalism studies. Gaining an understanding of journalists' work within this network can help us to further track developments in the changing field of journalism.

In a time in which many media outlets worldwide are facing economic difficulties, combined with political pushback against the freedom of the press even in democratic countries, keeping up a watchdog function to hold political and

economic elites to account appears even more challenging. While societal problems have become increasingly global – be it climate change, financial crises, terrorism, etc. – journalism is in many respects still a national matter fixated on national public spheres. But to keep up with processes of globalization, intertwined developments and events, journalistic working routines and structures must be adjusted accordingly. Transnational cooperation such as that under the umbrella of the ICIJ offers a solution by building an international infrastructure and support system for investigative journalism. As we have seen, the network structure can help journalists handle great amounts of information, find stories within hidden systems, and understand background mechanisms and contexts in which deficiencies can grow. In international teams, skills and knowledge can be shared for the common good.

Nevertheless, working in such structures is challenging. Cross-border collaborations are easier to maintain today through modern communication devices, but coordinating and organizing shared work still requires a lot of effort. The structure of the ICIJ, with headquarters that provide the infrastructure of the projects and offer support to the involved journalists and media outlets, facilitates cooperation on this scale. Shared professional norms on which collaboration can be built bind journalists together. Our results support these impressions: Central people from ICIJ headquarters are important coordinators and contact persons even for the actual production of journalistic products. The people working together in the projects also share a great agreement on how the work should be done, i.e. which research methods are appropriate and how sources should be dealt with, taking the public interest into account. Those shared norms may then also be helpful in balancing difficulties that arise in mixed teams due to different editorial requirements or a medium's editorial line.

Nevertheless, the ICIJ as a »highly structured organization with intense collaborations« (Heft/Alfter/Pfetsch 2017) also has strict rules that members must follow. This is not always easy for everyone. Examples from our study showed that several people had problems that they were not allowed to talk to external experts about, nor confront the accused in the run-up to their reporting. Central people within such a network can help to coordinate the project, keep it together, and monitor it. In the network analysis, we have seen that there are a few people – three of them in at ICIJ headquarters – in very central positions. But it is important not to overlook the fact that such positions go hand in hand with power differences and advantages of superior knowledge of certain people as well. Besides, the democratic structures of the ICIJ are rather opaque, e.g., the appointment of the board. It is hard to see through the processes of admission into the organization (Candea/Krüger 2018). People cannot simply join the organization; they need to be proposed and appointed. It is hard to find public information about the selection criteria and decision-makers. An organization such as

the ICIJ depends on a great deal of trust between the members in general and the participants of specific projects in particular. It has to make sure that the journalists share the same or at least very similar professional norms and that aspects of competition between different journalists and media organizations do not harm the collaboration.

Obviously, the journalistic success of networks such as the ICIJ is linked to their apparent advantages: Investigative journalism is a risky and time-consuming business. The more (well trained) journalists work together, the more likely it is that they will find relevant stories – and the more effectively they can act as watchdogs. As our study shows, investigative reporters face many challenges and see themselves at risk of threats and harassment. Revealing the criminal activities of powerful people puts the messenger on the line. This becomes apparent not only when remembering the murder of the Maltese journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia in 2017, but also when reviewing the numerous answers in our survey that indicate journalists' personal experience of repression and law enforcement that directly aim at impeding independent journalistic work. Even though international cooperation cannot take away the risk completely, it at least diminishes it to a certain degree by ensuring that relevant information is not only held in one hand.

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Copy-Editing: Sophie Costella

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Papers

Petra Herczeg

»World history does not pay enough attention to rays of sunshine«

The political and social dimension of Joseph Roth's journalistic work

***Abstract:* Joseph Roth (1894 to 1939) was one of the most significant authors of the 20th Century, familiar to a wide audience with works such as »Job« and »Radetzky March« and through the films of many of his literary works. But he was more than this, leaving behind a comprehensive body of journalistic work. Both his literary and his journalistic work is shaped by precise observations and a sociological look at people and society. This paper analyzes the journalistic work of Joseph Roth, especially his journalistic efforts to counter the rise of National Socialism, and discusses its topicality for journalism today.**

The German-language perception of Joseph Roth's work tends to differentiate between his roles as a journalist, feature writer, and poet. Yet it is precisely the interconnection between his journalistic and literary work that is so essential to its perception. Hackert points to »classic English authors like Defoe or Dickens, whose contributions to the journalistic genres are not considered per se of lower value than their narrative work« (Hackert 2013: 5). He adds that »fiction« in this context is not a value in itself that would attribute »a higher value to its text types« (Hackert 2013: 5). Although referring to Defoe and Dickens here, this consideration also applies to Roth's work. This is further evidenced by the six-volume collection of his works published in 1992, which consists of »half literary, half journalistic work« (Haas 1999: 259).¹⁾

1 All texts by Joseph Roth are taken from the six-volume collection of his works and are quoted in the text as: JR, Work 1; JR, Work 2 and JR, Work 3.

Hackert quotes Helen Chambers (2013), who refers to the modernity of Roth's work »when his thoughts and writing revolve around the question of human identity. It forms a focal point of the motifs in both the narrative work and the newspaper texts, although the interweaving of the invented and the experienced, of fiction and faction, can also be found in the book and newspaper medium, where sections of the serial novel precede the book version« (Hackert 2013: 6).

It is precisely these connections that characterize Joseph Roth's work, documenting both the diversity of the oeuvre and the difficulty of categorizing Roth's work.

Roth spent his entire life as a journalist. Most of his narrative works first appeared in newspapers (cf. Westermann 1987). He wrote his last journalistic text, »Die Eiche Goethes in Buchenwald« [Goethe's oak in the beech wood] – »with the addition by someone else: »Last article before his death Monday 22.V.1939« (JR Work 3, 1991: 946) – just a few days before his death on May 27, 1939, in a paupers' hospital in Paris.

In terms of the academic (and public) reception, the journalist Joseph Roth – as Hannes Haas also writes – was discovered very late. »Incomprehensible not only because of the quality, but also the scope of his journalistic work« (Haas 1999: 259).

By way of illustration, it is to be noted that Roth wrote more than 1,300 articles in the interwar period. Having joined up to fight in the First World War voluntarily in 1916, he wrote his first journalistic texts for the war journal of the 32nd Infantry Division, which was disbanded in 1917 (cf. Westermann 1989: 1110).

Born in Brody, modern-day Ukraine, in 1894, Joseph Roth lived through various developments in society that had a lasting effect on both his literary and his journalistic work. They included the development of the city in the industrial age, the formation of different milieus that accompanied it, the First World War, the collapse of the Imperial and Royal monarchy, the return of soldiers from the front, the misery of the people, the rise of Adolf Hitler, the persecution of the Jews and people of differing views, and exile.

After the First World War, Roth published journalistic texts for the »Abendblatt Arbeiterzeitung am Abend« [Workers' Evening News] newspaper and »Die Filmwelt« magazine in Vienna. Roth saw himself as part of the tradition of Peter Altenberg, Karl Kraus, and Alfred Polgar (cf. Bronsen 1974) and published his first articles as a young journalist under Alfred Polgar. Polgar was a literary deskman at the pacifist Vienna weekly magazine »Der Friede.« He then followed Alfred Polgar when the latter became Head of Features at the newly founded daily newspaper »Der Neue Tag,« which printed Roth's first feature in 1919. Although the paper folded after just 15 months, it was enough to demonstrate the extraordinary productivity of Joseph Roth, publishing more than one hundred of his articles, reports, and features.

The return to Vienna after the First World War was difficult. Roth encountered a world that was unravelling: The situation was chaotic, people injured or

traumatized in the War wandered the streets, the Habsburg Empire no longer existed. These consequences of war became one of the core topics of Joseph Roth's work. Roth described his journalistic approach thus: »I have to reduce every event of world history quality to the personal in order to feel its size and estimate its effect. In a certain way, to let it pass through the »ego« filter and be cleansed of the slag of monumentality. I want to translate it from the political to the human« (JR Work 1, 1921: 570). This is the start of his reportage on Upper Silesia, where he examines the situation of workers in the coal mine from his own subjective perspective. Roth concludes: »I would give a lot to know how many of the one hundred and twenty-five thousand catch the last shimmer of a ray of sunshine. World history does not pay enough attention to rays of sunshine« (JR Works 1, 1921: 571).

In his remarks, he links the private perspective with the public by discussing how individuals are inextricably involved in world events. He knew how to shape his articles to attract an audience. »Changing perspectives is a classic strategy in reportage. It primarily serves to grab and retain the reader's attention« (Chambers 2013: 51). A diverse range of access points, »always curious, always anxious to show his bourgeois readers in particular the life that they passed by unnoticed« (Ortheil 1992: 67) – that was what Joseph Roth offered and how he saw himself as a journalist.

The »social aspect« in reportages by Joseph Roth

Authenticity is a key criterion in social reportage. It is found when the reporter was at the scene of the action, describes the events and actors based on his own observations, and draws his own conclusions. After the First World War, Joseph Roth first observed and described the life of the individual in a period of economic, political, and social hardship in a column entitled »Wiener Symptome« [Viennese symptoms] for the newspaper »Der Neue Tag.« In the reportage »Von Hunden und Menschen« [Of dogs and people] in 1919, he wrote:

»The many street scenes of the misery of war in Vienna have been joined by a new one in recent days: A person transformed into a right angle by the war – an invalid with a broken spine – moves along Kärntnerstrasse in an almost inexplicable way, selling newspapers. On his back, which is parallel to the pavement, sits a dog. A well-trained, clever dog that rides on his own master and takes care that he does not lose a single newspaper. A modern mythical creature: a combination of dog and man, devised by the war and placed in the world of Kärntnerstrasse by the misery of being an invalid. A symbol of the new age, in which dogs ride on people to protect them from people. A reminiscence of the great age, when humans are trained like dogs and called

›pig dogs,‹ ›bl**** dogs‹ etc. in pleasant combinations of words by those who themselves were bloodhounds but could not be called it« (JR Work 1, 1919: 95).

This excerpt shows how Roth links the perspective of an individual person with the current situation and demonstrates how the War affected individuals – giving the people a status as subjects – as well as how criticism of the political system can be expressed.

In the reportage »The island of unfortunates,« Joseph Roth reports on the psychiatric hospital at Steinhof in Vienna:

›There she lies, the garden city of the insane, refuge of those who have foundered on the lunacy of the world, home of fools and prophets. [...] The houses are all built the same and are called ›pavilions,‹ have Roman numerals on the gable ends and locked doors. Some are surrounded by a garden where the residents stroll, sit, walk, and stand around. It is now the time that they are taken outside« (JR Work 1, 1919: 23).

Here Roth focuses on a group of people more often than not forgotten by the majority in society:

›A man squats on the ground and tries in vain to draw clear circles in the still-hard earth. Another is moving his fists, turns one fist inwards, holds the other horizontally and still and follows every one of his own movements attentively. But around other houses it is silent, there is no garden. [...] Then comes the reunion. Some of the invalids are happy to get visitors, some are perturbed, do not want to know, some laugh, others cry. But almost everyone I saw first looked through the bags, most are more excited about what the visitors have brought with them than about the visitors themselves« (JR Work 1, 1919: 23f).

Roth describes the people in the institution with respect and conducts interviews with them in order to find out first-hand how they feel and how they view their situation. At the end of his reportage, under the sub-chapter heading »Farewell,« he notes: »To be honest, I find it difficult. Evening envelops the island of unfortunates – or fortunates? – in a blue mist. Perhaps he is right, the little professor? Is the world not a madhouse? And is it not useful to secure a warm spot at ›Steihof,‹² in good time? Perhaps I will do that. And – set up a newspaper. This is how I will look for staff...« (JR Work 1, 1919: 27).

2 Joseph Roth did not live to see it, but Steinhof in Vienna was not a »warm spot« during the Nazi era, becoming instead a place of horror: the center of the Nazis medical crimes. Cf.: <http://gedenkstaettesteinhof.at/de/ausstellung/wien-steihof>

In this journalistic text, Roth employs a change of perspective, telling the story from the patients' own view and combining this with his own observations and facts, such as a copy of the menu and interviews with doctors. He does not answer the question of whether it is really the inmates who are »crazy.« Roth describes his experiences very vividly and atmospherically.

Following the closure of the newspaper »Der Neue Tag,« Roth moved to Berlin in 1920 to find new sources of income. The »traveler with burdens« – referring to a reportage by Roth from 1923 – became one of the best-paid journalists of his time. In his articles, he tackled various topics, traveled, and also composed reviews of books, plays, and films that, as Westermann notes, were often purely to fulfil his duties: »A sparkling idea, a brilliant formulation – the rest nothing more than routine filled with cliché« (Westermann 1989: 1113).

The individual perspective and the political effects: Joseph Roth's reports on the »Leipzig trial of the Rathenau murderers« (1922)

In his reports for the »Neue Berliner Zeitung – Das 12 Uhr Blatt,« Roth expressed his opinion of the court proceedings against Walther Rathenau's killers. The Foreign Minister had been murdered by members of the far-right group »Organisation Consul« (OC). Before this, the nationalist press had stirred up significant hatred against Rathenau as a representative of the »Jews' Republic.« Joseph Roth wrote nine articles about the trial published in the »Neue Berliner Zeitung« (»Das 12 Uhr Blatt« [The 12 o'clock paper] was added to the title in 1919) between October 4 and 13, 1922, and one article for the social democratic newspaper »Vorwärts.« In his biography of Roth, Sternburg writes that these may be the best political reportages Roth ever wrote (2009: 259). Westermann, too, claims that Rathenau's murder had been a »key experience« for Roth (1987: 120). Rathenau was killed in his car – a Mills grenade was thrown into the car and he was shot with an automatic pistol^[3] (cf. Mergenthaler 2014). Thirteen mostly young men who had been accomplices or accessories to the murder of Rathenau were put on trial. The two main perpetrators were already dead: The 23-year-old law student and former first lieutenant Erwin Kern had been killed by police in an exchange of fire, while the 26-year-old engineer and former second lieutenant Hermann Fischer had shot himself. There was huge public interest in the trial, with many people following events outside the State Court House in Leipzig. In his reports, Roth describes the proceedings in various segments, concentrating on accurately presenting the scene and the individual defendants. He instantly makes connections between the court room and the people in the dock: »The room in which the trial is taking

3 The roof of Rathenau's car was open.

place is excessively lined with images of the emperors. Oil-painted witnesses of former epochs, perhaps they speak for the defendants by pardoning them. The painted purple and torn clothing of Rathenau – a contrast and a causal link at the same time« (JR Work 1, 1922: 872)

Historical details are interwoven with the current political situation of the time. Roth also pays a great deal of attention to the murder weapon – the defendants are not only linked to the murder weapon, but their political sympathies are also discussed in parallel:

»With an indifferent expression, the defendants look at the weapon as if it were an immaterial kitchen device and not the instrument with which they allegedly wanted to liberate the nation. Indifferently, Techow discusses the speed of this weapon like an expert in shooting, while the lips of Lieutenant Tillessen betray a smile of contempt for all those in the room who have absolutely no idea about weapons and heroic deeds. [...] It is peculiar that the murderer's expertise immediately stops when the topic becomes political. One hears that he was convinced that Rathenau belonged to 300 Elders of Zion, that his sister was engaged to Radek, of »creeping Bolshevism,« and that Judaism was harmful. Although he has not read any of Rathenau's extensive writings, because he is no longer interested in the science of shooting, he is not even brave enough to admit his total ignorance. He claims to have read just a single paper by Rathenau, and that in Harden's »Zukunft,« for which Rathenau had not worked for more than ten years. Why read it? Why see for oneself? Better to go straight to the murder: It is easier« (JR Work 1, 1922: 874f).

Roth describes the atmosphere in the court room and observes the onlookers: »Their necks craned hungrily, their mouths open as if one could eat words, a mass of the hostile crouch together, each of them wishing his neighbor in the dock or even straight to the scaffold. No end in sight. Up there surges a sea of human desire for sensation« (JR Work 1, 1922: 879). And: »I am amazed by more than six hundred people every day, who have nothing to do for seven or eight hours and live just to listen. Their profession is being »the public.« They seem to live well, as they eat abundantly and noisily. Their appetites grow with their curiosity« (JR Work 1, 1922: 880). And the defense attorneys: »have to put up with being profiled here, as it is in their own interest to be seen in a kind of juridical spotlight. They are without exception upright, forceful, and wear their political stripes on their sleeves« (JR Work 1, 1922: 880).

Roth contrasts the defendants, the defense attorneys, and the audience, demonstrating the various power structures. Sternburg cannot be disagreed with when he states in his Roth biography that Roth did not write about the political

developments and background, but that his »insight into the political drama of the Republic« (Sternburg 2009: 261) provides a better description of the social conditions »than many of the editorials published on this topic« (Sternburg 2009: 261). Through the individual descriptions, Roth captures »the porousness of politics, crime, and justice« (Wagner 2011: 236) very analytically in his reports. Mergenthaler analyzes that, although Roth's court reports on the Rathenau murder do not provide the precise background to the conspiracy, they do deliver precise, »concise psychological portraits« (Mergenthaler 2014: 98) of the various actors, from the judge to the guards, the audience, the defense attorneys, the visitors, the witnesses, the chief prosecutor, and everyone involved in the trial in all the various functions.

In his article, Mergenthaler examines the political and aesthetic reach of the reportages. Roth refers to the robe of the state prosecutor as a toga in which dangerous intent lies dormant (cf. JR Work 1, 1922: 877). The term »toga« calls to mind »the habit of classical Romans, the citizens and dignitaries of the Roman Empire« (Mergenthaler 2014: 100). Continuing his argument, Mergenthaler claims that Roth states that it was not a German state prosecutor speaking, but a classical Roman. Roth quotes Cicero with »How long, oh Catiline?...« (JR Work 1, 1922: 885). Catiline, a Roman senator with an extravagant lifestyle, led a failed putsch against the Roman Republic in 63 BC. As a consequence, the Consuls were granted comprehensive powers in order to guarantee the stability of the Empire. »In 1922, no great hermeneutical efforts were needed to see the granting of these rights as a prefiguration of the right of emergency decree created in Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution – not least because the President of the Reich made use of this right as early as August 26, 1921 following the murder of Reich Minister of Finance Matthias Erzberger [...] Therefore, when Roth quotes the first speech with which Cicero attempts to convict his political opponent Catiline before the Senate and transfer responsibility, then he, Roth, could assume that more than a few were able to link this to the subject of the trial in Leipzig, the murder of Walther Rathenau« (Mergenthaler 2014: 103).

Reporting on the trial is thus embedded in a further political context that is no longer only about detailed characterization of the individual protagonists, but about the murder being an attack on the Weimar Republic itself. This approach is typical of Roth. Critics often accuse him of not conducting detailed research and being more interested in describing details (cf. Oei 2012: 32; Pott 2016) than in providing an overall picture. However, Roth takes a clear viewpoint and leaves it up to his audience to make the connections themselves. This requires an educated readership.

Joseph Roth's trip to the Harz mountains (1930/31) as an insight into his journalistic approach and how he deals with the public

Like Heinrich Heine (1824/26), whom he greatly admired, Joseph Roth took a trip to the Harz mountains for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* newspaper. However, only three articles were published in the paper, rather than the planned five (cf. Westermann, epilogue 1989: 1073). Westermann suspects that there may have been interventions against the reporting. Roth's texts were written as »letters from the Harz mountains« to a »dear friend.« In the first »letter from the Harz mountains,« Roth explains his journalistic approach by describing how he explores the small towns. Descriptions of the landscape alternate with those of the people Roth meets: »I sit in small cake shops, I go to medium-sized movie theaters, I eat in large public houses, I wander through late-opening bars. [...] I do not know any people, let alone a soul. Reichswehr soldiers seem familiar to me, merely because I was once also a foreign soldier in small garrisons. But I look at the faces of the soldiers: Now they are foreign to me. [...] The school children, too, seem to me close and related« (JR Work 3, 1930: 271).

The »master of miniature« (Haas 1999) observes the Central German small town and its inhabitants in great detail. Through »disclosure of his own point of view, i.e. through declared subjectivity, second-order objectivity is achieved« (Haas 1999: 243). Later descriptions by Roth demonstrate what Haas means by this:

»No museum, no church can compensate me for the sinister sight I am given by the window of a book shop in a small town, for example: a representative abundance of stupidity, lyrical amateurism, misunderstood idyllic ›local art,‹ and an empty dependence on a ›floe‹ of newspaper and cardboard lids in which one cannot pack more than a cylinder, that never houses a feeling, no seedling and no seed. [...] So much poison in violet chalices! From the charged countenance of the foreign dictator who holds the North in noble affection, whose chin is reminiscent of an upturned steel helmet, to Adolf Hitler's physiognomy, which anticipated the faces of his voters and into which every follower can look as if into a mirror: Everything is there, everything is in stock (...)« (JR Work 3, 1930: 274).

In this section, the travelogue is combined with criticism of the »dullness of public life« (JR Work 3, 1930: 274) and thus of how the political system acts. Without explicitly addressing it, Roth refers here to the Reichstag elections of September 1930, in which the Nazi Party gained 22.2 percent of the votes in the region travelled by Roth. »It is not the style of Roth's journalism to list or comment on such figures, however, but instead to capture trends in society through his own ever-

yday observations, be they real or pretend« (Kröhnke 1998: 108). Roth describes the mood in the provinces in a very pointed and clear-sighted way (cf. Kröhnke 1998), entering a confectioner's and a restaurant in order to observe the people and the scene:

»I drink beer and smoke cigarettes, for assimilation purposes and so that I am not noticed. [...]. It is not enough to just drink beer and smoke cigarettes; I also have to read the newspaper. Although it is an official gazette, it has it in for Severing⁴ and mocks democracy. It makes me look busy, and none of the talkative gentlemen dares to disturb me, as though I were deep in prayer. The views of the newspaper reassure them about my own. And one seems so satisfied with me that he raises his glass to toast me. I respond seriously yet charmingly and, in a flash, decide to escape him« (JR Work 3, 1930: 284).

This is another clear demonstration of the way Joseph Roth works as a journalist – the change of perspective, the incorporation of the actor in the surroundings, and the effects of developments in society on the individual.

In his second letter, entitled »Der Merseburger Zauberspruch⁵« [The Merseburg incantation], Roth examines the effects of the Leuna works chemical plant on the area of Merseburg and Frankleben through which he travelled.

The Leuna works had demolished the village of Runstedt, near Merseburg, in order to extract potassium. An interesting aspect of this report is Roth's very brusque and critical way of writing about his great role model Heinrich Heine and his journey through the Harz mountains:

»Heinrich Heine was, at least in the Harz mountains, a superficial traveler. What he saw and heard was blown his way by chance, the author's most treacherous and dangerous friend. It befell him. With cheerful indifference, he recorded it, wrote it down« (JR, Work 3, 1930: 275). Unlike Heine, Roth attempts to explain his own approach. After all: »But we, dear friend, who are gradually losing grace in a long and murderous fight with the stone cold facts of this world and who truly receive no further favor from God, when He sends them through an ever more gruesome world, it no longer befits us to harvest the anecdotes that the wind of chance blows in, and to gossip about encounters that have no valid relationship with the place in which they occurred« (JR Work 3, 1930: 275f).

4 Roth is referring here to Carl Wilhelm Severing, a social democratic politician who was Reich Minister of the Interior from 1928 to 1930.

5 The Merseburg incantations are two texts preserved in Old High German. The first relates to the release of a prisoner, the second to healing the sprained foot of a horse (cf. Eichner/Nedoma 2014).

He also criticizes not only Heine, but also the journalists who he claims do not report on certain events: »The spy reporters of the spy newspapers, who turn to the misery with such abrupt enthusiasm and use such large letters to grow the catastrophes that occur into the catastrophes that are depicted, strangely sometimes tend to miss the thunder that heralds a horror and the flames of an improbable blaze« (JR Work 3, 1930: 276).

Here, Roth complains that journalists do not explain and do not select and publish the topics that are informative and relevant to (the affected) people. He implicitly addresses the role conflicts in which journalists find themselves, as well as ethical questions like Max Weber's distinction between the ethics of responsibility and attitude, when it comes to the need for journalists to be aware that their actions can have consequences for which they need to take responsibility (Weber 1999). This journalistic responsibility is also addressed by Roth when he writes that the village was »not just killed, but also hushed up« (JR, Work 3, 1930: 276) and, not only that, but: »Reporting the naked facts in their gruesome magnitude was probably prevented simply by fear« (JR Work 3, 1930: 277). The fear of reporting on this probably relates to the company IG Farben, which until the Second World War was one of the largest chemical corporations in the world. In his epilogue, Westermann writes that »representatives of IG Farben [exercised] a massive influence on the publisher [of the Frankfurter Zeitung, P.H.] when Roth attacked the Leuna works as producers of poison gas. The editorial office probably even called their reporter back from the trip to the Harz mountains, as the series stops suddenly and abruptly after three articles« (Westermann 1991: 1073). Kröhnke states, however, that there is no proof that this was actually the case and that Westermann's suspicion may be based purely on a letter that Roth sent to his mother-in-law, in which he had promised five letters from the Harz mountains (cf. Westermann 1991; Kröhnke 1998).

In his reportage from Merseburg, Roth describes not only the destruction of the landscape, but also the way that the graveyard and the dead had been relocated. In doing so, he hears from a worker and quotes him directly. This worker confirms that the graveyard had been moved. In the article, Roth also comments on the situation of the farmers who had sold their property: »But war is coming, inflation, securities are melting away, the hungry world economy is crying out ever louder for potassium and coal, the owners are starting to tear down the village of Runstedt. The farmers move further into the country, destitute, and with worthless securities« (JR Work 3, 1930: 280). The various developments in society are interwoven with one another, the political and the social are interlinked, and the consequences embedded in the text with further reflection.

Joseph Roth's understanding of journalism is informed significantly by the kind of literary approach that Herodot and Heinrich Heine took. In 1921, as a reac-

tion to the »Kothurn-Pathetiker«⁶ [those who use pretentious and melodramatic language] (JR Work 1, 1921: 617) Roth wrote of the features section that, although they had learned grammar, they were also the source of the unfortunate, given that they are preachers and the scandalized (JR Work 1, 1921: 617): »There are absolutely appalling features writers. But those are the horses of the funeral cortege. The melodramatic who accidentally drop below the line. The coroners with the borrowed fools' bells« (JR Work 1, 1921: 618). Joseph Roth defies clichéd descriptions and, at this point, it becomes clear how difficult it is to classify Joseph Roth's work. According to Kröhnke, it is almost impossible »to differentiate strictly between [the different genres of] reportage, feature, travel piece« (Kröhnke 1998, footnote 1: 121). Rossbacher, who examined the apocalyptic fantasies in Roth's Merseburg incantation, comes to a similar conclusion (cf. Rossbacher 1991) and draws parallels between Roth's criticism of the environment destroyed by technological advances and the destructive effects of National Socialism. Roth observed the developments in society with pinpoint accuracy and addressed the contradictions of industrial progress in numerous articles.

In 1921, Roth wrote the following about Heinrich Heine and his travel letters:

»People say: Heine gave birth to the curse of features writing. But Heine's travel letters are not just amusing, but also a great artistic achievement and thus also an ethical one. The degenerate homo sapiens had spent ten years studying, it is claimed, and then written a boring, i.e. unethical, book. Heine may have fibbed about some small facts, but he saw the facts as they should be. His eye was more than just an optical instrument and optic tracts. If that is bourgeois, then bourgeois is very ethical. Long live the bourgeoisie! Was Herodotus, the features writer of ancient times, also bourgeois?« (JR Work 1, 1921: 617).

Joseph Roth and Heinrich Heine had something in common: As Bronsen writes, both had a strong need to share information and a great interest in political developments (cf. Bronsen 1974).

For Todorow, Roth is predominantly a political journalist »who professes to write apolitically, but who reaches his readers all the more effectively« (Todorow 1990: 380) and who uses a range of aesthetic means – such as very vivid images – to exploit »the options of political and intellectual semantics [...] in order to keep the perception of the readers awake under the emerging scarring, but not processing the Versailles trauma, the trauma of inflation, or the trauma of mediocre republican everyday conditions, if not to wake them up in the first place« (Kucher 2011: 224).

6 In the vocabulary of the educated classes: pretentious. It is interesting that Roth uses tautology here, as the word »Kothurn« can also be associated with melodramatic.

The juxtaposition of journalism and literature is always noticeable in Roth's work. For Roth, the reality he experiences is closely related to the literary reality. He argued that literature »occasionally« gives actions »a punch line« (JR, Work 1, 1922: 712) and that these punch lines reveal »the« reality better. Roth analyzes and casts judgment on the situations he observes; his journalistic texts aim never to instruct, but to explain.

Autopsy, analysis, and topicality: Joseph Roth's journalistic work

Joseph Roth, the precise observer and »prosector« who used different sources in his journalistic work and whose approach was characterized by Haas as a kind of »autopsy« (1999: 271), moved from the internal to the external view point and highlighted the discrepancies and contradictions. He proceeded »carefully like a newspaper reporter« (Bienert 1992: 151) and condensed »factual material, atmospheric impressions, and reflections [...] in an artistic report« (Bienert 1992: 151). Both political processes and the actions of individuals are not just described, but placed in the context of society. In his article »Das Dritte Reich, die Filiale der Hölle auf Erden« [The Third Reich, the branch of Hell of Earth], written in exile in France, Joseph Roth writes despairingly that journalists can do little to counter the regime in Germany:

»Because when one knows that the role of the German press is not to publish facts, but to conceal them; not just to spread lies, but to embed them in people's minds; [...] If one is to remark on a great achievement by Goebbels, it must be this: He made it possible to make the official truth limp as much as he limps. He lent his own club foot to the official German truth. It is no coincidence, but a deliberate joke of history, that the first German Propaganda Minister limps...« (JR, Work 3, 1934: 508f).

Joseph Roth was a deeply political journalist who recognized the danger of National Socialism very early and wrote against it – ultimately futilely. His understanding of journalism was shaped by introspection and precise observation, always incorporating social aspects and evaluating developments in society and technology ambivalently. He was ultimately a journalist who always felt he had a duty to an enlightened public.

His journalistic articles are up to date in the sense that they highlight mechanisms with which people can be instrumentalized; the role of journalists, policymakers, and the public; how developments in society can affect the individual; and how inhumanity can be revealed.

Joseph Roth died on May 27, 1939 in a paupers' hospital in Paris.

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Essay

Marcus Maurer

Between mistrust and instrumentalisation

On dealing with the AfD in journalism

Abstract: Like many populist parties, the »Alternative für Deutschland« (AfD) attempts to generate media coverage and public attention through targeted provocation. Journalism is thus faced with the question of how to deal with these attempts at instrumentalization. This paper discusses three possible strategies and their consequences, and calls for the AfD to be treated professionally, but not uncritically. Excluding the party from public discourse or reacting indignantly to its provocations is counterproductive and contradicts some of the fundamental rules of journalism

In August 2015, the AfD was at a crossroads. The party had initially gained attention largely for its Eurosceptic views but, following constant conflict, had now lost many of its founding members, including long-standing Chair Bernd Lucke. At this point, opinion polls showed that just three percent of Germans would have voted for the AfD at the next national election. Over the months that followed, however, the party enjoyed a meteoric rise, the like of which had never been seen in the history of the Federal Republic. By spring 2016, the AfD's share in opinion polls had more than quadrupled to 13 percent. Today, the AfD is the largest opposition party in the German Bundestag and has become even stronger by votes with state parliament elections in some Eastern German states in 2019.

So what happened? The easy answer is that the AfD shifted its focus to migration policy, was essentially the only party to criticize the admission of around a million migrants during the refugee crisis of 2015/16, and thus gained the support of the section of society that did not agree with this migration policy. Yet this is not the only answer. Parties' representation of popular positions among sections of the public is necessary for their success, but it is not the only factor. It may sound trivial, but the public first has to know the parties' positions. A party that

wants to enjoy lasting political success needs to gain lasting public attention for itself and its positions.

To attract and maintain this attention, the AfD uses a striking two-pronged approach. Populist parties know that they will receive little positive reporting in the established media, and counteract this by denying such media's credibility (calling them »lying press«). Instead, the AfD therefore uses social media as a platform for communication on which it can interact with its followers without being disturbed by those with differing views. Its favored platform is Facebook, where it currently has around the same number of followers as Germany's two main political parties, the CDU and the SPD, combined. However, even this is not in itself sufficient explanation for the significant rise in the party's vote within just a few months. The number of people seeking political information via social media remains relatively small and parties tend to reach only those people on social media who already hold similar views.

As a result, the AfD also relies on its presence in established news media. An internal party paper leaked in January 2017 reveals the strategy behind this (cf. <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/afd-strategiepapier-101.html>). It calls for the use of »carefully planned provocations« to ensure that the party and its core election campaign issue, immigration, remain on the agenda. Negative reactions from established parties and media are an inevitable and acceptable consequence. To examine how successful this strategy was, in an as yet unpublished study at the Department of Communication in Mainz, we compared three data series with one another on a weekly basis: 1) the number of reports on the AfD in leading German media with high coverage; 2) the number of searches on the AfD on the online search engine Google as an indicator of the public attention received by the AfD; and 3) the opinion poll figures for the AfD. The results are astonishing. A rise in media reporting about the AfD led directly to public attention on the party rising to a similar extent. In the long term, this in turn led to an ever larger number of people considering the AfD electable.

There are two reasons why media reporting on the AfD increased. Firstly, reporting rose significantly just before federal and state elections. Such rises were probably less relevant to the AfD, however, as reporting on the other parties also rose shortly before elections. In contrast, the other rises in reporting were all initiated by the AfD itself. All of them can be attributed to provocations by AfD politicians that were usually related to immigration policy and were highly likely to have been deliberately targeted at generating media reporting. Examples include Frauke Petry's call to shoot at women and children at the border; Björn Höcke's claim that the Holocaust Memorial is a monument of shame; Alexander Gauland's call to »dispose of« Germany's integration minister in Anatolia, and many more. Although many of these statements were originally made at events with only a few hundred participants, they were picked up on by the news media and thus became

the subject of discussion among an audience of millions. Using tactics like this, the AfD has succeeded in keeping the issue of immigration in the spotlight for years, even though the number of immigrants has fallen significantly since 2016.

Marginalizing, showing outrage, remaining objective:
Strategies for dealing with the AfD in journalism

Media reporting undoubtedly plays a key role in the success of populist parties, and the AfD uses the mechanisms of media logic in a targeted way for its own benefit. The question thus arises of how journalists can deal with this situation. There are three main strategies: 1) to offer little or no reporting on the AfD, 2) to show outrage about the AfD and 3) to report on the AfD in more or less exactly the same way as on other parties.

1) Before the parliamentary elections in the German state of Rhineland-Palatinate in 2016, SPD Prime Minister Malu Dreyer cancelled her participation in a television debate between the leading candidates of all the main parties because a representative of the AfD had also been invited, arguing that it was important not to give the party a platform. When the German newspaper FAZ printed an article by Alexander Gauland in October 2018, it received heavy criticism, especially on social media. There have been many such cases in recent years. It is clear that many segments of journalism, politics and the population want to exclude the AfD from public discourse. Anyone who talks to the party or gives it the opportunity to express an opinion in public is almost suspected of complicity. From a normative perspective, however, this is a questionable position. Democracy lives on the discussion between different positions and no-one should be robbed of the opportunity to take part in this discussion. To start with, it does not even matter whether or not the people in question are interested in a real exchange of views. Refusing such an exchange of views can also easily be construed as weakness: The person avoids discussion out of fear of losing. From a journalistic point of view, it is also important to note that the media in general, and public service broadcasters in particular, are required to represent the entire spectrum of opinion in their reporting. The exception to this is positions that violate legal principles and are therefore not covered by freedom of expression, for example. Whether this is true in a particular case is a question for lawyers, not journalists. A party that is now supported by around 15 per cent of the population cannot be excluded from media reporting and should not be left out of public discourse. The question is therefore not whether, but how, the media should report on the AfD.

2) A content analysis – conducted at the Department of Communication in Mainz and not yet published – of how various regional and national daily newspapers reported on 17 cases of provocation between 2015 and 2018 shows that the

media reported intensively on most of the AfD's provocations, strongly denouncing the provocateurs. The journalists often did not make this assessment themselves, however, instead including extensive quotes from third parties, especially politicians from other parties, who were outraged about the AfD. Journalists and politicians clearly shared the impression that they could not simply leave the AfD's provocations unchallenged. This impulse is understandable, but not especially useful. Here, too, the key question is a normative one: Can it really be down to journalists to combat disagreeable political parties? This may be appropriate in opinion-based styles and formats, but it cannot be reconciled with the neutral and objective communication of information in news and reporting. Instead, the job of combating populists falls to the established parties, who, if nothing else, must do so in their own interest. The data presented above also shows that media outrage about the AfD's provocations is actually useful to the AfD. The fact that the reaction is negative is largely irrelevant. Unlike the large established parties, parties on the political fringes benefit from any media attention. Negative reporting is used just as skillfully to claim the role of victim and as further evidence that the established media are part of a dysfunctional social elite that the AfD is rightly fighting against. By acting on their well-meaning impulse to stand up to the AfD, journalists thus allow the party to instrumentalize them for their own benefit.

3) The answer to the question of how journalists should deal with the AfD is therefore clear: When reporting on the AfD, journalists should simply remember the essentials of their trade – objective, non-moralizing, fact-based reporting, just as should be the case for any other party. This does not mean ignoring or failing to criticize extreme right-wing tendencies in sections of the party, but reporting should not be limited to these aspects. So what might this mean in detail?

- There is no need to report on every provocation by the AfD. Instead, journalists should weigh up the public interest in each case. What counts is not only the severity of the provocation, but also the number of people who would be reached by the provocation were it not reported in the media. Does the fact that an AfD politician insulted the Federal Government's integration minister in a small village hall in East Germany really need to be the subject of days of discussion in the media? Or is there a better use for the space this takes up?
- Instead of merely reacting to provocations, the media should be proactive in deciding when and what they report on the AfD. After all, journalists do not approve of other parties dictating their reporting either. Furthermore, reporting on a party voted for by almost six million people in the last federal election should not be limited to the issue of immigration. Journalists can also ask AfD politicians targeted questions on other topics – albeit not with the aim of embarrassing the party for (allegedly) having no other issues. Instead, the focus

should be on giving voters an opportunity to make a comprehensive judgment on the AfD's positions. This means that journalists need to make the effort to actively approach AfD politicians. Interviewing them does not mean unnecessarily giving the party a platform, but is in line with the journalistic principle of representing a diversity of opinions and removes the pressure on journalists to report on AfD provocations simply in order to meet this principle.

- In some cases, however, reporting on an AfD provocation is arguably unavoidable from a journalistic point of view, for example because an incident appears particularly severe or the situation has already been discussed so intensively on social media that the news media feel they need to follow suit. In such cases, the media reports can at least expose the strategy behind the provocation. The recipients would then not only gain information on the provocation and the reactions to it, but also be sensitized to the fact that it is a deliberate strategy by the AfD.

Conclusion: Media reports on the AfD and other parties

The media have to report on the AfD, but not on its every provocation. They should not see it as their role to debunk, expose, or warn against parties like the AfD. The media's race to be the most outraged and to distance themselves the furthest from the AfD's provocations merely gives the party more public attention in the short term and increases its potential voters in the long term. Journalists should not allow themselves to be instrumentalized by populist parties, but should make efforts to approach them. This way, the journalists can determine the timing and content of reporting themselves. An objective exchange of opinions with the AfD is a democratic duty; refusing to do so is not a route to glory.

However, in all probability, the success of the AfD depends not only on how journalists report on the AfD, but also on how they report on other parties and democratic institutions. Populist parties benefit when the population loses trust in established political institutions and thus becomes open to the populists' claims that only they can return power to the people. The media's tendency to focus its coverage on problems and conflicts and to paint established parties and institutions in a negative light can cause the population to develop an increasingly negative image of politics. The question of how journalists should deal with the AfD therefore also includes the question of how they should deal with the established political institutions. This reporting cannot be uncritically positive, of course, but can be more constructive. Editorial offices should at least discuss the question of whether every problem needs to be attributed to politics, every political proposal torn apart in the media, and every attempt to reach political compromise labelled »conflict«.

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Debate

Tommy Hasert / Gabriele Hooffacker

Overrated bots?

An examination of Twitter debates – and what journalists can learn from it

Abstract: Social bots are suspected of having an impact on public discourse, manipulating election results, and seeking to influence political conflicts. This paper is based on an investigation that sought to detect and evaluate social bots in current Twitter debates. The authors show that the influence of bots appears much less dramatic than is often written about. In fact, over-regulation presents a greater threat to democracy than the bots themselves.

In participative platforms with user-generated content, such as Twitter or Facebook, it is not always immediately obvious whether one is interacting with a real person or with an algorithm-controlled account that imitates human activities – known as a social bot.

Bots are said to have a huge influence. British newspaper *The Guardian* once ran the headline: »Social media bots threaten democracy« (Woolley/Gorbis 2017). In an opinion piece, the *Washington Post* even questioned whether the American democracy could survive this kind of interference in social media: »Artificial intelligence is transforming social media. Can American democracy survive?« (Watts 2018). »Social Bots – eine Gefahr für die Demokratie [A danger to democracy],« wrote Christian Kerl in the *Berliner Morgenpost* (Kerl 2017). Other German media argue that social bots have enormous destructive potential. On October 24, 2016, for example, *Spiegel Online* ran the headline: »Social Bots – Wie digitale Dreckschleudern Meinung machen [How digital muck-spreaders shape opinion]« (Amann et al. 2016). According to them, events in world politics such as Brexit, the 2016 US presidential election campaign, and the Russia-Ukraine conflict were influenced by social bots.

The attention this gained in society and the media led to calls from politicians for greater regulation of social bots. Proposals ranged from a simple labelling obligation (from political party Die Grünen) to a general obligation to use real names online (CDU/CSU). Politicians claimed that bots had the potential to curtail fundamental freedoms for all internet users (cf. Reuter 2017, 2019).

However, only a tiny part of this discourse in politics and the media is based on empirically substantiated figures. This paper therefore examines how widespread social bots really are on Twitter (Facebook was not included in the investigation) and what influence their activities have.

Bot strategies

How do bots influence social actors, opinions, and debates? There are four key strategies:

Imitation

Imitating human behavior is a fundamental property that defines every bot. The primary goal is to trick people into trusting the computer-controlled account by simulating a human identity. Social bots do this by basing themselves on human behavior in social networks. On Twitter, for example, it means tweeting and retweeting, following other users, participating in discussions by replying, and adding external content to favorites (cf. Misener 2011).

Language also plays a vital role. Using natural language algorithms is intended to produce more authentic responses (cf. Good 2016). Spelling mistakes and slang are deliberately incorporated to make the bots more difficult to uncover: »To avoid detection, they may even employ slang words, street idiom and socially accepted spelling mistakes« (Woolley/Howard 2014).

The use of persuasive techniques also seems to be a popular method of increasing trust in the bot accounts. Given the social proof effect, for example, it is a good idea to gain as many followers as possible at the start, as these act as social proof of the relevance of the account and thus increase its influence. A study by Hegelich and Janetzko showed that most of the content disseminated by a network of social bots investigated did not pursue a direct mission, but was solely intended to gain trust and maintain the cover (cf. Hegelich/Janetzko 2016). Once this trust/influence has been developed, it can be used to advance individual objectives, such as promoting a particular political opinion or discrediting a public figure.

Simulating trends

Social networks increasingly act as trend barometers for the relevance of topics in society. The last decade has seen the emergence of an entire industry dedicated to identifying trends on social media so that they can be exploited for commercial gain. Journalists and politicians also use the various social media channels to gain a sense of »what makes sections of society tick« (Weck 2016). Social bots benefit from this social relevance and generate their own trends through the intense use of certain hashtags or key words. This can create a distorted picture of the true real significance of a topic (cf. Meiselwitz 2017: 381).

Astroturfing

Astroturfing describes the strategy of »organizing particular interests as supposed desires of citizens [...] with the aim of influencing sociopolitical decisions« (Irmisch 2011: 24). Social bots use this approach within public debates in order to create the impression that there is a great deal of support for certain opinions or movements, when this is not actually the case. This can lead to strategic distortion of a debate. The structure of social networks like Twitter and Facebook, which offer the option of sharing and liking other content as a core function, provides the ideal conditions for this. A particularly popular strategy for gaining influence in political contexts, its existence has already been proven numerous times in various studies (cf. Ratkiewicz et al. 2011).

Smoke screening

Smoke screening is another influencing strategy used by social bots. Unwelcome debates are disrupted in a targeted way through dissemination of huge numbers of discrediting or irrelevant messages. In the context of Twitter, this approach is also referred to as a »Twitter bomb« (cf. Brachten et al. 2017), as it makes individual hashtags unusable. A study by Abokhodair et al. into a Syrian bot network was able to prove the use of smoke screening (cf. Abokhodair et al. 2015).

How can bots be uncovered?

As well as basic obstacles like user authentication and crowd-based approaches (reporting system), the large social networks predominantly rely on bot detection processes to keep social bots and fake content off their platforms. Twitter intensified its approach to this in mid-2018; the *Washington Post* reported that more than 70 million accounts were deleted for suspicious behavior in May and June 2018

alone (cf. Timberg/Dwoskin 2018). Facebook also published figures on deleted accounts for the first time in a transparency report in 2018, in which it stated that it had deleted more than a billion accounts in just six months: »694 million in the last quarter of 2017 and 583 million in the first quarter of 2018« (Brühl 2018).

Identifying social bots on social networks is a huge challenge for researchers. Social bots benefit enormously from behaving inconspicuously and imitating human behavior as accurately as possible in order to expand their influence. Often, the majority of available resources are invested in concealing the bot's identity. One of the core problems is the huge diversity of social bots used, meaning that different approaches for different types of social bot currently enjoy different levels of success. Another difficult factor is the fact that different data is available for investigation depending on the platform and the user's privacy settings: »[...] the majority of Twitter profiles are public, whilst on Facebook, most profiles are private« (Haugen 2017: 27). Furthermore, social bots are becoming ever more complex, putting them in a kind of arms race with researchers.

Before the content analysis itself began, this investigation used two freely available automated processes for bot detection: *Botometer* and *DeBot*. These use different strategies:

Botometer (originally published under the name BotOrNot) is a framework for detecting bots on Twitter that emerged from a collaboration between the Indiana University Network Science Institute (IUNI) and the Center for Complex Networks and Systems Research (CNetS). The framework uses more than 1,000 features from Twitter metadata, content, and interaction patterns in its classifications (cf. Davis et al. 2016). The features can be classified in six categories (cf. Varol et al. 2017):

1. User-based features: Meta-information such as the number of accounts followed and followers, the number of tweets posted, profile descriptions, and settings.
2. Friend-based features: Various language-related (e.g. entropy of the language, number of languages used) and temporal (e.g. age of the account) aspects, as well as the popularity of the tweet and the time between tweets, are considered based on the four types of information exchange (retweeting, mentioning, being retweeted, being mentioned).
3. Network-based features such as the retweet network, user mention network, and hashtag (coexistence) network.
4. Temporal features: The average rates of tweet production, retweets, and user mentions are considered based on measurements of activity at certain intervals.
5. Content and language-based features using statistical examinations of the length and information density of tweets.
6. Sentiment-based features: Information on the emotions communicated by a text.

In 2016, a team of three researchers from the University of New Mexico developed a totally different approach to bot detection – *DeBot*. As it does not analyze any explicit metadata from users, it is ideal for detecting bots that are part of a bot network. Instead, activity logs are looked at and examined for correlation. The researchers' fundamental theory is that »humans cannot be highly synchronous for a long duration; thus, highly synchronous user accounts are most likely bots« (Chavoshi et al. 2016). What makes this method so special is its ability to record even activity logs that have a time delay but are still synchronous.

Investigation design

In order to deduce possible patterns for bot use, the investigation combined technical detection processes and a content analysis, also based on algorithms, of the content produced by social bots and humans. The following research questions formed the basis of the investigation:

1. How high is the rate of social bots and what total proportion of the data sets investigated does their content account for?
2. Does the focus of the data set's content (politics, social affairs, consumption, lifestyle) have a significant influence on the rate of social bots?
3. How wide is the reach of the bot accounts found and what influence do the tweets spread by social bots have?
4. Does the content spread by social bots differ from human content in terms of text length, text mood, text subjectivity, media shared (images, videos, links) and the linking strategies used (hashtags, cashtags, user mentions)?

The data investigated consisted of tweets that were keyworded using a selection of hashtags over a defined investigation period of ten days. Each hashtag represents an exchange of information in various topic areas. All the tweets extracted in association with one hashtag were analyzed as independent data sets and the results compared at the end of the investigation. As Twitter itself deletes bots it identifies, it was only possible to investigate published tweets.

The data base

The period August 1, 2018 to August 10, 2018 was defined as the investigation period. This period of ten days was based on a rough estimate of the expected number of tweets given the research parameters chosen.

The hashtags and the associated topic areas of the content investigated were selected based on the following criteria:

- The number of tweets in the selected period must be sufficiently high (at least 10,000), but must not exceed 250,000 tweets in total (due to existing Twitter API limitations).
- The tweets under investigation should represent different content areas (politics, social affairs, consumption, lifestyle) in order to cover as many potential interests for the use of social bots as possible, e.g. influencing political opinion making, defaming political opponents, influencing discourse in society, shifting commercial interests etc.
- Due to the planned sentiment analysis, the tweets need to be in a single language. Based on the higher number of tweets in individual debates and the better compatibility with relevant frameworks, this language will be English. This means that only international hashtags and/or national hashtags in English-speaking countries should be selected.

Following detailed research into hashtags, the following four emerged as suitable:

#midTerms2018: The hashtag relates to the midterm elections in the USA held on November 6, 2018, in which the entire House of Representatives and a third of the Senate were up for election. The elections are seen as a test of the national mood ahead of the upcoming presidential election. The hashtag includes political discussions, links to media reporting, and opinion polls. Because the elections were in the near future at the time of the investigation, the hashtag also saw a lot of traffic during the investigation period.

#metoo: In October 2017, multiple allegations against the producer Harvey Weinstein became public, accusing him of the sexual abuse and sexual harassment of multiple women in the film industry. Shortly afterwards, Tarana Burke launched a campaign aiming to bring sexual assault and harassment into the open (cf. Göbel/Bäuerlein 2017). This campaign and the debate that accompanies it have since taken place under the hashtag #metoo, which also acts as a synonym for the MeToo movement of the same name. The hashtag has lost none of its topicality since its establishment, making it the ideal starting point for the planned analysis.

#iphone: In this selection, the hashtag #iphone predominantly represents content of a commercial or consumption-oriented nature and is thus intended to highlight a different focus than the other hashtags chosen. With the launch of the new iPhone model (iPhone XS) at around the same time, September 14, 2018, the hashtag saw particularly frequent use during the period selected due to various speculation and promotion.

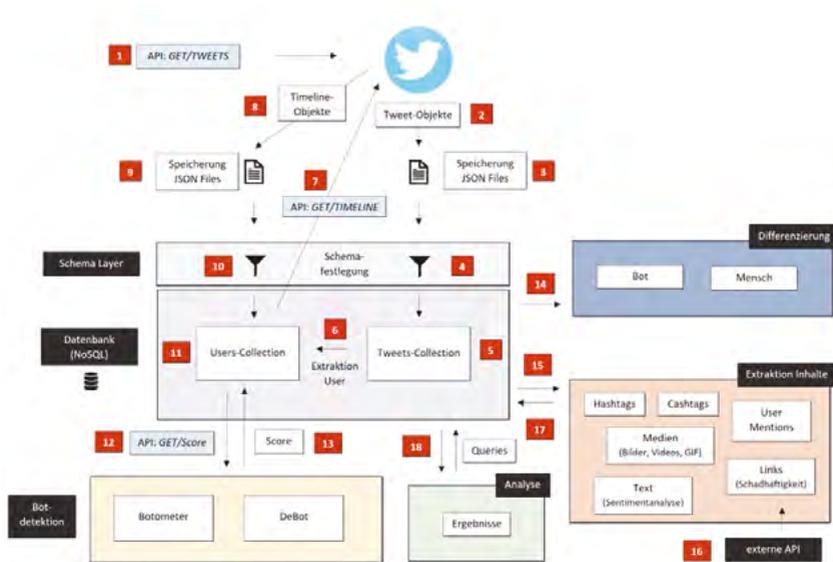
#foodporn: The hashtag #foodporn is intended to pick up on a very separate trend from the last few years – the (aesthetic) depiction of food on social media. Although this hashtag is related to the field of consumption, it is much more

focused on the lifestyle sector and adds a new topic area to the other three hash-tags.

Technical procedure

A diagram of the technical procedure for the investigation is shown in the figure below. Steps 1-16 have to be repeated separately for each data set under investigation (#midTerms2018, #metoo, #iphone, and #foodporn) in order to achieve comparable results at the end.

Figure 1
Steps of the investigation



Results: fewer bots, less influence than expected

Social bots performed worse than humans in every area: They had around 33 percent fewer followers on average, 63 percent fewer likes, 49 percent fewer retweets, and 67 percent fewer replies. Content comparisons were also conducted regarding the linking strategies used, incorporation of media, and external links and text

characteristics (sentiment analysis). The results of this do show some differences – social bots use around 50 percent more hashtags, 22 percent more links, and 20 percent more media, and produce texts that are around 30 percent shorter with slightly more negative and objective characteristics. However, no targeted influencing strategy was found.

The majority of research up to now has concentrated exclusively on political debates. The results of this paper suggest, however, that it would be useful to investigate content with a commercial background as well, in order to gain a more comprehensive view of the issue of social bots.

(1) How high is the rate of social bots and what total proportion of the data sets investigated does their content account for?

In total, 9,644 of 125,610 accounts investigated were identified as social bots – a rate of 7.68 percent. However, this rate differed widely between the various data sets and focus topics.

(2) Does the focus of the data set's content (politics, social affairs, consumption, lifestyle) have a significant influence on the rate of social bots?

Somewhat surprisingly, the lowest rate of social bots – 4.53 percent – was found in the political debate under #midTerms2018. Representing a debate in society, the #metoo discussion had a similarly low social bot rate of 6.60 percent. In contrast, lifestyle and consumption-related content appears to be much more attractive for the use of social bots, with 10.91 percent of the data sets under #foodporn and 17.79 percent of those under #iphone identified as social bot accounts.

(3) How wide is the reach of the bot accounts found and what influence do the tweets spread by social bots have?

At the same time, the investigation showed that social bots were comparatively productive. 13.18 percent of the 207,687 tweets investigated in total came from social bots. That puts them at almost twice as many tweets per account as humans, albeit with lower potential for influence. Social bots had around 33 percent fewer followers on average. In addition, content from humans had around two-and-a-half times more likes, twice as many retweets and three times as many replies compared to content from social bots. The #midTerms2018 data set was the only exception, with social bots achieving a range that was around 75 percent wider.

(4) Does the content spread by social bots differ from human content in terms of text length, text mood, text subjectivity, media shared (images, videos, links) and the linking strategies used (hashtags, cashtags, user mentions)?

Social bots tend to use hashtags as their preferred linking mechanism, employing them around 50 percent more frequently and with greater variance. Humans,

on the other hand, prefer user mentions as a way to address users directly, employing them more than twice as often.

Another finding relates to the use of external links. As found in studies by Stieglitz et al. 2017, Gilani et al. 2017, Brachten et al. 2017 and Chu et al. 2010, social bots use external links more frequently (by around 22 percent). Although the proportion of defective links was slightly higher for social bots, it remained low: 1.86 percent for social bots and 0.46 percent for humans.

Similar to the rate of links, media use was also around 20 percent higher for social bots – 0.55 media per tweet on average, compared to just 0.45 media per tweet for humans. When it comes to the distribution of the types of media (image, video, SIF), no significant difference was found between social bots and humans: images were by far the most popular medium among both groups.

In contrast to the greater use of links and media, the texts for social bots were around 30 percent shorter than those written by humans. The sentiment analysis of the texts did not provide any fundamentally different results, with the basic mood for both slightly positive. In a value range of -1/+1, the value for humans was +0.21 (μ : 0.29) and for social bots +0.14 (μ : 0.28). The data set for #midTerms2018 was an exception to this, with social bots delivering more negative texts compared to texts by humans. This could indicate a strategy of negative influence.

Although comparing the content did throw up some differences between social bots and humans, these differences were not significant and do not point to any explicit strategy. The inherent tactic of social bots – to communicate in as authentically human a way as possible – appears to have worked, at least formally. The lower influence of individual tweets combined with the higher tweet production suggests that social bots focus more on quantity than quality. The lower reach (33 percent fewer followers) can be seen to indicate lower influence.

The results of this investigation thus contrast significantly with reports in the media. Current research shows that social bots do not have excessive influence and are not disproportionately represented in social networks. Given the lack of research up to now, the true effect of the content spread by social bots on opinion forming and users' offline behavior also appears questionable.

What the media could learn from this

It would be easy to accuse the media of agenda setting. The causes can only be the subject of speculation. Do they lie in the insecurity of media creators or the ignorance of how algorithms work? Are they journalistic processes of news selection – when some warn against it, others pick up on it? Are there economic reasons behind the exaggeration of the potential dangers of social bots?

It is undoubtedly possible to conceive of theoretical dangers and risks resulting from social bots – from manipulative influencing of purchase choices and social discourse to influencing voting choices in elections. However, current findings do not provide clear evidence of their effectiveness. Some authors even speak of a »myth of social bots« (Gallwitz/Krell 2019).

Instead, one-sided reporting itself risks creating a distorted perception of social bots, which could lead to restrictive political consequences such as stricter regulation of social networks. This is the view taken by Linus Neumann, Spokesperson of the Chaos Computer Club. He sees social bots as a symptom rather than the cause of current developments in society (cf. Kind et al. 2017: 57). According to him, very different actors actually hold the potential for influence: »private television, the Bild newspaper, and lying Interior Ministers have a much greater political influence on people« (Rebiger 2017).

One thing is certain when it comes to media reporting: It should »promote conscious handling of the channels and discourses« – after all, »even algorithms make mistakes« (Niekler 2019). While some commentators warn of the power of social bots and call for Europe-wide regulation (Sarovic 2019), others see a tightening of the laws as a danger in itself. Markus Reuter shares the view that over-regulation presents a much more significant risk to democracy than the threat from bots, arguing: »The problem with fighting social bots or other manipulative accounts is that regulation very quickly begins to affect basic rights like freedom of speech and of the press – the negative consequences of regulation thus weigh heavier than the (negligible) damage to democracies currently identified from these disinformation tactics« (Reuter 2019).

This paper is based on a master's thesis in Media Informatics at Leipzig University of Applied Sciences by Tommy Hasert.

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Reviews

Britta M. Gossel, Kathrin Konyen (Hrsg.): *Quo Vadis Journalistenausbildung? Befunde und Konzepte für eine zeitgemäße Ausbildung [Quo vadis journalist training? Findings and concepts for contemporary training]* Wiesbaden [Springer VS] 2019, 207 Seiten, 39,99 Euro

Reviewed by Liane Rothenberger

Will the journalists of the future have to be programmers and businesspeople, too? Should we focus on supporting learners' creativity and developing their personalities? How much teaching time should a lecturer spend on research techniques or writing style? These are the questions currently being considered by many involved in journalist training. Whether the learners are students at university, trainees in editorial offices, or undertaking further training online, they expect to be taught everything they need to know for a career in journalism. What do they want to learn? What should we be teaching them? We need to make a selection from all the skills and abilities we would like to get across.

The editors of the volume »Quo Vadis Journalistenausbildung« and the academics, educators, and practitioners who have contributed to it have recognized the problem. They offer the results of studies, empirical reports, and personal opinions, in varying levels of usefulness. Parts of the study have already been published in a series of discussion papers in the Digitale Bibliothek Thüringen, which also contains more detailed information on the research instrument. This printed volume provides a summary, enhanced with contributions from other authors.

The first almost 70 pages of the 200-page work are taken up with the editors' description of the online survey they conducted in 2015. In it, they draw on responses from 227 journalists currently in training or with less than ten years of professional experience. The core results are outlined here. The majority of those surveyed found that the extent to which basic skills such as creativity, ability to deal with conflict, conscientiousness etc. are taught is »exactly right.« Specialist skills such as media ethics and media law also received sufficient coverage in the training, they said, although, were the amount to be changed, it should be increased rather than decreased. In contrast, the respondents felt that business

skills such as media, cost and quality management could be taught more. However, the analysis of the open responses clearly shows how widely tastes can differ: While one considers the teaching of technical aspects excessive and would like to see broader training, another wants greater depth in specific fields of skill. The editors explain exactly what they mean by »skills« at the start of the chapter. This clearly shows that their survey is dominated by the perspective of media management, as demonstrated by the section of questions on »business-related self-image,« for example – a field that has not been covered in this form in previous surveys of journalists, but is unquestionably justified in an age in which more and more journalists work freelance. Training that focused on the aim of producing »salaried print editors« would undoubtedly disregard the actual figures regarding salaried and freelance journalists. It remains unclear, however, what the respondents who stated »desired career: business« actually had in mind.

Further points of criticism of the study (some of which are also noted by Klaus-Dieter Altmeyen in his paper) include the small sample size and the fact that it only looked at what the (soon-to-be) journalists wanted to see, rather than the skills they actually had. It would also have been useful, even or perhaps especially given the small sample size, to separate some of the findings by the journalists' position – journalism school / traineeship / editorial office (perhaps further divided by medium) / university. Another improvement would have been to provide a little information on the authors in Part II. It is not clear why the practitioners in that section were selected – although the selection does highlight the different career paths effectively, it seems rather arbitrary in places.

In her opening statement, Beatrice Dernbach gets straight to the point on the advantages of diverse routes into journalism: »There is not just one way – and that is a good thing!« The study shows so many widely differing wishes on content to be taught that it would be impossible to fulfil them all with a single »ideal« curriculum. Agreeing on basic skills is useful, but each educational institution should be free to choose further, more specialized content. The journalistic laboratories at universities (and schools of journalism) can act as the »think tanks of the sector« (p. 77) here. Given the enormous quantity of subject matter that one could teach students, Ramón García-Ziemsén sees just two possible solutions: condensing everything to an extreme degree or making the training longer.

Michael Harnischmacher presents data from international studies and explains differences in the training systems based on historical developments. Klaus-Dieter Altmeyen discusses negative aspects of digitalization, for example the fact that the fall in the number of permanent jobs is causing a decrease in the identity that people associate with specific media. Altmeyen reminds his readers that, even though the trend is moving towards more technical and business-related skills, the core skills that ensure quality in journalism are more important than ever. García-Ziemsén from Deutsche Welle holds a similar view. He lists reliable

research skills and the ability to spot relevance as particularly important journalistic abilities and asks, »Perhaps the journalism of the future is at least to some extent the journalism of the past?« This is in stark contrast to Yvonne Malak from private radio, who draws the conclusion that »today's traineeships should have nothing in common with the traineeships of the last millennium.«

Gudrun Bayer emphasizes the crucial importance of those responsible for training at media houses and how editorial offices can see apprentices as a source of innovation and ideas from outside. Large publishing houses can of course offer training on a very different scale to smaller ones, but both options have their advantages and disadvantages. Like other authors, Stephan Weichert calls on those designing degree programs to constantly reflect on their content and to reorganize and renew it where necessary. Just like editorial offices, training institutions are also »learning organizations« (p. 125). Weichert believes that there is a great deal of work to be done in communicating technical expertise in particular. Nikolaus von der Decken advocates a business-focused, economics-related mindset. He calls for projects to be developed from the broadcaster-recipient perspective (rather than just the broadcaster perspective) and for the costs and potential profits to be included in considerations from the start.

The field of professional journalism has become so diverse that someone who would like to do nothing else but SEO for a large publisher is just as likely to find the perfect position as someone who specializes in test reports on mountain bikes or who is better at programming than writing. Innovation is essential in order to remain fit for the future, but does every journalist have to be able to operate a drone for aerial images? It is good that the volume allows different training providers to have their say, provides new stimulus and relativizes some aspects. It can be recommended to anyone involved in journalist training (as previously stated, regardless of whether at universities, schools of journalism, editorial offices, or anywhere else). The fact that the content of such training is constantly the subject of discussion – not only in this book, but also in papers and sample training curricula from DJV, EJTA, and VOCER, at training conferences offered by the »Initiative Qualität im Journalismus,« and by the ECREA working group »Journalism and Communication Education« – can only be a good thing.

It is also important to note that the study is a collaboration between the University and the Deutscher Journalisten-Verband [German Journalists' Association, DJV]. Cooperation like this should be much more common, given that it encourages closer discussion between academic study and practice, both of which are actively involved in training journalists. But the study is also four years old. Perhaps it is time to start working on a follow-up.

To finish, a true word from the final chapter of the book, entitled »And now?«: »No serious predictions« can be made today about what the specific requirements on journalism and journalist training will be in ten years' time (p. 204).

About the reviewer

Liane Rothenberger is a senior academic at the Institute of Media and Communication Science at Ilmenau University of Technology. The focuses of her research include journalism; standards and values in communication science; and crisis communication.

Translation: Sophie Costella

Manfred Theisen: *Nachgefragt. Medienkompetenz in Zeiten von Fake News. [Asking the question. Media literacy in the age of fake news]* Bindlach [Loewe] 2019, 136 Seiten, 8,95 Euro

Reviewed by Guido Keel

Media literacy is the topic on everyone's lips. Claims that journalism has descended into a lying press, elections are manipulated by fake news, and smartphone use by children and young people is out of control, have all led to a sense that there is a lack of media literacy, and that this deficit is a danger to society, democracy, and the personal wellbeing of young people.

The *Nachgefragt* series of books is an easy-to-understand introduction to issues in society for young people, explaining key terms and concepts in a question-and-answer structure. Previous editions have included Politics, Philosophy, Human Rights and Democracy, Refugees and Integration, and World Religions. Having moved on from general topics to more specific and current ones, the series is now tackling media literacy, specifically in the age of fake news.

Although »actually a political scientist,« the author, Manfred Theisen, is familiar with the media from his work as a journalist and deskman. He takes a practical approach to and social interest in the topic, not getting too bogged down in academic theories and findings. Although he does note academic studies in his responses, he does not provide any sources or a bibliography. This seems entirely appropriate for a book that aims to communicate abstract knowledge to young people.

The book is divided into seven chapters. In the first, the author uses 13 questions to explain what media, including social media, actually is. Taking a light, compact and clear approach, he presents basic information on media actors, media content, media use, and media economy. The next two chapters look at the issue of fake news. First, Theisen once again uses concrete questions to explain what fake news is, before going on to explain why fake news exists and how it is used. In doing so, he uses both historical references and current examples.

Chapter 4 looks at populists and how politicians deal with the media, while Chapter 5 focuses on data and data security. Entitled »Welcome to Smartphonia,« Chapter 6 examines the dangers of the online world, in particular internet addiction and filter bubbles. The dangers of cyberbullying and hate speech are tackled separately in the last chapter of the book. In these final two chapters, the book becomes more of a guide for young internet users. It ends with an appendix containing an enormous array of useful links and addresses related to the media, drawing the reader's attention to further sources and applications on the topic. These tips range from alternatives to the Google search engine and WhatsApp messaging service to addresses and telephone numbers of bodies that can provide advice on cyberbullying.

The aim of the book is to explain apparently complex social and political issues to young people aged 12 and above in way that is easy to understand and relevant to their lives. So does it succeed? Firstly, it is a non-fiction book. That in itself is an obstacle when it comes to the target audience – how many 12-year-olds will voluntarily pick up a book to learn about a social issue? If they do, however, the structure of the book makes it very easy to access information about media literacy. It does not deter its young readers with too many specialist terms, nor does it force them to wade through the entire book. Readers can dip in and out, picking out the questions that interest them: »TV and radio: Why do we have to pay fees?« – »Why are Instagram and WhatsApp so powerful?« – »First aid for cyberbullying: How can you defend yourself?«

Each of the 66 questions, all of which any media user might ask themselves, is given a response of one page, and never more than two. This understandably means that the author has to abbreviate, simplify and sometimes omit details, but this rarely becomes a problem or appears unreliable. There are some imprecise and simplistic statements like »Tabloid newspapers tend to exaggerate and polarize. It is easy for news to become fake news.« (19), but they are few and far between. On the other hand, the book uses simple terms and comparisons to provide definitions that get straight to the heart of the matter.

If there is one area in which this slim little book becomes a little long-winded, it is historical contexts. For example, the author spends eight pages telling the history of fake news, starting from 1274 BC and covering the Roman Empire, the Crusades, Daniel Defoe and his *Robinson Crusoe*, the October Revolution, *Kristallnacht* and the invasion of Poland, the Vietnam War, and finally the invasion of Iraq. Compared to the brevity that the author maintains elsewhere, this is a startling level of detail.

Apart from this, the book is extremely up to date and relevant to everyday life. However, the selection of topics and the weight they are given could also be its downfall. Fake news takes up two of the seven chapters and around a quarter of the pages in the main section of the book. But more recent studies indicate that the impact of fake news and filter bubbles may have been exaggerated by specialists in an initial shock reaction and actually play a much more limited role than originally assumed. There are more pressing issues, such as the changing way young people consume media and the potential consequences for coexistence in society and democracy – yet questions such as »What is news?« and »Where does the relevance of information lie – for me and for society?« receive only brief responses in the book.

If young people can be motivated to read this book, they will find a wealth of easy-to-understand information. Even if not, the book provides interested parents and teachers with material to help them talk to young people and reflect with them on how to use smartphones and other media appropriately. It is thus a book

about media literacy for young people, for adults who deal with young people, and also for adults themselves. After all, it is they who set the example for children and young people. They are in just as much need of occasionally taking a critical look at their own media consumption and media literacy.

*This book review was first published in *rezensionen:kommunikation:medien*, 26th of March 2019, accessible under <https://www.rkm-journal.de/archives/21748>.*

About the reviewer

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Translation: Sophie Costella

Karl Nikolaus Renner, Tanjev Schultz, Jürgen Wilke (Hrsg.): *Journalismus zwischen Autonomie und Nutzwert* [Journalism between autonomy and use value] Köln [Herbert von Halem], 2017, 590 Seiten, 49 Euro

Reviewed by Sebastian Köhler

The two key terms of the volume's title – »autonomy« and »use value« – have gained »a particular topicality« (13) in recent years. The editors are very aware that the focus lies no longer only on the future of journalism in a digitalized world, but increasingly on its fundamental legitimation in society, certainly since New Year 2015/2016. Against this backdrop, the volume is a commemorative publication for the journalism studies expert Volker Wolff, who was Professor of Newspaper and Magazine Journalism at the Department of Journalism, Department of Communication, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz.

Just as the editors believe Wolff did, the commemorative publication attempts to build bridges between practice and academic study (cf. 14). As well as specialist academic papers, it therefore also includes essays and field reports from journalists and those working in public relations who have a particular connection with Wolff.

The first section concentrates on historical and overarching perspectives (21-184), while the second examines the current challenges facing journalism (185-356). The third part is dedicated to Volker Wolff as a business and finance journalist (357-482) and, last but not least, the fourth section to him as a university lecturer (483-580). The volume thus deliberately brings together very different positions, including »their partial contradictions« (17), as a continued »soliloquy that time is conducting about itself,« as liberal publicist Robert Eduard Prutz described the emerging modern journalism as far back as the mid-19th Century.

We are currently seeing developments that are putting pressure on media freedom in democratic societies from at least two sides: Media corporations like Facebook and Twitter delete suspected fake news accounts with little to no transparency, while the German state of Saxony, from the Prime Minister to the State Office of Criminal Investigations, uses its state power to hinder journalists in their work. In this environment, the article »What is press freedom still worth (to us)« by Christina Holtz-Bacha is especially worth reading (79ff.). Backed up by excellent explanations, Holtz-Bacha reconstructs two semi-topical phenomena in this context: the »Cicero« case from 2005 and the »NetzpPolitik.org« case from 2015. In both cases, media freedom in Germany was limited in political and legal terms (the economic and structural limitation of media freedom unfortunately remains a neglected topic, even here). The author notes that recurrent conflicts here are repeatedly fought in the highest courts. This tells her that media freedom cannot be taken for granted, but requires »constant confirmation« (93). In neither

the »Cicero« nor the »Netropolitik.org« case did anyone take to the streets to campaign for media freedom. Holtz-Bacha is rightly concerned that »press freedom« now appears more precarious than it did in the past.

I also consider Tanjev Schultz' contribution »Nothing is safe« (99ff.) highly relevant given the »challenges in reporting about terrorism.« Like many other experts in journalism studies, Schultz assumes that there is no »generally recognized definition of terrorism« (100). Despite this, he uses the term – which is of course very judgmental – at the object level, not the meta level (i.e. not as a quote with reference to the language use of relevant sources). This is somewhat surprising, and does little justice to the complexity of the problem of attacks and corresponding reporting. To clarify polemically: »terror« and »terrorism« are »of course« always done by »the others« (the bad people, the outsiders etc.).

Unfortunately, Schultz does not appear to be interested in this level of »terror.« He implicitly presupposes this dichotomy and instead discusses the extent to which a »symbiosis« between journalists and attack perpetrators can be assumed to exist. The author rejects this kind of model and notes that, instead, asymmetry prevails: »Terrorists may rely on media, but the reverse does not apply. Journalists do not need terrorists. The mass media does not need terrorist attacks in order to fulfil its function« (101). It is interesting that, in light of such normative formulations, the implicit dichotomy required (»us« against »the terrorists«) can be explicitly reconstructed. This brings us relatively quickly to the limits of the explanatory power of this model. Schultz certainly rejects the »symbiosis« model as simply a »figure of speech« (102) – an argument that does little to convince me.

Schultz writes that he also wants more attention to be paid to the equally thorny relationship between the media and security authorities. Although he at least sees a structural problem in the communication with representatives of authorities (cf. 104), he appears to think little of equidistance, stating that there is no place for gullibility in dealing with representatives of authorities, but also that mistrust leads to its own danger: »the erosion of the fundamental trust in central institutions that is necessary in society« (104). Which society is he talking about here? All societies? All contemporary ones? Even (or indeed especially!) in societies with a democratic political environment, why should skepticism and involvement not be useful instead of the somewhat conservative-sounding »necessary fundamental trust« (see above)? In my view, the author proves too unreflective as an ensemble of the conditions with which he appears familiar.

When it comes to journalistic practice, Schultz proposes »seven important points« for reporting on attacks (cf. 110ff.), which he hopes can also be integrated into degree programs and training (more than they currently are):

1. Refusal to publish photos and names of perpetrators
2. Qualitative and quantitative moderation in reporting
3. Particular care in live reporting

4. Creating transparency for one's own work, including unknowns
5. Positioning in contexts and background, realistic hazard assessments
6. Critical distance from policymakers and security services
7. Playing a constructive role – communicating not only problems, but potential solutions

Another paper that I found particularly worth reading was the one by Kerstin Liesem: »The suspicion« (119ff.), in which the author examines the fine line between media freedom and protection of privacy. Liesem outlines convincingly why and to what extent journalists bear particular responsibility when reporting on suspected cases. Journalists should not wait until a suspicion has been substantiated, she argues, but can and should actively address processes, even when there is merely a suspicion (or multiple moments of suspicion in various directions) (cf. 128). However, Liesem is rightly careful to note the journalistic duty of care.

Competition within the media landscape has intensified, as has competition between journalists and state power on the one hand and certain groups/classes in society on the other. To be precise, it has been and is being intensified by people. And yet the journalistic duty of care is still important – indeed is becoming even more important in order to (re)gain people's trust in journalism. The author succeeds in making a convincing case for this specific dialectic between the individual and the collective in a special case. Behind every case of suspicion is at least one person – not only according to Liesem. In the worst case of an incorrect suspicion, this person faces ruin. According to the author, handling this situation with professionalism is a key part of the responsibility journalists bear in society. These examples are intended to show that the volume contains plenty of food for thought, in many different directions, for both practitioners and theoreticians. The mixture succeeds in demonstrating both the broad-based and in-depth aspects of issues in journalism and journalism studies.

*This book review was first published in *rezensionen:kommunikation:medien*, 21st of September 2018, accessible under <https://www.rkm-journal.de/archives/21423>.*

About the reviewer

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Translation: Sophie Costella

Marcus Bölz: *Sportjournalistik* [Sports journalism studies] Wiesbaden [Springer VS] 2017, 310 Seiten, 25 Euro

Reviewed by Jörg-Uwe Nieland

In 2013, Marcus Bölz published a volume on football journalism in Germany. This work in media ethnography gave insight into the way sports journalism in regional newspapers is becoming professionalized and commercialized, given the media transformation, the crisis facing newspapers, and the audience's fixation on entertainment/football.

The latest volume, *Sportjournalistik*, sets the bar much higher, looking at the »rules, standards, and working methods of sports journalism« and discussing »what sports journalism gives society and what consequences and effects the reception of sports media triggers in people and society« (XVIII). Bölz thus attempts to bring together sports communication research (specifically the sub-fields of communicator research and editorial office management) and journalism studies, in order to »recognize the interaction between theory and practice in sports journalism« (XVI). The author explains the relevance of this with the following observation: »Sport journalists actually compose the medial reality of the highly-emotional dream world that is sport« (XV). And even more than that: »In a similar way to Christianity in past centuries, sport today has a fascinating power through images, a mythical strength, and a communicative omnipresence« (ibid.).

Although the chapter on theory mentions McLuhan in connection with mediatization (cf. 3), there are no further explanations on the transformation of the public or, especially, medialization (or mediatization). The author misses his opportunity to follow on from the broad, and broadening, base of research on the »medialization of sport.« Referring to Görke, Bölz stresses that the sports media organized in editorial offices synchronize »our society materially, socially, and temporally« (4f.), but in general the depiction of approaches in system theory remains insufficiently complex. The distance from theoretical debates in communication studies is exemplified in a quote: »Many sports journalists ask themselves: ›Do I even need theories for my everyday work in editorial practice?‹« (7) There is a very justified counter-question here: Since when do practitioners decide on the use of theories? Chapter 1 contains very few bibliographical references even for a text book, and uses almost no examples or research findings.

This deficit continues in the subsequent chapters. Focusing on the significance of sports journalism in everyday culture, Chapter 2 looks at economic aspects, for example, and asks the question: »Can a product that is purchased by one's own business for a lot of money and that may not even be attractive, but instead just a tired kick-about, be described neutrally as a tired kick-about?« (46). The author

does not initially provide a clear answer, instead stating rather generally: »Given the intensive products of sports journalism, sports journalists are the cultural and, especially, language communicators of this society« (ibid.).

One of the few passages that does address international research is a reference to Maguire and his definition of »sport as a spectacle.« According to Maguire, sport displays a »test run for society that even today simulates future transnational identities under the banners of profit maximization and world culture and against the background of the dissolution of national identity-seeking processes« (49). The consequences of this assessment are barely addressed.

Chapter 3 reminds the reader that the democratic society calls journalism »the Fourth Estate in a state« (55), without the specifics of sports journalism being related to this (normative) function. The questions of whether sports journalism has a control function to fulfil and, if so, whether it has fulfilled it up to now, remain unanswered. Instead, Bözl shows that Weischenberg's Onion Model is also useful for explaining the contexts/influencing factors of sports journalism (cf. 66f.). In my view, this aspect should have been given more attention for precisely that reason.

One of the strengths of this book is its examination of pioneering studies into sports communicator research in Germany. Unfortunately, however, there are not enough references to more recent studies on how sports journalists see themselves. The changes that Bözl argues are caused by the »digital media transformation« and can be observed in seven trends, therefore have no clear link to the (current) research into digitalization and sports journalism.

Chapter 4 examines »sports journalism past and present.« Bözl provides a very convincing reappraisal of the history of sports print journalism (cf. 90ff.). In my opinion, sports journalism on the radio (cf. 106ff.) is not given enough attention, while no data at all is provided on sports journalism on television. It would have been possible to take a look at the (high or »highest«) viewing figures, such as those regularly published and discussed in the media perspectives. Instead, there is a quote from (RTL) sports journalist Felix Görner in 1995, in which he states that he »views television particularly critically as a medium of record for sport,« as television makes »the depiction of sport« appear more attractive »than the game itself« (115). Here in particular, it would have been good to address the debate about the »medialization of sport.«

Instead, Bözl uses an insertion to remind readers of the case of Carmen Thommas, the first female sports presenter on »Aktuelles Sportstudio« (ZDF). This case study is particularly topical given the hostility faced by Claudia Neumann during the 2018 soccer World Cup in Russia. In my view, the sub-chapter on the challenges and changes presented by digitalization could have done more to examine the competition between sports journalists and citizen journalism, the way PR by associations and athletes in social media is handled, and the significance of Twitter communication by sports journalists. The reference to Koch's study on the

research activities of sports journalists is not very useful, given that the finding quoted is that, due to digitalization, sport journalists »gain the majority of information from agency or radio reports« (119).

Chapter 5 looks at »sports journalism and its ethical norms.« Bözl takes a two-pronged approach, both drawing on the classic journalism studies sources and working with literature that has little impact in communication sciences. Geil is quoted with an article from *Junge Welt* (from 2008) in order to depict the magic triangle of sport, media, and business. Another point of criticism is that Bözl takes sports journalism to mean almost exclusively football journalism (cf. e.g. 136). On the other hand, it makes sense for him to address the study by Schaffrath, although there is a lack of reference to critical sports journalism and its institutionalization (key topic: »doping editorial office at ARD«).

Chapter 6 discusses the »quality (of sports journalism).« The author is very successful in applying the Russ-Mohl's criteria (cf. 150f.). However, I would not necessarily agree with his classification of Schaffrath as a system theoretician (cf. 153). Chapter 7 invokes the connection between »sports journalism and its recipients.« This section provides a series of data and discusses the findings of various studies (such as those by Maar and Schramm). Bözl also addresses the decline in daily newspapers (cf. 192). Chapters 9 and 10 on the management of editorial offices in sport (both in print and television) are particularly worth reading.

In conclusion, *Sportjournalistik* by Bözl is to be recommended as a book for its target group – students and practitioners. This is not least thanks to the questions at the end of each chapter, which are very useful for checking existing knowledge and progress. The text book makes no contribution to research into sports communication, but this was never its objective.

This book review was first published in Rezensionen: Kommunikation: Medien, 13th of July 2019, accessible under <https://www.rkm-journal.de/archives/21323>.

About the reviewer

Dr. Jörg-Uwe Nieland studied Political Science at the Universities of Duisburg, Bochum and Berlin. He is a member of academic staff at the Department of Communication at the University of Münster. In addition, he is an associate member of the »Media of Cooperation« Collaborative Research Center at the University of Siegen. Since 2014, Nieland has been spokesperson and deputy spokesman of the ad-hoc group »Media Sport and Sports Communication« in the German Communication Association; Board Member of Initiative Nachrichtenaufklärung e.V.

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