

Ideological immunity in the German media coverage of domestic terrorism

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Abstract

Influenced by the uncovering of the National Socialist Underground in Germany, in this paper I employ a framing analysis in order to explore whether the ideology of terrorist(s) makes a difference in how they are portrayed in the German media. Taking into account two media models, the Democratic Corporate model of Hallin and Mancini and the propaganda model of Herman and Chomsky, as well as critical terrorism studies, the first two weeks of coverage from *Der Spiegel* and *Die Zeit* of the kidnapping of Hanns-Martin Schleyer by the Red Army Faction in 1977 and the discovery of the National Socialist Underground in 2011 are submitted to a framing analysis. The similarity in the framing of both events by each newspaper taken independently and the minimal difference in framing between the two news outlets found in the analysis then provides the basis to argue for a synthesis of both the Democratic Corporate model and the propaganda model. The free democratic basic order of Germany as prescribed in the German constitution acts as a unifying force bridging the gap between different news outlets and their respective political partisanship.

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1. Introduction

On the 4th of November in 2011 German police discovered that three neo-Nazis had over the course of 14 years of ‘underground’ operations killed at least 9 immigrants and a police officer, robbed more than a dozen banks and committed a bombing attack.² The three called themselves the National Socialist Underground.³ The public was shocked and quickly made comparisons with the Red Army Faction, a left-wing militant group seeking to unmask the German state’s fascist face in the 1970s and 1980s.⁴ I take these comparisons of the RAF with the NSU and study the initial framing of media reports of both the discovery of the NSU and the kidnapping of Hanns-Martin Schleyer by the RAF in 1977, the latter of which was done in order to blackmail the German government to release eleven political prisoners, among them Andreas Baader one of the early members of the RAF. The intent is not so much to explore if the NSU and the RAF are indeed comparable, but to investigate if the ideology of the perpetrators of terrorist acts has an impact on the way in which they are framed by the media. An answer to this question may also have wider implications for media systems theory and the categorization of the German media system.⁵ Furthermore, little research has been done on the media coverage of the discovery of the NSU.

In this paper, then, I argue that due to the analogous framing of both events by each source taken independently, the ideology of terrorists does not make a significant difference to how they are portrayed in the media. Instead it is the political partisanship of the news outlets which accounts for the differences in framing between the two news sources inspected here. In order to make this argument, I first survey the existing literature, then lay out my methodology in detail. After dealing with these preliminaries, I will present the results of my framing and offer three competing explanations for the outcomes, before arguing that the decisive factor, accounting for the difference in the framing between the two news outlets, was in both events political partisanship. Finally I consider some more general implications

² Lehr. (2012.)

³ henceforth NSU

⁴ henceforth RAF

⁵ I discuss Hallin & Mancini’s models as well as Herman & Chomsky’s model in detail below.

which this research may have, taking into account external constraints specific to the German media.

2. The media and terrorism Media models

There are different approaches to the study of media and the study of terrorism. In the case of the media, the crucial difference lies in the different functions and mechanisms assigned to the media. In the following section, I review some of the approaches to the study of the media and the study of terrorism, focusing mostly on the approaches later employed in my research whilst acknowledging their potential weaknesses.

First, there is the liberal ideal of the media being the Fourth Estate, which locates media as a central actor within the political processes.⁶ This approach is based on an empiricist epistemology, generally characterized by the belief that objectivity in coverage can be achieved because the news is 'out-there' to be collected and reported. Louw doubts this approach because reporting the news necessarily implies interpreting them in the first place.⁷ Thus, Louw rejects the empiricist epistemology and replaces it with a constructivist epistemology, which takes the construction, namely interpretation, formulation and selection of news into account.⁸ Furthermore, Louw argues that the Fourth Estate is subject to commercial pressures turning it into "[...] a sensationalized watchdogism appealing to entertainment-seeking mass audiences."⁹ But in his further development of 'sensationalized watchdogism' Louw focuses solely on the US. Hallin, "[...] caution[s] against assuming that the trend toward convergence can simply be projected into the future, and argue that there are significant limits and counter-tendencies which should not be ignored."¹⁰ Additionally, in his work with Mancini, the Democratic Corporatist model is developed with specific reference to Germany.

⁶ Louw. (2010.)

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ *ibid.*, p. 49

¹⁰ Hallin. (2009.), p. 332

The Democratic Corporatist model directs attention to “[...] the coexistence of political parallelism and professionalism: they [*the media*] have traditionally reflected the divisions and diversity of society, yet have functioned as members of a profession with strong institutional coherence, consensus on its own rules of conduct, and substantial autonomy from other social institutions.”¹¹ This model stands in contrast to the liberal ideal of a politically neutral, objective journalism. In fact, Hallin and Mancini claim this model “[...] suggested that other forms of journalistic professionalism can exist, apart from the Liberal Model of neutral professionalism.”¹² The media system in Germany is presented as an example of the Democratic Corporatist model and fundamentally differs from the watchdogism that Louw describes and criticizes. As Hallin and Mancini put it, in the Democratic Corporate Model the media is seen to be a social institution.¹³ Countries to which this model applies, “[...] tend to combine strong protection for press freedom with a significant level of regulation [...]”.¹⁴ Furthermore, the media is seen, in these countries, to be “[...] not simply a private business.”¹⁵ Finally “[...] newspapers var[y] widely in their political tendencies.”¹⁶ In this context it is also important to be aware of the fact that 71 percent of German journalists see themselves as “[...] “championing particular values and ideas” [...]”.¹⁷ Therefore, explicit or implicit political allegiances of newspapers are not uncommon and need to be taken into account when researching German media content.

Finally, there is Herman and Chomsky’s

“[...] propaganda model that [...] sees the media as serving a “societal purpose,” but not that of enabling the public to assert meaningful control over the political process by providing them with the information needed for the intelligent discharge of political responsibility. On the contrary, a propaganda model suggests that the “societal purpose” of the media is to inculcate and defend the economic, social and political agenda of privileged

¹¹ Hallin & Mancini. (2004.), p. 196

¹² *ibid.*, p.197

¹³ cf. footnote 4

¹⁴ Hallin & Mancini. (2004.), p.163

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 181

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 180

groups that dominate the domestic society and the state.”¹⁸

In order to establish the strong conclusion quoted above in their study of the US media, Herman and Chomsky focus on cases which are usually upheld as examples of media independence and autonomy of the media. The propaganda function of the media is achieved by means of the five filters, which are in place to “[...] marginalize dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their messages across to the public.”¹⁹ These five filters are:

“[...] (1) the size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth, and profit orientation of the dominant mass-media firms; (2) advertising as the primary income source of the mass-media; (3) the reliance of the media on information provided by governments, business, and “experts” funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power; (4) “flak” as a means of disciplining the media; and (5) “anticommunism” as a national religion and control mechanism.”²⁰

In the new introduction to the second edition Herman and Chomsky also take into account the global changes since the publication of the first edition, which leads them to assert a shift in ideology away from the negative anti-communism to “[...] the greater ideological force of the belief in the “miracle of the market” (Reagan).”²¹ Interestingly, the propaganda model can also accommodate many other approaches, such as the sensationalized watchdogism of Louw. However, the question remains: how far the propaganda model can be generalized in the German context specifically? As mentioned above, the homogenization hypothesis appears to be not as universal as often assumed and the German Democratic Corporate media model differs significantly from the Liberal media exemplified by the US.

¹⁸ Herman & Chomsky. (2002.), p. 298

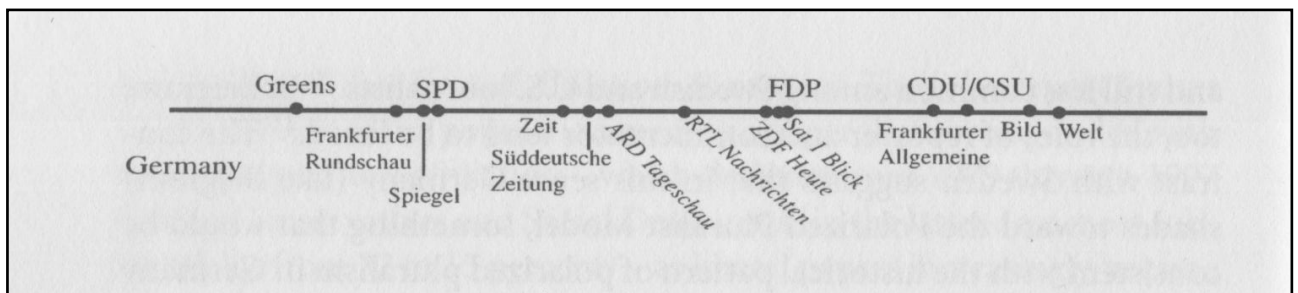
¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 2

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ *ibid.*, p. xvii

Media and Framing

Even though the media is regarded as a social institution in Germany, there are still different frames, “[...] news narrative that encourage those perceiving and thinking about events to develop particular understandings of them.”²² These different frames partly reflect the differences in political partisanship in the German news media as shown in Figure 1.



parties above the line, media below. TV news programs in italics

Figure 1: major German news outlets on the political spectrum.²³

Frames are an important concept in political communication because “[...] [c]onvincing others to accept one’s framing means to a large extent winning the debate.”²⁴ Furthermore, as Entman points out, “[...] it is the initial interactions of sources and journalists that set the framing process in motion.”²⁵ Tankard, in his further development of a concept of frame, adopts a more refined definition of a frame, as “[...] a central organizing idea for news content that supplies and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration.”²⁶ Especially “the assignment of the cause of social problems [...]” can be a good indicator in a framing analysis.²⁷

²² Entman. (1991.), p. 7

²³ originally from Patterson & Donsbach (1993.), cf. Hallin & Mancini. (ibid.), p. 182

²⁴ Tankard. (2001.), p. 96

²⁵ Entman. (ibid.), p. 7

²⁶ Tankard, Hendrickson, Silberman, Bliss & Ghanem. (1991) as quoted in Tankard. (ibid.) p. 101

²⁷ Tankard. (ibid.), p. 103

Furthermore, Tankard offers a clear guideline on how to discover and analyze frames. Starting with the assumption, that “[...] every story has a frame [...]”, a list of possible frames is to be created.²⁸ Then the development of “[...] keywords, catchphrases and symbols to help detect each frame [...]” can follow.²⁹ Finally a content analysis can be carried out and news items coded. But a research design does not need to be limited to this. Frames can also be developed during the coding process, which distinguishes a deductive from an inductive research design.

Tankard also suggests, “[...] that one useful approach to coming up with a list of frames can be to draw upon the theoretical or research literature pertaining to a topic of discourse.”³⁰ This approach appears especially helpful in areas where there has been research done already, as is the case for the study of terrorism and media coverage of terrorism.

State and Terrorism

Lehr in his comparison of German responses to domestic political terrorism from both ends of the political spectrum, gives a general overview of the events which I am analyzing as well as the responses of the German government to these ideologically different kinds of terrorism. Lehr argues that since the discovery of the NSU, the German state as well as the public are no longer blind in the right eye because the general outrage about NSU signifies an attention shift toward becoming fully aware of the extent of extreme right-wing political violence in Germany. With reference to definitions of the German authorities as well as other scholars, he disentangles the different perceptions of political violence and provides a thorough discussion. Specifically Lehr’s focus on the element of perception, “[...] the ‘shocking act of terrorist violence itself [...]’, as a crucial part of terrorism is of importance,

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 102

²⁹ *ibid.*

³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 103

“[...] because this is the part one’s imagination usually latches on, more often than not helped or fueled by widespread coverage of them in mass media.”³¹

Furthermore, Lehr offers an explanation for the difference in treatment of the left-wing and right-wing radicals in Germany, relating it back to the political climate of the Cold War. In contrast, due to a change in political climate and the decline of a threat emanating from islamic terrorism Lehr sees “[...] the XRW [*extreme right-wing*] scene [as] the only credible contender for domestic security consensus building at the moment.”³² But there seems to be a gap in Lehr’s argument, which could be due to his tendency to overly focus on the perception element. After all, it was already in “[...] the 1970s that (small) groups emerged openly declaring their intention to rehabilitate the National Socialism of the pre-1945 period [...]” after the NPD (National Democratic Party) had failed to get a enough votes to enter the German Bundestag in 1969.³³ In addition to this, Virchow also provides an extensive list of right-wing terrorism in one of the articles analyzed for this research.³⁴

A further criticism can be leveled at Lehr’s account for uncritically accepting the official definitions of extremism and radicalism as well as estimates of the size of the right-wing extremist scene from the Germany authorities. The field of orthodox terrorism studies is often riddled “[...] with a certain amount of political bias, associating it with Western counterterrorism policies, and functioning ideologically to legitimise and promote Western state interests and priorities [...]”.³⁵ In their argument for a new and more critical approach to terrorism studies, Jackson, Smyth and Gunning also emphasize the importance of a more integrated approach to terrorism, which avoids studying terrorism as an isolated phenomenon.

³¹ Lehr. (2012.), p. 189

³² *ibid.* p. 208

³³ Virchow. (2004.)

³⁴ Die Zeit. (2011.)

³⁵ Jackson, Smyth & Gunning. (2009.)

In the same vein, Gunning suggests taking social movement theory into account when studying terrorism for (a.) there is an “[...] interplay between militants and the wider social movement of which they form part, however loosely”; (b.) there are “[...] movement dynamics, whether organisational and ideational [...]”; and (c.) there is “[...] the interaction between militants, state forces and countermovements, within the context of the prevailing political system, elite alliances, and changing socio-economic conditions.”³⁶ Therefore, if social movement theory were taken into account, the explanatory force of terrorism studies could be increased. Further, if terrorism cannot be studied, as Gunning argues, as an isolated phenomenon, it can only be insufficiently portrayed as such a phenomenon too. Hence the inclusion or exclusion respectively can serve as an indicator in the framing analysis.

Last but not least, terrorists as an extreme outgrowth of wider social movements also follow an ideology. Haywood offers three distinctive features that ideologies possess: (1.) ideologies “[...] offer an account of the existing order, usually in the form of a ‘world view’ [...]”; (2.) they “[...] advance a model of a desired future society, a vision of the ‘good society’ [...]”, and (3.) they “[...] explain how political change can and should be brought about [...]”.³⁷ Ideologies, according to Haywood, synthesize understanding and commitment as well as thought and action. Through these syntheses ideologies blur the conventional distinction between the descriptive and prescriptive.

In his highly complex and technical investigations of ideologies Freedden puts forward a more detailed conception of ideology.³⁸ According to him, ideologies make sense of the world by “[...] decontesting the contested conceptual arrangements [...] by imposing specific meanings onto the indeterminate range of meanings that our conceptual clusters can hold.”³⁹ This implies that ideologies are competing to impose their own specific meaning on conceptual clusters. Furthermore, Freedden also draws the distinction between thin-centred and thick-

³⁶ Gunning. (2009.) pp. 176-7

³⁷ Haywood. (2012.) p. 11

³⁸ Freedden. (1999. & 2001.)

³⁹ Freedden. (1999.) p. 19

centred ideologies which emphasizes morphological differences in form and structure of different ideologies.⁴⁰ The crucial difference between thin and thick ideologies lies in their core concepts. While thick-centred ideologies have “[...] a broad and distinctive set of values, doctrines and beliefs [...]”, thin-centred ideologies have “[...] a ‘cross-cutting’ character, in that they incorporate elements from ‘thicker’ ideological traditions [...]”.⁴¹

3. Methodology

In order to address the question set out at the beginning of this article, I follow a distinct methodology, set out in the following section. Here I cover the research design as well as methods of data collection and discuss some possible reliability and validity issues.

The research is focused on comparing the media coverage of two different terrorist acts. It also compares how two different media outlets cover the same event. Both of these comparisons are combined to provide evidence for the possibility of a synthesis of the Democratic Corporatist media model and the propaganda model.

The research is specifically focused on the first two weeks after the events the coverage of which is analyzed, took place. I am particularly interested in these first two weeks because the initial framing of an event will also be reflected in any further coverage. After all, because frames “[...] [supply] a context and suggest what the issue is [...]”, any follow-up coverage will most likely relate back to the original interpretation in some way.⁴² The framing of the events is then compared in order to analyze whether the difference in framing coincides with the different political orientation of the terrorists. Secondly, it is assessed whether there Herman and Chomsky’s propaganda model also applies to the Democratic Corporate media system of Germany. The research design is, hence, comparative in three dimensions: (1.) local, namely between coverage of the same events by

⁴⁰ cf. Freedon (2001.)

⁴¹ Haywood. (ibid.) p. 14

⁴² cf footnote 16

two different news sources; (2.) temporal, namely between the coverage of two events at different times; and (3.) political, namely between the coverage of two terrorist acts committed by perpetrators from opposite ends of the political spectrum. At the outset, one limitation needs to be mentioned. Even though both *Der Spiegel* and *Die Zeit* are weekly published newspapers, *Der Spiegel* is a much more magazine like publication with significantly fewer but longer articles, while *Die Zeit* comes in a traditional newspaper format containing more articles of a lesser length than *Der Spiegel*.

The articles analyzed are from the first two issues of *Die Zeit* and *Der Spiegel*, which covered each event.⁴³ Due to the difference in publication day, *Die Zeit* is published weekly on Thursdays, while *Der Spiegel* is published weekly on Mondays, the issue numbers are not identical in 2011, while they are the same in 1977.⁴⁴ The news articles were collected directly from the webpages of each of the two news outlets between 04/10/2013 and 07/10/2013.⁴⁵ All articles from *Die Zeit* were retrieved as pdf documents in simple text format with wide margins and a 1.5 line spacing. In comparison, the articles from *Der Spiegel* were downloaded in their original publication format. An exception to this are two articles from *Die Zeit*, which were faulty in their simple text version. They were, thus, retrieved in their original publication format and scaled down to be printed on an A4 page. The choice to pick the text instead of the original publication format of *Die Zeit* articles was one of convenience. Due to the size of the newspaper, roughly A2 if folded out, the print of the articles is significantly reduced when the articles are scaled down to A4 format, which makes them barely readable.

The total number of articles analyzed was 38. *Der Spiegel* covered the discovery of the NSU with four articles making up 22 pages of the actual publication, and the kidnapping of Hanns-Martin Schleyer and the RAF terrorism with eleven articles, making up 30 pages of

⁴³ Hanns-Martin Schleyer was kidnapped on the 5th of September in 1977; the NSU was discovered on the 4th of November in 2011

⁴⁴ all articles analyzed were published in issues 38/1977, 39/1977, 46/2011 & 47/2011 of *Der Spiegel* and issues 38/1977, 39/1977, 47/2011 & 48/2011 of *Die Zeit*

⁴⁵ <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/> and <http://www.zeit.de/2013/index> respectively

the actual publication.⁴⁶ *Die Zeit* dedicated ten articles to the discovery of the NSU which make up 38 pages of text if printed out individually, and 13 articles to the kidnapping of Hanns-Martin Schleyer and the RAF terrorism, making 34 pages of text.⁴⁷ The articles of *Die Zeit* also include three opinion pieces from well regarded personalities, namely Herbert Marcuse, Heinrich Böll and Rudi Dutschke. Furthermore, the articles discussing the new anti-terror laws in 1977 were included in the articles analyzed, because the articles made direct reference to the RAF terrorism and more specifically the kidnapping of Hanns-Martin Schleyer. In addition to that, the laws were after all also a direct response to the terrorism of the RAF.

After the collection of articles the frames were developed. This was done in a parallel fashion, combining both inductive and deductive approach in order to attain frames that were both generalizable and specifically fit for the research. In this process the distinction between orthodox and critical terrorism studies, specifically the tendencies to either regard terrorism as isolated or as situated within a movement and a field of complex dynamics respectively, was employed to get a guideline. Equipped with this basic distinction the general frames were further specified according to the cases.⁴⁸ This specification of frames was done inductively.

The two frames, namely the '*institutional problem*' frame and the '*socio-political issue*' frame, according to which the articles were analyzed contain nine interconnected categories, all of which taken together suggest one specific interpretation of the events as well as a solution. The nine categories are:⁴⁹

1. Problem definition
2. Actors

⁴⁶ cf. Appendix II

⁴⁷ cf. *ibid*

⁴⁸ cf. Appendix I for the final frames

⁴⁹ these nine categories are adapted from Deprez & Raeymaeckers. (2010.) for a detailed description of the frames cf. Appendix I

3. Origin of the problem
4. Responsibility
5. Solution
6. Moral basis
7. Contextualization
8. Lexical choices/metaphors
9. Dominant sources

In general the two frames closely resemble the difference between orthodox/conventional terrorism studies and critical terrorism studies. The '*institutional problem*' frame relating in narrative, political bias and narrowness of conception to the former, while the '*socio-political issue*' frame adopts the wider set of analytic and explanatory tools promoted by Jackson, Smyth and Gunning.⁵⁰

The *institutional problem* frame, hence, solely focuses on terrorism as an isolated phenomenon. It locates its origins in features of the individual, the mystical process of 'radicalisation'.⁵¹ Moreover, it suggests a purely legislative solution which mostly focused on the reform and/or expansion of the executive branch of government and its agencies in the specific cases analyzed here.⁵²

Opposed to the *institutional problem* frame, the *socio-political issue* frame suggests that terrorists are the extreme outgrowth of a wider movement, even if this movement does not share or support their methods. Furthermore, the origin of the problem is seen to be manifold, including factors internal and external to the individual. The suggested solution is a more wide ranging one, aimed at the totality of conditions and factors from which the problem originated.

⁵⁰ Jackson, Smyth & Gunning. (ibid.)

⁵¹ cf. Jackson. (2009.)

⁵² cf. Jackson. (2009.)

It is important to point out, that both frames assign responsibility of the terrorist acts to the perpetrators. The difference between the two frames in this particular category lies in the extent to which the individual is held responsible for her actions without taking into account wider problems like societal failings. The same goes for the category 'moral basis', where the *institutional problem* frame categorically rejects the ends of the terrorist, while the *socio-political issue* frame draws a means-end distinction and only rejects the means while not necessarily rejecting the ends.

The frames were developed into their final shape during a round of first coding and then all articles were recoded once the frames were fully developed. In accordance to Tankard's recommendation, coding articles as neutral or containing both frames was avoided.⁵³ Thus, articles which could have been coded as pushing both frames were coded in accordance with which framework they promoted more. In addition to this, articles which either focused on investigative methods, the individual personal history of the terrorist(s), or the terrorist(s) and a limited number of helpers were coded as *institutional problem* frame, because these articles attempt to portray terrorism in isolation from wider social forces, conditions and factors.

In the context of the methodology I employ, there is one reliability to be problematized. I have chosen to only code for the one dominant frame, which may distort the results of my analysis. It is obviously conceivable that a news item can have more than one frame being pushed at the same time, maybe even contains overlapping frames, which enhance one another. Moreover, the focus on just the dominant frame may open up the possibility of over-simplifying the outcome. But it also needs to be taken into consideration that I have only identified two frames in the first place. Hence, if I were to code for primary and secondary frames, the outcomes would be equally obscured. In fact, such research would most likely fail to yield definite outcomes at all. Furthermore, all news items have a dominant frame, which may well be supplemented with a secondary frame. But the

⁵³ cf. footnote 18

dominant frame would still be the frame most suggestive. Thus I have decided to risk this reliability in order to increase the applicability as well as the coherence of the framing analysis.

4. Balanced and unbalanced framing

In this section I will present and discuss the results of my framing analysis with specific reference to the two interlinked questions set out in the beginning of the paper. There are two distinct parts, which are dictated by the twofold research question. In this section, I tackle the most specific questions: is there a difference between the framing of the NSU terrorism and the RAF terrorism?; and: can this difference be attributed to a difference in political orientation of the perpetrators?

The relevant findings of my framing analysis are presented in chronological order, first considering the coverage of the kidnapping of Hanns-Martin Schleyer and the RAF, then proceeding to the coverage of the NSU discovery.

Generally, the *institutional problem* framework, suggesting the RAF terrorism to be an isolated problem requiring a legislative solution, strongly dominates the coverage of the kidnapping of Schleyer by the RAF in the first week of coverage, the week beginning Monday, 12/11/1977.⁵⁴ This is the case for both sources, *Der Spiegel* as well as *Die Zeit*. Both offer, in their respective issue of that week, detailed descriptions of the kidnapping and discussions of the investigative techniques employed to find the terrorists, especially *Der Spiegel*'s twelve page article "*Eigentlich müsste jeder verdächtig sein*" is a prime example of such a discussion.⁵⁵ The second week in contrast sees a rise in both news outlets of the *socio-political issue* frame. But while in *Der Spiegel* a dominance of the *institutional problem*

⁵⁴ cf. Appendix IV

⁵⁵ cf. Appendix II

frame is still maintained, the framing in *Die Zeit* shifts more significantly with the *socio-political issue* frame becoming dominant.⁵⁶

When comparing the coverage of the NSU discovery to the coverage of the Schleyer kidnapping, the fact that *Der Spiegel* solely adopts the *institutional problem* frame sticks out the most. While *Die Zeit* is shifting towards the dominance of the *socio-political issue* framework in its second issue covering the NSU discovery, the *socio-political issue* frame is entirely absent in both issues of *Der Spiegel*.⁵⁷ Further, even in issue 47/2011 of *Die Zeit*, the first issue covering the NSU discovery, already devotes one-third of the coverage to the *socio-political issue* frame.⁵⁸ This is significantly more than in 1977, when only two ninth of all pages was devoted to the *socio-political issue* frame.⁵⁹ Meanwhile the coverage of *Der Spiegel* focuses on investigative methods again, but this time also specifically focusing on the failure of the investigative and security agencies to prevent the NSU terrorism.

It is obvious then, that each newspaper taken independently frames both instances of terrorism similarly. But there is a vast difference between how each newspaper frames both instances. While the coverage of *Der Spiegel* is in both cases dominated by the *institutional problem* frame, the framing of *Die Zeit* shifts from a dominance of the *institutional problem* frame to a dominance of the *socio-political issue* frame in both cases. In the following I discuss three possible explanations for this.

First, there is an important difference in the events: while the discovery of the NSU was the first Nazi-terrorist plot to receive major media coverage in 2011, by the time the RAF kidnapped Hanns-Martin Schleyer in 1977 they were already a well established threat.⁶⁰ In addition to that, the time of the kidnapping by the RAF also coincides with the passing of a

⁵⁶ cf. Appendix IV

⁵⁷ cf. Appendix V

⁵⁸ the ration of pages devoted to articles adopting a *institutional problem* frame to pages devoted to articles adopting a *socio-political issue* frame is hence 3:1; cf. Appendix V

⁵⁹ the ration of pages devoted to articles adopting a *institutional problem* frame to pages devoted to articles adopting a *socio-political issue* frame is hence 4.5:1; cf. Appendix IV

⁶⁰ cf. Lehr. (ibid.)

new package of anti-terror laws in Germany the coverage of which hugely overlapped with the coverage of the kidnapping.⁶¹ This is one possible explanation of the dominance of the *institutional problem* frame in 1977. Furthermore, the actions of the NSU are, if one is to believe the articles analyzed, partly attributable to the failures of German investigative and interior intelligence service(s) to take the threat of right-wing political violence seriously.⁶² Thus the appearance (and temporal) dominance of the *institutional problem* frame in 2011 can possibly be explained by the nature of the events themselves. But this explanation cannot fully account for the difference between the two newspapers and would suggest either a uniform shift towards the *socio-political issue* frame or the uniform maintenance of the *institutional problem* frame. The fundamental difference between the framework adopted by each newspaper, hence, remains unexplained.

The second kind of possible explanation open to explore would be to take a closer look at those who contribute opinion pieces to each of the publications. This kind of explanation is particularly applicable to *Die Zeit* and may help explaining the shift from the *institutional problem* frame to the *socio-political issue* frame. In the 39/1977 issue of *Die Zeit*, there were three prominent contributors: (1) Herbert Marcuse, the well know critical theorist of Frankfurt School and self-identified marxist, (2) Heinrich Böll, the winner of the Nobel Prize of Literature in 1972, and (3) Rudi Dutschke, former German student protest leader of the late 1960s. All three of them, take a critical attitude towards the RAF but also towards the approach of considering terrorism an isolated phenomenon requiring a purely legislative/executive solution. A similar case can be made for the shift in framing in the 2011 coverage of *Die Zeit*. There again, the contributions by academics may have caused the shift in framing.⁶³ The coverage of *Der Spiegel* does not draw so much on guest contributors, which may explain the narrower focus of it articles. This explanation first and foremost raises another question though: how and why are the guest contributors chosen? But this question reveals the narrow scope of this explanation, it cannot fully account for the

⁶¹ cf. Methodology

⁶² also cf. Lehr. (ibid.)

⁶³ e.g.: Zeit (2011.)

difference between the two newspapers rather this explanation only signifies a first explanatory step which leads to the third possible explanation.

This third possible explanation may be derived from the political partisanship of the media themselves. This explanation suggested that the difference in political partisanship may account for the difference in frames employed by *Der Spiegel* and *Die Zeit*. In this context it would be worthwhile going back to Figure 1, which may help explain some of the framing. According to Figure 1, *Der Spiegel* is located on the left of the political spectrum, while *Die Zeit* occupies a rather center-left position. Furthermore, *Der Spiegel* is located very close to the political position of the social-democratic party (SPD), while the distance between *Die Zeit* and any party is significantly bigger.⁶⁴ One way to explain the focus on legislative issues of *Der Spiegel* would therefore be by reference to the closeness of the paper's political position to that of the SPD. This is especially plausible, because *Der Spiegel* covers and defends the new anti-terror laws in much greater detail than *Die Zeit*. After all, the SPD was the senior partner in a social liberal coalition government during 1977. Furthermore, *Der Spiegel* also attacks the conservative position demanding even stronger laws than the SPD led government passed. This is not to say, that *Die Zeit* does not cover these laws. But the coverage of them by *Der Spiegel* predominantly adopts the *institutional problem* frame often narrowly reiterating the parliamentary debates at great length, while *Die Zeit* offers an even balance between the *institutional problem* and the *socio-political issue* frame in its treatment of the new anti-terror laws taking social dynamics and historic insights into consideration.

Importantly a similar trend can be found in the 2011 coverage. While *Der Spiegel* in its coverage of the NSU discovery solely adopts the *institutional problem* framework, *Die Zeit* after an initial dominance of the *institutional problem* frame shifts to a dominance of the *socio-political issue* frame. Moreover, *Der Spiegel* offers a very isolated account of the NSU

⁶⁴ Although it is worth noticing that the former *Bundeskanzler* (Chancellor) Helmut Schmidt, who was *Bundeskanzler* during the kidnapping of Hanns-Martin Schleyer, has been since 1983 the publishers of *Die Zeit*.

terrorism, this time focusing on the investigative and preventive failures of government agencies, predominantly the police forces and the German interior intelligence service (*Verfassungsschutz* - on the federal as well as on the state level). In 2011, the government was lead by Angela Merkel of the christian-democratic party (CDU), the traditional rival of the SPD.

As Figure 1 shows, the position on the political spectrum of *Der Spiegel* is very close to that of the social democrats, namely the SPD, while *Die Zeit* is located in the vast gap between the social democrats and the liberals, the latter being the FDP. Even though *Die Zeit* is still closer to the SPD than to the FDP, it is by far not as close as *Der Spiegel*. If their location on the political spectrum is taken into consideration, the different focus of each newspaper can be accounted for. Due to its close allegiance to the SPD, *Der Spiegel's* focus on parliamentary politics and the adoption of the *institutional problem* frame can be explained. In contrast, *Die Zeit* is not as closely aligned with any political party and thus able to employ a wider framework as evident in the shift towards the *socio-political issue* frame.

Finally, political partisanship is also able to incorporate the former two explanations. Obviously, the political position of a newspaper has implications for the selection of guest contributors. In addition to that, if the nature of the two events was fundamentally different, there would be a correlative difference in how the two events were framed in each newspaper. This is not the case. Rather, there is a surprising continuity in how of each, *Der Spiegel* and *Die Zeit*, frames both events and the surrounding debates. But the coverage and the frameworks employed in each source vastly differ. Therefore, the difference between the two events cannot account for the difference in the framing employed by each newspaper, as I have described it above. Instead I suggest the cause for this difference is to be found in the different political biases of the two newspapers. Especially the closeness of the political position of *Der Spiegel* to the political position of the SPD can then be employed to make intelligible its focus on the legislative issues while excluding the wider factors.

Because *Die Zeit* is not as close to the political position of a party, its coverage can employ a wider framework and explore issues more thoroughly.

5. The Democratic Corporate Propaganda Model

So far I have argued that there is a similarity in the framing of the two events in each newspaper. Further I established there being a difference between the two newspapers in the frames adopted due to their different political partisanship, their position on the classical left-right political spectrum. If this is the case, what are the implications for media theory? Does the Democratic Corporate model of Hallin and Mancini rule out the applicability of Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model?

As Hallin and Mancini point out, the political and the commercial press developed into a system of political parallelism in the Democratic Corporate model.⁶⁵ This contrasts with the *Gleichschaltung* of the media which Herman and Chomsky suggest.⁶⁶ From the analysis I present above, it is possible that the German case synthesizes the two models. On the one hand side, there is noticeable diversity in the framing of the same events by different newspapers due to political partisanship. On the other hand side, the general tone of both frames is similar and marginalized groups or opinions are not prominent. This is specifically the case for the 2011 coverage. There is only one article considering the perspective of immigrants in *Die Zeit*, while *Der Spiegel* excludes them completely. Instead both frames tend to emphasize the threat to free democratic basic order (*freiheitlich demokratische Grundordnung*).

Furthermore, both frames rely on Herman and Chomsky's third filter, even though the *socio-political* issue frame does comparatively less so. Both *Der Spiegel* and *Die Zeit* are commercial enterprises relying on advertising. The free democratic basic order can be seen as a version of the fifth filter. This filtering mechanism is, of course especially prominent in

⁶⁵ Hallin & Mancini. (ibid.)

⁶⁶ Herman & Chomsky. (ibid)

the *institutional problem* frame as this frame does not differentiate between means and ends of terrorist(s) and therefore marginalizes the ideological content of their actions. Further, in *Der Spiegel* there is also one article which clearly qualifies as flak, namely an article on the mediator of the negotiations between the German government and the RAF in 1977, Mr. Payot.⁶⁷ This article includes quotes about Mr. Payot's character deficiencies which are not attributed to a source and appears to be entirely aimed at discrediting him.

What, then, are the implications of this research? First of all, it appears that the ideology of the terrorist(s) does not matter in the media framing of their acts. In fact, both terrorist groups, the RAF as well as the NSU, attribute, upon close inspection, competing and very different meanings to political concepts.⁶⁸ Importantly, both groups reject the German constitution for different reasons and seek to reconfigure the political sphere. There may be a difference in thickness and/or thinness of their ideologies respectively. But these ideologies are not fully taken into consideration in either case. Instead the framing of both acts is continuous in each news outlet, each time reaffirming the political paradigm of the Federal Republic of Germany as prescribed in its constitution. Even though both the RAF and the NSU had concrete and also vastly different ideological aims, these are not fully portrayed in either media outlet.⁶⁹ Therefore, the coverage of both events can be seen as an ideologically immune response to political violence because both threaten the free democratic basic order. This ideological immunity is evident in both frames. The *institutional problem* frame with its narrow focus on political responses explores the possibility of strengthening institutions to defend the free democratic basic order, while the *socio-political issue* frame simply locates the roots of the threat differently and hence suggests different, wider reaching countermeasures to avoid future threats.

Thus, the propaganda model can be applied to German media. Although there may be minor differences between news outlets and their framing due to political partisanship, a common

⁶⁷ cf. Appendix II

⁶⁸ cf. Lehr. (ibid.)

⁶⁹ cf. Lehr. (ibid.)

denominator between the different media can be found. This common denominator is ideology, namely the free democratic basic order of Germany as established in the German Constitution. Further, the Constitution also places an external limitation on the media, because the freedom of expression, specifically the freedom of the press can be voided in cases where the expression is employed to fight the free democratic basic order.⁷⁰

Certainly, my research alone does not establish the general points made in the conclusion. But this research could be a starting point for further investigations. Because I have only inspected two news outlets among many in the German media landscape, there is also the possibility that other newspapers would provide contrary evidence. This could be a further avenue of research to be explored to increase the theoretical force behind the claims made here.

⁷⁰ cf. German Constitution, Art. 18

6. Appendices

Appendix I: Frames

	Institutional Problem	Socio-Political Issue
Problem definition	Isolated terrorists murdering and abducting people, while official institutions fail to prevent these acts or to find the perpetrators.	Radicals as part of a particular movement resorting to violence as means to political ends. Fluidity between militants and non-militants.
Actors	focus on state actors, officials, lesser focus on individual perpetrators	focus on the perpetrators and the sympathizers, less focus on state actors and officials. additionally, social forces and wider society are taken into consideration.

	Institutional Problem	Socio-Political Issue
Origin of the Problem	<p>“Hass auf Ausländer” (translation: hating foreigners) “so-called ‘radicalisation’” (Jackson. 2009), psychological factors of the individual (cf. Jackson (ibid.) and Gunning (2009)) failures to the government to provide security</p>	<p>complex dynamics of a wider movement coupled with factors/views of the individual, e.g.: ideological, social, political and psychological factors. (see Gunning (2009.))</p>
Responsibility	<p>a small, isolated group terrorizing the country and executive agencies’ failures (e.g.: (Landes- und Bundes-)Polizei, BKA, und Verfassungsschutz)</p>	<p>the problem is conceived as a wider one and amounts to a challenge not just to the government or the investigating agencies, but to society as a whole, while the responsibility for the terror-acts lies still with the perpetrators.</p>
Solution	<p>Reform and expansion of the investigative as well as intelligence agencies</p>	<p>the solution can only be a wide ranging one relieving prevalent the socio-economic and political disparities</p>

	Institutional Problem	Socio-Political Issue
Moral Basis	democracy is under attack and needs to be protected at all cost. Politicians must act! These terrorist(s) are incorrigible.	liberal market democracy is questioned and rejected by the terrorists, but their means are not justified by their ends.
Contextualization	Terrorism is contextualized in structural failing of the executive branch of government. Further, legislative and party political consequences are given room. (political perspective)	Terrorism is contextualized as a socio-political issue. The problem is looked at from a historical and social perspective as well as from a political.
Lexical choices/metaphors	terrorist = 'Kriminelle', 'Gangster', 'Mörderbande', 'Killerbande' 'Kranke' (translation: criminals, gangsters, killer gangs, sick (in the sense of mentally ill)) terrorist act = 'Drama', 'Tragödie' (translation: drama, tragedy)	terrorist = 'Radicale', 'verlorene/entlaufene Kinder' (translation: radicals, lost/run-away children)

	Institutional Problem	Socio-Political Issue
Dominant sources	government officials, MPs, security experts, members of the executive branch of government	academics, intellectuals and sources close to the movement concerned, to a comparatively lesser extent official sources

Appendix II: Coding of 1977 articles:

article title	number of pages	dominant frame
<i>Der Spiegel 38/1977</i>		
Stark genug, den Krieg zu erklären?	5	institutional problem
Mann, o Mann	1	socio-political issue
“Konzentration aufs Wesentliche	1	institutional problem
“Eigentlich müsste jeder verdächtig sein”	12	institutional problem
<i>Die Zeit 38/1977</i>		
Am Tatort: 300 Patronenhülsen	3	institutional problem
Ratlose Fahnder hoffen auf den Zufall	3	institutional problem
Im Zeichen geschäftiger Ohnmacht	4	institutional problem

article title	number of pages	dominant frame
Die schrecklichen entlaufenen Wohlstandskinder	4	socio-political issue
Nachgeben ist gefährlich	4	institutional problem
<i>Der Spiegel 39/1977</i>		
Fall Schleyer: "Die Dramatik mus raus"	3	institutional problem
Schuldige gesucht	1	socio-political issue
"Immer alles alleine machen"	1	institutional problem (FLAK)
"Der Bürger ruft nach härteren Strafen"	6	institutional problem
Letzte Instanz	1	institutional problem
"So viele man köpfte, es hörte nicht auf"	1	socio-political issue
Viele Jemand	2	socio-political issue
<i>Die Zeit 39/1977</i>		
Eine Reise ins Verderben?	4	institutional problem
Mord darf keine Waffe der Politik sein <i>by Herbert Marcuse</i>	2	socio-political issue
Wer Freude hat, birgt eine Bombe <i>by Heinrich Böll</i>	2	socio-political issue
Räson und Nerven	2	institutional problem

article title	number of pages	dominant frame
Kritik am Terror muß klarer werden <i>by Rudi Dutschke</i>	2	socio-political issue
Das Geschäft der Feinde besorgen?	4	socio-political issue
Das Vexierspiel der Terroristen	1 (scaled to fit on page)	socio-political issue
Kontakt halten und nichts verbauen	1 (scaled to fit on page)	institutional problem

Appendix III: Coding of 2011 articles:

article title	number of pages	dominant frame
<i>Der Spiegel 46/2011</i>		
Letzte Ausfahrt Eisenach	10	institutional problem
<i>Die Zeit 47/2011</i>		

article title	number of pages	dominant frame
Verbrecher und Versager	7 (including a picture and a map	institutional problem
Hat der Osten jetzt seine eigene RAF?	3	institutional problem
Nur ein Türke?	2	socio-political issue
“Man lebt für den Tag X”	2	socio-political issue
War dieser Terror vorstellbar?	4	institutional problem
Sind sie die finsternen Kinder der Einheit?	3	socio-political issue
<i>Der Spiegel 47/2011</i>		
Der braune Terror	4	institutional problem
“V-Leute sind unverzichtbar”	2	institutional problem
Das Netz der Bösen	6	institutional problem
<i>Die Zeit 48/2011</i>		
“Absichtsvoll schiefgegangen”	4	institutional problem
Macht nicht schlapp	2	institutional problem
15 Minuten Größenwahn	2	institutional problem

article title	number of pages	dominant frame
Für Volk und Nation by <i>F. Virchow</i>	6	socio-political issue
Der falsche Frieden	4	socio-political issue

Appendix IV: Coding Results RAF terrorism

News source / issue number	Institutional problem frame articles / number of pages	Socio-political issue frame articles / number of pages
<i>Der Spiegel</i> 38/1977	3 articles/ 18 pages	1 article/ 1 page
<i>Die Zeit</i> 38/1977	4 articles/ 14 pages	1 article/ 4 page
<i>Der Spiegel</i> 39/1977	4 articles/ 11 pages	3 articles/ 4 pages
<i>Die Zeit</i> 39/1977	3 articles/ 6 pages + 1 pages of the actual publication	5 articles/ 10 pages + 1 pages of the actual publication

Appendix V: Coding Results NSU terrorism

News source / issue number	Institutional problem frame articles / number of pages	Socio-political issue frame articles / number of pages
<i>Der Spiegel</i> 46/2011	1 article/ 10 pages	/

News source / issue number	Institutional problem frame articles / number of pages	Socio-political issue frame articles / number of pages
<i>Die Zeit 47/2011</i>	3 articles/ 14 pages (including a picture and one pages with a map of the terrorist attacks)	3 articles/ 7 pages
<i>Der Spiegel 47/2011</i>	3 articles/ 12 pages	/
<i>Die Zeit 48/2011</i>	3 articles/ 8 pages	2 articles/ 10 pages

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