



universität
wien

MASTER THESIS

Titel der Master Thesis / Title of the Master's Thesis

„Lügenpresse“ - How the anti-Media narrative of far-right populist groups is affecting free expression and journalist safety in Germany

verfasst von / submitted by

Florian Lang, MA

angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts (MA)

Wien, 2016 / Vienna 2016

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /
Postgraduate programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

A 992 884

Universitätslehrgang lt. Studienblatt /
Postgraduate programme as it appears on
the student record sheet:

Universitätslehrgang Master of Arts in Human Rights

Betreut von / Supervisor:

Dr. Petra Herczeg

Index:

1. Introduction	5
2. The human right of free expression in the context of journalist safety	7
2.1 The reasoning behind a human right to free expression .	8
2.2 The International, European and German legal standards regarding the right to free expression	
2.2.1 Freedom of Expression in the ICCPR	9
2.2.2 Freedom of Expression in the CoE framework	11
2.2.3 Freedom of Expression in the German Basic Law	14
2.3 Freedom of Expression in the context of journalist safety .	15
3. The political far-right movement in Germany and its relation to the media	20
3.1 The political far-right movement in Germany	
3.1.1 The PEGIDA movement	21
3.1.2 Alternative für Deutschland (AfD)	31
3.1.3 The ‘New Right’ as ideological foundation of PEGIDA and the AfD	39
3.2 The far-right’s relation to the media – The historical origin and the current emergence of the ‘lying press’- narrative	
3.2.1 The origin and historical concept of the ‘lying press’- narrative	41
3.2.2 The re-emergence of the ‘lying press’- narrative along the rise of the far-right movement	43

4. Inquiries and statistics by the state and civil society on journalist safety in Germany	50
4.1 Inquiries, statistics and responses by the state	51
4.2 Inquiries, statistics and responses by civil society actors	55
5. Empirical Study: Qualitative Interviews	61
5.1 Nature, Frequency and Magnitude of Attacks, Threats and Insults against Journalists	
5.1.1 Responses to Questions 1-4	63
5.1.2 Analysis 1-4	79
5.2 Perceived and Actual Impediments to Journalistic Work and the Freedom of Expression	
5.2.1 Responses to Questions 5-7	81
5.2.2 Analysis 5-7	92
5.3 Response of the State towards Attacks, Threats and Insults against Journalists in Germany	
5.3.1 Responses to Question 8-9	94
5.3.2 Analysis 8-9	102
6. Conclusion	103
7. Bibliography.	107
8. Appendix	
8.1 Interview with Stefan Locke, FAZ, 25.05.2016	122

8.2 Interview with Carsten Thureau, ZDF, 21.07.2016	128
8.3 Interview with the East Germany correspondent of a national newspaper, 25.07.2016.	138
8.4 Interview with Ulrich Wolf, Sächsische Zeitung, 26.07.2016	144
8.5 Interview with Stefan Schölermann, NDR, 26.07.2016	153
8.6 Interview with Stefan Raue, MDR, 29.07.2016	160
 Abstract/Kurzbeschreibung	 170

1. Introduction

“As soon as somebody in the mosque gives a sign, everybody reaches for their knives and sabers and start attacking us in streets.”, a friendly looking older lady says to the reporter. “I read the Koran in parts and what is in there, is just enough for me!”, another PEGIDA protester states. Upon the question, what it is that he read, the man replies: “I really don’t want to tell this now, I am just telling that I read the Koran in parts and it is enough!”. These short quotes that illustrated a mindset ridden by prejudices against Muslims stem from *Neue Deutsche Welle* reporter Jaafar Abdul Karim, gathered a PEGIDA rally in Dresden in which the first anniversary of the movement was celebrated.¹ However, the xenophobic attitude of the protesters is not the only worrisome aspect of Karim’s vlog. Along the 3.29 minutes, the atmosphere is getting increasingly aggressive towards the reporter. While some of the protesters just don’t want to talk to Karim, some of them start shouting at him. “Get lost! You and your bullshit always! All you do is lying all the time!”, a middle-aged man shouts in rage while another protester tries to block Karim’s view with his flag. Shortly after, Karim and his team get circled by protesters who shout racist slurs at him and finally beat him in the neck and also attack his two co-workers. Up to this day, the perpetrators could not be identified, mainly because witnesses accused Karim of lying.

This case is the most publicly discussed of a series of incidents (many of which will be presented later) that took place in the surrounding of far-right demonstrations, in particular at PEGIDA rallies. This is due to Karim’s approach to go full public with the attack on him and unfortunately also because the whole sequence illustrates the concept of enemy for the far-right movement: Islam and the media. The slogan ‘Lügenpresse’ (lying press) is circulating among PEGIDA protesters since the beginning of the demonstrations in fall 2014. It captures a diffuse feeling of being manipulated by political elites that control the media in order to prevent politically incorrect facts from being published. In the very situation of a demonstration, when groups of angry people develop a self-enforcing rage and the complexity of a mass of people suggests anonymity, it seems

¹ Spiegel Online (2015): Jaafar’s Videoblog #3: Hauen Sie ab! Sie lügen nur!, 20.10.2015, available online

a very logical consequence that this anger is at some point translated in violence. But also outside of demonstrations, journalists in Germany increasingly report harassment, insults and threats, articulated in particular via social media. The journalists Anja Reschke and Dunya Halili received horrifyingly hateful comments when speaking about a humane approach in the refugee crisis.²

For a country like Germany, a western democracy, important within the European Union and at the forefront of human rights advocacy around the world, this development is worrisome. Yet, considering the public debate, it doesn't seem that the public and more importantly the political sphere have developed a clear stance on it. Neither does it seem as if an effective response mechanism has been put in place to protect journalists at demonstrations and, even more importantly, to consequently investigate and trial perpetrators.

This vague feeling of witnessing an inappropriate reaction to a very worrisome trend that could potentially harm the human right to free expression, is the starting point for this thesis. It is intended to produce answers on the following three questions: Have attacks and harassment against journalist reached an extent in which the human right of free expression in Germany is affected? Are there actual and perceived impediments on journalistic work and how are they demonstrated? And finally and most importantly, does the German state as responsible for guaranteeing free expression and press freedom live up to its obligations under international and national legal standards?

For this purpose, the thesis will first introduce the human right of free expression and its relation to the work of journalists. Then, the political far-right movement in Germany as well as its aversion to the media are explained and put into context. A first analytical part then focuses on inquiries and statistics gathered by state organs and the German civil society, in order to measure the actual extent of attacks, threats and insults against journalists in Germany as they are reported or investigated. The second analytical part will feature interviews with journalists who either have personal or professional experience with the issue. Combined with inquiries and statistics, the interviews shall

² Stern (2016): Dunja Hayali's geniale Reaktion auf einen Hassbrief, 19.05.2016, available online

allow to make conclusions regarding the aforementioned research questions, based on detailed, first-hand accounts by journalists themselves.

2. The human right of free expression in the context of journalists' safety

Methodological remarks

This first background chapter is dedicated to the international and national standards that safeguard journalists, their free expression and their essential societal role in a democracy. Divided in three sub-items, the first one gives a brief overview on the reasoning behind the human right to free speech as part of philosophical and practical considerations. In this regard, the most common argumentations are illustrated.

The second sub-item demonstrates the international and national legal standards that apply in the context of journalist safety in Germany. As the most relevant, these include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the framework of the Council of Europe including the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights as its associated court and finally the relevant articles in the German Basic Law. Apart from the mere scope of the provisions, this sub-item focuses strongly on how the mentioned legal frameworks interpret 'positive obligations' on behalf of the states. As this thesis doesn't explore violations committed by the state or state agents but the role of the state in regard to the protection against violations by third parties, covering the negative obligations of the state would be of no avail and most certainly misleading.

The third sub-item specifies the context of the thesis and elaborates on how these standards apply in the context of journalist safety. It is discussed, how governmental and non-governmental institutions and organizations that are basing themselves on the international legal standards organize advocacy, protection and assistance to journalist that are targeted or in danger of being targeted. Again, the sub-item focuses on issues that relate to positive obligations, e.g. the fight against impunity.

2.1 The reasoning behind the right to free expression and the freedom of the press

In the wake of the attack on the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, Steven Pinker, professor for psychology at Harvard University, wrote an article for the Boston Globe in order to remind why the right to free expression so fundamental in a democratic society.³ Pinker argues that freedom of speech and expression are required to generate knowledge individually and collectively by the possibility to express opinions and ideas openly, as they are either confirmed or refuted by the world. He bases himself on the theory of conjecture by Karl Popper whose concept is dependent on free speech as opposed to the dogmatic generation of knowledge. As a third reason, and arguably the most comprehensive one, Pinker mentions the freedom of speech as bulwark against tyranny, as dictatorships and authoritarian regimes depend on a censored public debate in which the regime controls the common knowledge as subject of societal discourse.

In his in-depth, academic work on freedom of expression, UCL law professor Eric Barendt summarizes four general schools of thought arguing for the free speech principle.⁴

I) The importance of discovering the truth

In its essence, the arguments state that in restricting speech, a society prevents accurate facts and valuable opinions of entering the public discourse and thus hindering the development of a society towards the truth.

II) Free Speech as an aspect of self-fulfillment

Freedom of Speech is seen as an intrinsic, independent good. Restrictions on what is allowed to be said, written, heard or read, inhibits the personality of a person and its growth. Free Speech should consequently lead to more mature and reflective persons which also benefits a society as a whole.

³ Pinker, Steve (2015): Why free speech is fundamental, Boston Globe, 27.01.2015, available online

⁴ Barendt, Eric (2005): Freedom of Speech, 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, 11.08.2005, Oxford, pp. 6

III) Citizen participation in a democracy

The argumentation, probably the most symbolic for the understanding of free speech in western democracies, see the primary purpose of free expression in protecting the right of all citizens to understand political issues and participate effectively in a democratic society.

IV) Suspicion of government

This line of thought doesn't emphasize the positive effects of free speech on a society but describes it as sort of a protection mechanism against manipulative governments. It is build up on the premise that based on historical experience, regulation of free speech had overwhelmingly evil intentions and bad consequences.

2.2 The International, European and German legal standards regarding the right to free expression

2.2.1 Freedom of Expression in the ICCPR

On the international level Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) is arguably the most relevant and interpreted in most detail.⁵ Based on Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it reads as follows:

1. Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference.
2. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.
3. The exercise of the rights provided for in paragraph 2 of this article carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be

⁵ UN General Assembly (1966): International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 16.12.1966, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 999, p. 178

subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:

- (a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others;
- (b) For the protection of national security or of public order (ordre public), or of public health or morals.

Article 20 on the other hand, can be interpreted as emphasizing the responsibilities and restrictions this human right carries.⁶ It prescribes that:

1. Any propaganda for war shall be prohibited by law.
2. Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law.

Article 20 emphasizes the restrictions and also the responsibility that the exercise of free expression carries with it. It implies that all such speech, expression and in general information exchange that severely harms the exercise of other fundamental human rights, can be restricted when it is necessary and proportionate.

As a basic principle of international human rights law in general, human rights carry negative as well as positive obligations. According to Article 2 (1) of the ICCPR, state parties are obliged to ‘respect and ensure’ the rights, which does not only entail the obligation of non-interference but also requires to take all necessary measures in order to protect individuals from violations perpetrated by entities other than state entities and to provide for effective remedies in such cases.⁷ This is further specified by Paragraph 8 of the Human Rights Committee’s General Comment No. 31 on ‘The Nature of the General Legal Obligation Imposed on States Parties to the Covenant’⁸:

“[T]he positive obligations on States Parties to ensure Covenant rights will only be fully discharged if individuals are protected by the State, not just

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., p. 173

⁸ UN Human Rights Committee (2004): General comment no. 31 [80], The nature of the general legal obligation imposed on States Parties to the Covenant, 26 May 2004, CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.13, p. 3

against violations of Covenant rights by its agents, but also against acts committed by private persons or entities that would impair the enjoyment of Covenant rights in so far as they are amenable to application between private persons or entities. There may be circumstances in which a failure to ensure Covenant rights as required by article 2 would give rise to violations by States Parties of those rights, as a result of States Parties' permitting or failing to take appropriate measures or to exercise due diligence to prevent, punish, investigate or redress the harm caused by such acts by private persons or entities.”

It is furthermore important to note that states are required ‘to give effect to the general obligation to investigate allegations of violations promptly, thoroughly and effectively through independent and impartial bodies’ and that the ‘failure to bring to justice perpetrators of such violations could in and of itself give rise to a separate breach of the Covenant.’⁹

2.2.2 The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR)

The ECHR features the human right of free expression in its article 10.¹⁰ The first paragraph reiterates the provision made in the article 19 of the ICCPR but adds that the article ‘shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises.’ Paragraph 2 however provides added value in the sense of including a rather lengthy list of circumstances in which the right free expression can be derogated from:

2. The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Council of Europe (1950): European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, as amended by Protocols Nos. 11 and 14, supplemented by Protocols Nos. 1, 4, 6, 7, 12 and 13, 4.11.1950, p. 11

society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.

These provisions concern reasons on which ground a state could argue the legitimacy of an interference with the right to free expression while also describing the test that is ought to be applied when considering such an interference, e.g. in front of the ECtHR. Similar to provisions that are also used generally in the international human rights law, the standard test reviews if an interference was described by law, pursued a legitimate aim (as described by paragraph 2 of article 10), necessary in a democratic society and proportionate to the legitimate aim.¹¹

The ECHR also contains a provision to require states not only to respect but also to secure the rights in the Convention. This is firmly established in the case law of the European Court of Human Rights. In *Gongadze v. Ukraine* the court stated that:

“The Court reiterates that the first sentence of Article 2 § 1 enjoins the State not only to refrain from the intentional and unlawful taking of life, but also to take appropriate steps to safeguard the lives of those within its jurisdiction. This involves a primary duty on the State to secure the right to life by putting in place effective criminal-law provisions to deter the commission of offences against the person, backed up by law enforcement machinery for the prevention, suppression and punishment of breaches of such provisions. It also extends, in appropriate circumstances, to a positive obligation on the authorities to take preventive operational measures to protect an individual or individuals whose lives are at risk from the criminal acts of another individual.”¹²

¹¹ McGonagle, Tarach (2013): The role of the Council of Europe in protecting journalists and other media actors, Expert Paper for the Council of Europe, Conference of Ministers, 07.11.2013, available online

¹² European Court of Human Rights (2005): *Gongadze vs. Ukraine*, no. 34056/02, judgement, 08.11.2005, § 164

Similarly, the court argued in *Özgür Gündem v. Turkey* that '[g]enuine, effective exercise of this freedom does not depend merely on the State's duty not to interfere, but may require positive measures of protection, even in the sphere of relations between individuals.'¹³ However, in the same case, the court specifies on limitations of the positive obligation of a state in regard to article 10 of the convention:

“The scope of this obligation will inevitably vary, having regard to the diversity of situations obtaining in Contracting States, the difficulties involved in policing modern societies and the choices which must be made in terms of priorities and resources. Nor must such an obligation be interpreted in such a way as to impose an impossible or disproportionate burden on the authorities [...]”¹⁴

In general, it can be observed that the court is reluctant in holding a state responsible for failing its positive obligation when considering the limitations established in article 10 (2) or, to put it differently, it tends to follow the argumentation of the state when these legitimizations are brought up in a case. In *Appleby and others vs the United Kingdom* decided that the United Kingdom did not violate its positive obligations when a private company denied activists to collect signatures for a petition on their property.¹⁵ In *Sirbu and others v. Moldova*, the court declared the applicants complain inadmissible a state can be put under no positive obligation to publish classified material in official media.¹⁶

As the cases cited in detail above demonstrate, the court applies a much stricter interpretation of the positive obligation if cases concern the work of journalists, and in particular when such cases concern the right to life and bodily integrity of the journalists involved. This will be discussed further in a later chapter.

¹³ European Court of Human Rights (2000): *Özgür Gündem v. Turkey*, no. 23144/93, judgement, 16.03.2000, § 43

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Council of Europe (2007): *Freedom of expression in Europe - Case-law concerning Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights*, Human Rights Files no. 18, available online, p. 111

¹⁶ Ibid., p.78

2.2.3 Freedom of Expression in the German Basic Law

The fundamental freedoms and rights that are enshrined in the ‘Grundgesetz’, the German constitution, serve as the last piece to the relevant national and international legal framework of the right to free expression.¹⁷ The respective article 5 reads:

(1) Every person shall have the right freely to express and disseminate his opinions in speech, writing and pictures, and to inform himself without hindrance from generally accessible sources. Freedom of the press and freedom of reporting by means of broadcasts and films shall be guaranteed. There shall be no censorship.

(2) These rights shall find their limits in the provisions of general laws, in provisions for the protection of young persons, and in the right to personal honour.

(3) Arts and sciences, research and teaching shall be free. The freedom of teaching shall not release any person from allegiance to the constitution.

Article 5 establishes additional elements in the understanding of the right to free expression. Although the international human rights treaties are interpreted broadly, also in the context of journalism, they do not specify the freedom of reporting and the press in general as the German basic law ‘guarantees’. Further remarkable, are the clear stance on including freedom of art, science, research and teaching under the umbrella of free expression.

As a result of the terrible consequences of Nazi era Germany, the state has a complex relationship with the right to free expression. In the scope of the ‘limits in the provision of general laws’, Germany’s criminal law contains the paragraphs 130 and 86. Paragraph 130 declares incitement of the people and the denial, justification and glorification of

¹⁷ German Bundestag (2012): German Basic Law, English Translation, Language Service of the German Bundestag, 2012, available online, p. 16

national socialism a crime,¹⁸ while paragraph 86 prohibits the use of symbols and slogans of unconstitutional organizations.¹⁹ Both laws are specifically designed in scope and wording to prevent the relativization of the Nazi crimes.

Regarding positive obligations arising from article 5, Dieter Grimm, former member of the Federal German Constitutional Court, states in regard to the establishment of free broadcast environment that ‘the German Court reasons that, because of the purpose of art. 5 (1) is to serve, [the] government is obliged to take action in order to ensure those ends are reached.’²⁰ Grimm sees it as the ‘protective duty’ which, as a ‘second side of the human rights coin’, constitutionally obliges the state ‘to fulfill this duty. Non-action is a violation of the duty. If the state does not comply with the duty, the Court can state this and oblige government to take appropriate measures.’²¹

The constitutional theory in Germany also entails what is called ‘Drittwirkung der Grundrechte’ which can be translated as third-party or horizontal effect of fundamental rights. It is the idea that fundamental rights can in some instances pertain to private law. The most common example for the consideration of this principle is the ‘Lüth Case’ in which the Federal Constitutional Court decided that Erich Lüth’s call for a boycott of Nazi director Veit Harlan are covered by article 5 and a temporary restrain order obtained by Harlan was ruled unconstitutional.²²

2.3 Freedom of Expression in the context of journalists’ safety

The fact, that the human right to free expression is strongly interlinked with press freedom and journalism in general, doesn’t have to be discussed. Not only logic but also the jurisprudence or interpretation of any human rights document entailing such a right, demonstrate how much the profession of a journalist is dependent on his or her right to free speech. However, it is interesting to discuss, how the jurisprudence and interpretation

¹⁸ § 130, Abs. 1-7, StGB (Germany)

¹⁹ § 86, Abs. 1-4, StGB (Germany)

²⁰ Grimm, Dieter (1994): Human Rights and Judicial Review in Germany, in: Human Rights and Judicial Review – A comparative perspective, David M. Beatty (Editor), Springer Netherlands, 1994, p. 283

²¹ Ibid.

²² BVerfG, judgement, 15.01.1958 - 1 BvR 400/51

of human rights documents but also projects and guidelines by special interest groups and institutions, specify the protection needs of journalists at intersection of free expression and the rights to liberty, life and freedom of bodily integrity.

In the context of journalists, the notion of free expression covers two main, broadly defined issues. The first issue relates to the situation of journalists in armed conflicts. This is not only regulated in international human rights but also in international humanitarian law in which different forms of war reporting carry different obligations and rights. For example, journalists in general enjoy the same rights in international humanitarian law as civilians do, while war correspondents or ‘embedded journalists’ acquire a prisoner-of-war status due to their close relation to the armed forces of a country.²³

Internationally, there are several governmental and non-governmental groups that are advocating for the safety of journalists in armed conflicts and offer varying forms of protection and assistance. In particular, the OSCE and its Representative for Freedom of Media have been very vocal in this regard against the background of the conflict in Ukraine. In June 2015, for example, the Representative organized an event in Vienna highlighting the challenges for journalists working in conflict zones.²⁴ In addition, the issue is regularly featured in the United Nations framework and addressed by special interest groups and human rights organizations like the Reporters without Borders, the International Federation of Journalists and the Committee to Protect Journalists.

More relevant and therefore elaborated on in-depth is the second, broader issue in regard to journalists’ safety which can be subsumed as attacks, threats, harassment, arbitrary detention or enforced disappearance against journalists and the impunity of such crimes in non-conflict situations.

In the UN framework the Human Rights Committee addresses article 19 in its General Comment No. 34. Although the comment features a section on the media, it focuses more on the specification on when the restrictions in article 19 (3) can be invoked and in general

²³ International Committee of the Red Cross (2010): How does international humanitarian law protect journalists in armed-conflict situations?, 27.10.2010, available online

²⁴ OSCE (2015): Conference on Journalists' Safety, Media Freedom and Pluralism in Times of Conflict, 15.06.2015, available online

the negative obligations of states parties.²⁵ This is however not to say that the UN wouldn't address the abovementioned issues in relation to article 19 in other areas or circumstances. The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UNESCO and, naturally the Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression are the leading institutions within the UN that produce reports and define a fierce stance against all forms of violence and harassment against journalists. All these institutions participated at a Human Rights Council meeting in June 2014, which had impunity as the main theme.²⁶

The organizations emphasized that 'every State should have a response mechanism to deal with situations where journalists and media freedoms are threatened, [...] a special prosecutor and special investigators to deal with assaults and killings'.²⁷ It was in addition reiterated that 'states must create an enabling environment in which journalists can play their role safely' and that states 'must also adopt legislative and policy measures for ensuring the safety and protection of journalists and other media workers, with zero tolerance of any form of violence against journalists, and full accountability for any such violence'.²⁸ The UNESCO has the responsibility of the coordinating of all UN efforts in this regard and published the UN Action Plan which foresees a number of quite predictable measures. It calls for strengthened UN mechanism, which should establish the issue in an inter-agency strategy, more cooperation with member states to act at the local level, partnering with other governmental and non-governmental institutions, encourage projects to raise awareness on the issue and fostering safety initiatives to establish safety provisions and real-time emergency response mechanisms.²⁹

The framework of the Council of Europe has an even more extensive set of guidelines, recommendations, monitoring mechanisms and, via the ECtHR, also case-law on the matter. As recent as June 2016, the CoE published a recommendation on the protection

²⁵ UN Human Rights Committee (2011): General comment no. 34, Article 19, Freedoms of opinion and expression, 12 September 2011, CCPR/C/GC/34

²⁶ UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2014): Safety of journalists: States must act to end impunity, 13.06.2014, available online

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ UNESCO (2012): UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, UN Chief Executives Board, 12.04.2012, available online

of journalists' safety and protection as agreed upon by the Committee of Ministers.³⁰ The document of 39 articles features, next to the provisions of negative state obligations like freedom from censorship and the principle of non-interference, very detailed guidelines on the positive obligations. The issues most relevant in the context of this paper are summarized in several categories: 'Prevention', 'Protection', 'Prosecution' as well as 'Safety, Security, Protection'.

The committee requires states to have in place a legislative framework dealing with the protection of the physical and moral integrity of a person which 'should be implemented in an effective manner, including through administrative mechanisms and by recognising the particular roles of journalists and other media actors in a democratic society' and also be backed up by 'law enforcement machinery and redress mechanisms for victims (and their families) that are effective in practice.'³¹ The states are furthermore encouraged to establish and support 'the operation of, early-warning and rapid-response mechanisms [...] to ensure that journalists and other media actors have immediate access to protective measures when they are threatened.'³² Finally, the document reiterates that 'states are under a positive obligation to protect journalists and other media actors against intimidation, threats and violence irrespective of their source, whether governmental, judicial, religious, economic or criminal.'³³

Adjacent to the recommendations for member states, the CoE entertains itself a monitoring mechanism that collects allegations of violations of Article 10 in regard to journalists' safety to which countries can reply and inform about the details of the case.³⁴ It furthermore issues country reports and fact sheets on more specific issues like the safety of journalists covering protests and demonstrations.³⁵

In addition, the ECtHR has collected quite some case law on the issues of journalists' safety, the impunity of attacks and the failure of proper protection. The case law

³⁰ Council of Europe (2016): Recommendation CM/Rec (2016)4[1] on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors, 13.04.2016, available online

³¹ Ibid., Part I, §§ 2-3

³² Ibid., Part I, § 10

³³ Ibid., Part I, § 28

³⁴ Council of Europe (2016): All media freedom alerts, available online

³⁵ Council of Europe (2016): Resources on Threats to Media Freedom, available online

demonstrates that the Court tends to require high standards regarding a state's positive obligations when considering cases that involve the right to life or integrity of a person. As briefly mentioned above this was shown for example in the case of *Gongadze v. Ukraine*. The court concluded that Ukraine violated article 2 (The Right to Life) in regard to the disappearance and death of a journalist who specialized in corruption, as 'the domestic authorities ought to have been aware of the vulnerable position of a journalist who covered politically-sensitive topics. Nevertheless, their response was not only formalistic, but also blatantly negligent.'³⁶ In the case of *Kiliçi vs. Turkey* the court saw a violation of article 2 because 'the investigation by the gendarmes and the Public prosecutor did not include any inquiries as to the possible targeting of Mr Kemal Kiliçi due to his work as an Özgür Gündem journalist' although he had requested police protection two months prior to being shot dead by unknown gunmen after he had been receiving threats.³⁷ There are several other cases representing similar facts and similar reasoning by the judges. These include in regard to physical attacks against and killings of journalists the cases of *Adali vs. Turkey*, *Tepe vs. Turkey* and *Dink vs. Turkey*.³⁸

There is a broad network of human rights NGO's that exclusively or primarily deal with the free expression and press freedom issues. The leading organizations in that field publish regularly reports, monitor the situation country by country and cooperate with international governmental organizations in creating prevention and response mechanism. Of the countless that operate, three NGO's are portrayed in this regard to their size and significance.

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)³⁹ focuses on advocacy and human rights research, and publishes detailed reports and analysis of alleged human rights violations against journalists. However, the organization also entertains an assistance scheme that journalists being targeted or operating under dangerous circumstances can request. The

³⁶ Council of Europe (2016): Factsheet ATTACKS ON THE PHYSICAL INTEGRITY OF JOURNALISTS, June 2016, available online

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ See: www.cpj.org

scheme includes medical help after attacks, legal counseling and funding as well as relocation assistance.

The Reporters without Borders⁴⁰ are arguably the most known human rights organization dealing with media freedom and associated issues. Their yearly report 'World Press Freedom Index' ranks countries worldwide according to their stance on free expression and the situation of journalists. The report is frequently cited by the media and the political sphere as a reliable indicator and has therefore significant impact. Furthermore, the organization provides a similar assistance scheme as the CPJ.

As opposed to the abovementioned two organizations, the International Federation of Journalists⁴¹ isn't a human rights NGO but more the largest international special interest group. Its primary function is to advocate for free expression and assist journalists in need, however author's rights and fair contracts are also part of the organizations agenda. Furthermore, the IFJ serves as a non-official self-regulatory body by defining a code of conduct and ethical principles for journalists.

3.The political far-right movement in Germany and its relation to the media

Methodological Remarks

This second background chapter deals with political far-right movement and its relation to the media. What is to be classified as politically far-right, whether in terms of a party or a civil movement, is highly contested. Naturally, there are analyses by political scientist that apply specific tests in order to classify political parties and movements (this is discussed briefly in the sub-item about the Alternative in Deutschland). However, these considerations are highly theoretical and meet fierce resistance in large parts of those associated with these movements. It seems understandable that for those called far-rights or populists, other terms are preferred to describe their political mind-set. Additionally, the movement is a very dynamic one. This means that at different moments of time the organizations associated with the movement have to be classified differently. This is why

⁴⁰ See: www.rsf.org

⁴¹ See: www.ifj.org

terms like liberal-conservative, center-right or nationalist-conservative are also surrounding these groups. For the purpose of this paper, it is necessary to combine this variety of terms in a reasonable framework. And although it is unfortunate to use a generalization for a very diverse movement, the public and political scientists who are not associated with the groups do overwhelmingly consider the organizations representing the movement to be politically far-right and populist in its strategies. This classification is backed by the analysis of the political content these organizations are acting upon. Therefore, it is maybe unfortunate but definitely not unfair to call the organizations discussed far-right, populist groups.

The first part of the chapter will discuss the civil movement PEGIDA, the political party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) and the ideological mind set these organizations are embedded in, the so-called 'New Right'. This includes the origin and rise of the organizations, their constituencies as well as the political content and public reception on which their classification as far-right and populist is based upon.

The second part then explores the relation between the movement and the 'lying press' – narrative. The narrative is first introduced as it was used historically, particularly in Nazi era Germany, and then described as it re-emerged based on a general distrust towards the media in the surroundings of the portrayed groups, resulting in reported attacks and harassment of journalists at rallies and in social media.

3.1 The political far-right movement in Germany

3.1.1 The PEGIDA movement

Origin & Mobilization

In October 2014, the situation of the Kurdish Peschmerga defending Kobane (Syria) against the troops of Daesh dominated the media landscape. In Germany, this led to demonstrations in several cities, demanding the support of the Peschmerga with weapons. In Celle and Hamburg, these demonstrations, which can be traced to followers of the PKK (Kurdish Workers Party), met the resistance of counter-protests, consisting of supporters

of the Salafist interpretation of Islam.⁴² The violent clashes between the two groups sparked significant media attention and, according to Lutz Bachmann, one of the founders of PEGIDA, constitute the decisive motivation for the creation of the movement.⁴³ Although being portrayed as the founding myth of the movement, it is unlikely that those events have turned formerly rather unpolitical citizens into activists. It seems more reasonable to suggest that Bachmann and his friends saw the considerable concerns sparked by the violent protests as a chance to present anti-Muslim prejudices in a civilian disguise.

On October 11th, Bachmann created a closed Facebook group in which he himself and several of his like-minded friends (some of which later became part of the organization team), discussed the threat of an ever growing influence of Islam and the dangers of religious wars between different groups of Muslims.⁴⁴ Also the preparations for the expected rise in arriving refugees sparked outrage. The city administration of Dresden had started to allocate funding already in June 2014 and planned to house 2150 refugees centralized in 12 shelters. As a result of these discussions, the group decided to start an initiative in order to expand from the internet onto the streets.⁴⁵

The first demonstration of PEGIDA was announced for the 20th of October, gathered around 350 people and thereby exceeded the groups expectations. Lutz Bachmann had promoted the event only on Facebook and on a local event information platform. Already the first demonstration featured known figures of the local extreme right but also protesters who clearly separated themselves from right-wing slogans and rituals.⁴⁶ The fact that the message of PEGIDA would not only speak to extreme right but also touched upon issues near to the heart of conservatives in the political center, can be seen as a decisive aspect in the rise that should follow. The PEGIDA protests ‘were marked on the

⁴² Reimann, Anna (2014): Krawalle zwischen Kurden und Salafisten, Spiegel Online, June 2014, available online

⁴³ Vorländer, Hans (2016): PEGIDA - Entwicklung, Zusammensetzung und Deutung einer Empörungsbewegung, Springer Verlag, Wiesbaden, p.5

⁴⁴ Geiges, Lars; Margs, Stine; Walter, Franz (2015): ‘PEGIDA – Die schmutzige Seite der Zivilgesellschaft?’, transcript Verlag, Bielefeld, p. 11

⁴⁵ Vorländer, Hans (2016): PEGIDA - Entwicklung, Zusammensetzung und Deutung einer Empörungsbewegung, pp. 6-7

⁴⁶ Geiges, Lars; Margs, Stine; Walter, Franz (2015): ‘PEGIDA – Die schmutzige Seite der Zivilgesellschaft?’, p. 12

one hand by unprofessionalism and improvisation but on the other hand showed a careful orchestration, navigation and gallery play.⁴⁷ Therefore, they did not have the image of yet another manifestation of the region's notorious neo-Nazi scene but gave birth to the 'concerned citizen' as a symbol for political rebellion.

In the following months, the number of protester consistently grew, peaking in January 2015 with allegedly 25,000 protesters, as counted by the police.⁴⁸ However, the numbers of protesters at PEGIDA's rallies had been contested right from the beginning. While those affiliated with PEGIDA accused the police of underestimating the numbers, opponents of the movement criticized them as too high.⁴⁹ Since April 27th 2015, the collegiate research group *durchgezaehlt.org* of Leipzig University's sociology department measures the attendance at PEGIDA and LEGIDA demonstrations. In June, presumably also because of the great divergence between its own estimations and the scientifically sounder method of counting protesters individually on pictures, the police stopped publishing numbers of participants at the rallies in these two cities. The media in Germany subsequently referred to the numbers acquired by *durchgezaehlt.org* as main source.⁵⁰ The following graphic shows the development of attendance at PEGIDA demonstrations in Dresden according to the data available:⁵¹

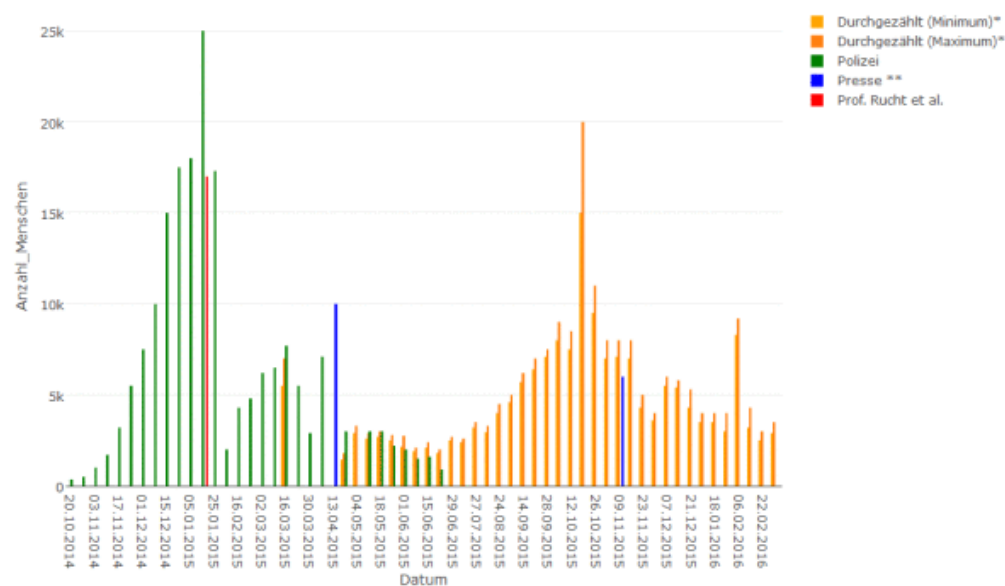
⁴⁷ Rucht, Dieter: „Pegida und Co. – Aufstieg und Fall eines populistischen Unternehmens“. In: betrifft: Bürgergesellschaft. Hrsg. von der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2015, Nr. 41, p. 3

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.4

⁴⁹ Schuh, Mathias (2015): Interview with Deutschlandfunk, 26.10.2015, available online

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Durchgezaehlt.org (2016): Statistik zu PEGIDA in Dresden, available online



As can be derived from the figure above, the attendance is marked by great variation, usually in correlation with special occasions like Gert Wilders' speech in April 2015 and the aggravated refugee situation. It is important to note however, that the mere attendance at PEGIDA demonstrations, especially in regard to the grave regional divergence in attendance, doesn't cover PEGIDA's significance entirely. The movement had and still has a huge impact on the public political debate in Germany, in particular via the social media. This phenomenon will be discussed in-depth later in the chapter '*Response by the German Public*'.

Political Content & Demographics

The political agenda of PEGIDA is difficult to describe in a precise manner. This is foremost due to the diversity in the organization of PEGIDA's regional off-shoots and the discrepancies within the original organization team, which in early 2015 led to a split between the moderate wing and the radical wing.⁵²

⁵² Rucht, Dieter: „Pegida und Co. – Aufstieg und Fall eines populistischen Unternehmens“. In: betrifft: Bürgergesellschaft. Hrsg. von der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2015, Nr. 41, p. 6

A first, basic approach to describe PEGIDA's political agenda is to take a look at the several position papers that were dispersed. The original organization team published a first paper composed of 19 items in December 2014.⁵³ These were composed of mostly of moderate positions, confirming for example the duty of helping refugees of war and prosecution and providing them with humane, decentralized housing. It also featured a clear condemnation of every form of radicalism and hate on political or religious grounds and the request for better funding for asylum processes and police. However, the position paper also spoke out against the perceived 'gender mainstreaming' in Germany and demands to eliminate parallel societies and the practices of sharia law.

In February 2015, as the result of a meeting with PEGIDA off-shoots from all around Germany, Lutz Bachmann declared the *Dresdner Thesen* as the official PEGIDA program.⁵⁴ The main ideas of this program can be summarized as follows:

- The German culture is to be maintained and protected against radicalism, Islamization, gender mainstreaming, pre-mature sexual education. Furthermore, a fierce and strict immigration law has to be established according to Swiss and Canadian model laws in order to prevent the current mass immigration.
- There has to be a consequent use of the law regardless of the ethnic background of the affected, in particular, concerning the determination of asylum eligibility and the swift enforcement of deportations. This requires an immediate stop in budgetary cuts for the police.
- The family policy has to be designed as to protecting the classical composition of family in order to combat the demographical change and secure enough births.
- Germany needs more direct democracy and less influence by foreign agents like the EU. Consequently, the EU should return to a loose association of sovereign states cooperating in economic and trade issues. Furthermore, the relation with Russia is to normalize immediately.

⁵³ Menschen-in-Dresden.com (2014): Das PEGIDA Positionspapier, 21.12.2014, available online

⁵⁴ LEGIDA (2015): Dresdner Thesen, Legida.eu, 15.02.2015, available online

The actual demonstrations as well as social media publications by PEGIDA affiliates are more diverse. In order to grasp the atmosphere on PEGIDA demonstration, a look at the speakers is useful.

In the beginning, Lutz Bachmann and other members of the organization team provided for the speeches at PEGIDA demonstrations. In particular Rene Hahn and Kathrin Oertl were established as the faces of PEGIDA, next to Lutz Bachmann as the leader of the group.⁵⁵ The content of the speeches was pretty much identical to the opinions in the position papers and was usually presented in moderate words. However, as PEGIDA gradually opened up to external speakers, the content of speeches started to vary increasingly in their focus and tone. Stephane Simon, a retired federal police officers, was the first to center his speeches on immigrants and sparked controversy over his radical and insulting text.⁵⁶ After the more moderate members of the organization team Kathrin Oertl and Rene Jahn left PEGIDA, Lutz Bachmann sharpened the focus on the threat of Islamization and invited speakers with a more targeted, aggressive message. Former CDU-member Rene Stadkewitz and the popular Dutch far-right politician Gert Wilders serve hereby as examples.⁵⁷ PEGIDA's slow but consistent radicalization peaked in the speech of author Akif Pirincci, himself the descendant of Turkish immigrants. His monologue was so outright racist and insulting towards Muslims that none of it deserves to be reproduced, however the fact that the crowd started to shout 'Stop' is illustrative.⁵⁸

For the organization itself there is clear indication for a continuing radicalization in opposing Islam. The composition of the demonstrators is in comparison much more diverse but several statistical inquiries allow to make solid statements on the demographic structure of the movement, at least in its early stage. Hans Vorländer compared and

⁵⁵ Vorländer, Hans (2016): PEGIDA - Entwicklung, Zusammensetzung und Deutung einer Empörungsbewegung, p. 31

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.32

⁵⁷ Ibid., p.33

⁵⁸ Sydow, Christoph (2015): Eklat bei Pegida-Demo: "Die KZs sind ja leider derzeit außer Betrieb", Spiegel Online, 20.10.2015, available online

consolidated all five major studies in this regard and based on his analysis the demonstrators can be classified as follows:⁵⁹

- The big majority of PEGIDA protesters are male (~ 75%), between 30 and 60 years (average of 47 years) and not affiliated with any religious denomination (~ 70%). Most of them are either from Dresden (~ 40%) or the surrounding state of Saxony (~45%)
- Workers (50%), pensioners (17%) and self-employed (20%) are the largest groups regarding profession. Remarkable is the very low number of unemployed people (2%) which is way below the average of 8,5% for the state Saxony.
- Common distortion effects in this question already considered, the share of academics (~25%) is above the average for the state. Around 50% have at least graduate from *Realschule* (mid-level high school). The majority earns low or medium salaries from 800€ to 2500€ (52%).
- Around 60% of protesters don't feel affiliated to any political party in Germany while many (~ 25%) consider themselves as AfD clientele. This is also reflected in the voting behavior where around 40% are voting for the AfD, around 25% for the CDU and 12% belong to the constituency of the Left Party. 70% name a general disappointment in the political establishment as reason for their participation while dissatisfaction with the German public and media sphere and general aversion towards foreigners and immigrants are important reason for 30% respectively.

Before addressing the public response, it is important to note that the statements on positions and demographic structure refer to the period when the PEGIDA protests in Dresden swelled. The reason for why these numbers are important, is the split of the phenomenon of PEGIDA into those who are active on the streets together with the organization team, and those who identify themselves with PEGIDA but continued to be otherwise politically active.

⁵⁹ Vorländer, Hans (2016): PEGIDA - Entwicklung, Zusammensetzung und Deutung einer Empörungsbewegung, pp. 54-69

The protesters became fewer along 2015, and although fueled by the refugee crisis, PEGIDA in Dresden evidently stopped growing. Hans Vorländer believes that the decrease in protesters is due to the shift to the xenophobic far-right by the organization team, that led to a condensation which reduced the crowd to its extreme right core.⁶⁰ In regional off-shoots where such masses as in Dresden were never mobilized, PEGIDA was in general mostly backed by known Neo-Nazi groups and parties like the NPD.⁶¹ Regarding PEGIDA as a political phenomenon, the significance of movement is on a much higher, societally important level. This is mostly due to the shift to the right by the AfD with its pronounced anti-elitist and anti-political establishment approach which resonates in large parts of the society.⁶² Those affiliated with this kind of right-wing populism in Germany are extremely active in social media. It is those who still refer to the concerns expressed at the first, more moderate rallies and consequently helped to establish far-right ideas in the German public political debate.

Response by the German Public

When Thilo Sarrazin published his book 'Deutschland schafft sich ab (Germany abolishes itself)', the potential for far-right populist groups in Germany became visible for the first time.⁶³ It was in the midst of economic turmoil and the time of the first successes of far-right parties like Front National in France, when also the German public started to develop a certain division between the left, politically correct people and those who see the alleged dangers of Muslim immigration. The book, filled with racist anti-Muslim thoughts based on biological differences, led to aggressive reactions in social media and the commentary sections of articles dealing with the book itself or the issues entailed in it.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 69

⁶¹ Rucht, Dieter: „Pegida und Co. – Aufstieg und Fall eines populistischen Unternehmens“, In: betrifft: Bürgergesellschaft. Hrsg. von der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2015, Nr. 41, p. 6

⁶² Grimm, Robert (2015): The Rise of the German Eurosceptic Party Alternative für Deutschland between ordoliberal critique and popular anxiety, International Political Science Review, Vol 36, No 3, 2015, p. 273

⁶³ Adam, Heribert (2015): Xenophobia, Asylum Seekers, and Immigration Policies in Germany, Nationalism and Ethnic Politics, Vol 21, No 4, p. 457

⁶⁴ Ibid.

With this heavy public reaction as a background, the PEGIDA movement sparked attention by media and political sphere to an extent that doesn't resemble the actual magnitude of the demonstrations. In addition, the protests revitalized the diffuse feeling of disappointment in the government and the established parties, which mobilized also those who were not necessarily associated with far-right ideas in the past.⁶⁵

In the media, traditionally rather affiliated to the left-liberal political spectrum the PEGIDA protests were met with fierce opposition. Anna Reimann and Christina Hebel wrote for Spiegel Online in December 2014 that PEGIDA protesters live in a 'crude world [...] between frustration and anger, concern and fear.'⁶⁶ The same article also takes note of the remarks 'from worrisome to hateful' and warns that many within the crowd have a background in the Neo-Nazi scene. In the same month Spiegel columnist Jakob Augstein wrote that anybody protesting the Islamization of the occident is an 'idiot or a racist'⁶⁷.

Die Zeit wrote that PEGIDA is the perfect political movement for Saxony with its tradition of 'fierce conservatism plus ideas of an extremely right mind set' and states that the protesters 'group-focused enmity' has a long tradition as relevant and even important political notion in the East.⁶⁸ The Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung acknowledged that a majority of the PEGIDA protesters weren't far-right extremists, but also warned that the message of the movement attracts Neo-Nazis and drew attention to outright xenophobic social media activity of many PEGIDA supporters.⁶⁹ The examples illustrate the reaction of the media in general quite well. While commentators usually refrained from generalizing the crowd at PEGIDA events, along the whole political spectrum of the German media, they were clear in emphasizing the infiltration by far-right extremist groups and condemned the message of the movement as xenophobic.

⁶⁵ Rucht, Dieter: „Pegida und Co. – Aufstieg und Fall eines populistischen Unternehmens“, In: betrifft: Bürgergesellschaft. Hrsg. von der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2015, Nr. 41, p. 7

⁶⁶ Reimann, Anna; Hebel, Christina (2014), Die wirre Welt der Wohlstandsbürger, Spiegel Online, 16.12.2014, available online

⁶⁷ Augstein, Jakob (2014): Null Toleranz für PEGIDA, Spiegel Online, 18.12.2014, available online

⁶⁸ Lühmann, Michael (2014): PEGIDA passt nach Sachsen, Zeit Online, 16.12.2014, available online

⁶⁹ Locke, Stefan (2014): Die neue Wut aus dem Osten, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 07.12.2014, available online

Right in the beginning, the media and political analysts tried to measure the impact of PEGIDA among the general public. In the first few months there had been several inquiries undertaken by newspapers and opinion research centers which came to quite different results regarding the acceptance of the movement in the German society. The ZDF politbarometer, the opinion research center of Germany's public broadcaster, 74% of the interviewees disagreed with the demonstrations.⁷⁰ Die Zeit published an inquiry that saw 49% showing understanding for those marching in the streets with still 30% approving the entire message of PEGIDA.⁷¹ Not even in Dresden there is a majority to support PEGIDA as in contrary, 71% of the people view the organization as the biggest problem in the city.⁷² Noteworthy is however, that there is still a potential for anti-Muslim sentiment. The terrorist attacks in Paris in January 2015 led 35% of interviewees in polls to call for a reduce in refugees from Muslim countries and 52% to state that Islam doesn't belong to Germany.⁷³ Although there have been peaks in Islamophobia, it is safe to suggest that PEGIDA did not and does not have a majority of citizens in Germany on their side. However, far-right activity in the internet, and in particular in social media, are artificially amplifying the voice of their followers. As this is hard to measure, the fact that PEGIDA has the same amount of likes on Facebook than the CDU and the SPD combined, seems illustrative.⁷⁴

In the political sphere, politicians were reluctant to formulate a clear position on the matter. The strongest reaction came from Angela Merkel who said that 'too often there are prejudices, a certain iciness and even hate in the hearts of those demonstrating'⁷⁵ However, while Merkel expressed no tolerance for the demonstrations at all, within the grand coalition most politicians applied a more differentiated approach. The CSU, the

⁷⁰ Beitzer, Hannah (2015): So viel Dresden steckt in Deutschland Süddeutsche Zeitung Online, 17.01.2015, available online

⁷¹ Zeit Online (2014): Jeder Zweite sympathisiert mit Pegida, Die Zeit Online, 15.12.2014, available online

⁷² Kuhr, Uwe (2015): Dresdner Bürger lehnen Pegida überwiegend ab, freipresse.de, 12.02.2015, available online

⁷³ Adam, Heribert (2015): Xenophobia, Asylum Seekers, and Immigration Policies in Germany, Nationalism and Ethnic Politics, Vol 21, No 4, p. 447

⁷⁴ Facebook (2016): Official pages of CDU, SPD and PEGIDA e.V, available online

⁷⁵ Korge, Johannes (2014): Merkel prangert Hass bei PEGIDA-Märschen an, Spiegel Online, 31.12.2014, available online

Bavarian off-shoot of the CDU, supported the call for tightened asylum laws and felt that the demonstrations are justified as they would show that people in risk of their livelihoods express their fear.⁷⁶ Also members of the center-left coalition partner SPD showed sympathy for those motivated by precarious social situations and offered talks in order to address the concerns. The Greens, followed Angela Merkel in condemning PEGIDA. Representatives of the party categorically precluded the idea of direct talks with organization team and the protester.⁷⁷

Naturally, the AfD had and still has the friendliest relationship with PEGIDA which is not surprising given that the AfD is the favorite party of the demonstrators. However, the leadership of the AfD struggled just as much with its political direction as PEGIDA has. Therefore, the ties between the two groups remain volatile. After both shifted their course further to the right however, cooperation increased. The party's co-leader Alexander Gauland called PEGIDA demonstrators 'a natural ally of the AfD'.⁷⁸ Others emphasize that although there are many similarities in opinion, the AfD and PEGIDA should remain independent from one another due to the different nature of organizations.⁷⁹ However, after both groups completed their radicalization, ties between them became more obvious.

3.1.2 Alternative für Deutschland (AfD)

Foundation & Development

Unlike other European parties like Front National in France and Ukip in England, the AfD (Alternative for Germany) wasn't founded as far-right but developed in that political direction. Although the early Euro critic and center-right stages shall be addressed for the

⁷⁶ Gathmann, Florian (2015): SPD weist CSU-Vorstoß für schärfere Asylgesetze zurück, Spiegel Online, 02.01.2015, available online

⁷⁷ NTV (2014): Özdemir wettert gegen 'weinerliches Gesülze', NTV online, 22.12.2014, available online

⁷⁸ Focus Online (2015): AfD-Vize Gauland sieht PEGIDA als Verbündete, Focus Online, 07.01.2015, available online

⁷⁹ Sächsische Zeitung (2016): AfD zeigt PEGIDA die kalte Schulter, Sächsische Zeitung Online, 01.03.2016, available online

sake of completeness, the elements relevant for the AfD's classification as part of the far-right movement in Germany stem from a later, current state of the party.

The party was founded in February 2013 by economic professor Bernd Lucke in the wake of fierce discussions among economic experts, the political sphere and the public about the right course of action in the Euro-Crisis and the bail-out policies of the German government.⁸⁰ Although the party attracted a nationalist conservative clientele from the beginning due to its harsh rhetoric against Greece's handling of the crisis, the idea that Germany should leave the Euro-Zone and the demanded down-scaling of EU competences, its party program didn't entail xenophobe or authoritarian content.⁸¹

After its first successes at regional and European election's in the course of 2014, the party began to be torn by its political wings. Bernd Lucke and fellow moderate party members who opposed a possible association and cooperation with PEGIDA were heavily criticized by the far-right wing. In March 2015, Björn Höcke and Andre Poggenburg, the two influential chairmen of the regional sections in Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt, published the so-called 'Erfurter Resulotion'. The document that was presented at the party's state convention in Thuringia, condemns that popular movements were neglected, that a lot of members whose profile is desperately needed were abandoned and that the party does not more actively fight against gender mainstreaming and the failed multi-cultural society.⁸²

As a reaction to the developments in the AfD, founder Bernd Lucke and other members of the economic-liberal wing of the party started the 'Weckruf 2015' (wake-up call 2015). Their initiative warned that the party's successes 'must not be misused by those who try to establish a radicalized, sectarian party of angry citizens' and called it an 'alarm signal that three chairmen of regional sections trivialize the right extremist NPD.'⁸³

⁸⁰ Lewandowsky, Marcel (2014): Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) – A New Actor in the German Party System, International Policy Analysis, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Berlin, March 2014, available online, p.2

⁸¹ Gleis, Mathias (2013): Wie rechts ist die Alternative für Deutschland?, Zeit Online, 18.04.2013, available online

⁸² Derfluegel.de (2015): Die 'Erfurter Resolution' – Wortlaut und Erstunterzeichner, derfluegel.de, 14.03.2015, available online

⁸³ Lucke, Bernd (2015): Weckruf 2015, bernd-lucke.de, 18.05.2015, available online

The internal conflict on the future political direction of the AfD peaked at the party's national convention in June 2015. After an aggressive atmosphere during the speeches of Bernd Lucke and Frauke Petry, who managed to rally the far-right behind her, Lucke lost the election for the chairmanship of the party, while Petry and economist Jörg Meuthen were confirmed as the new and current leaders of the party.⁸⁴ After Bernd Lucke and other prominent party members had left the AfD as a consequence of its shift to right, the party started to communicate its nationalist conservative ideology more obvious and adjusted its party program accordingly.

Political Program

The development of the AfD is reflected by the its political programs and public appearance of leading party figures. In an analysis based on the party's program for the European Parliament elections in 2014, Kar Arzheimer found that although the AfD would have to be placed at the far-right of the political spectrum in Germany due to its nationalist-conservative social policy, its 'soft' EU skepticism and the only marginal anti-Immigration stance would differentiate from radical, populist European parties.⁸⁵ In early 2016, Frank Decker applied different comparative tests that overwhelmingly resulted in the classification of the AfD as a populist right wing party.⁸⁶ This was indicated inter alia by the neo-liberal economic ideas, the tendency to nationalist-conservative social policies and the fierce Euro- and EU-skepticism.⁸⁷ In the same volume, the AfD is assessed as radical and populist also due to the obvious intersections with the 'culturizing, immigration adverse and etatist-authoritarian' PEGIDA movement, that ties the internal security discussion to the immigration and refugee issue.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Steffen, Tilman (2015): Buhrufe und rote Karten, Zeit Online, 04.07.2015, available online

⁸⁵ Arzheimer, Kai (2015): "The AfD: Finally a Successful Right-Wing Populist Eurosceptic Party for Germany?", West European Politics, Vol. 38, No. 3, p. 555

⁸⁶ Decker, Frank (2016): Die AfD aus der vergleichenden Parteienforschung, in: Häusler, Alexander et al. (2016): Die Alternative für Deutschland: Programmatik, Entwicklung und politische Verortung, Springer Verlag, Wiesbaden, 2016, p. 10

⁸⁷ Ibid., pp. 11-13

⁸⁸ Korsch, Felix (2016): Stichwortgeber in Nadelstreifen, in: Häusler, Alexander et al. (2016): Die Alternative für Deutschland: Programmatik, Entwicklung und politische Verortung, Springer Verlag, Wiesbaden, 2016, p. 144

Although it is indeed relevant to at least shed some light on how the AfD has been perceived in political science along the course of its existence, the work of scholars fails to keep up with highly dynamic evolution of the party. As a *protest party* the AfD consistently repositions itself according to the public debate which itself undergoes consistent change in the form of pressing public issues like the Euro- or the refugee crisis. The change in leadership that symbolized the party's gradual shift to the right is hereby a good example. Therefore, the most precise way to display the party's current political positions is to analyze the fundamental program the AfD has adopted in the beginning of May 2016.⁸⁹

The 95 pages of the document touch upon the whole spectrum of political branches. Unlike the preceding programs that were rather focused on niche issues like the Euro or the refugee crisis, the fundamental program includes topics ranging from tax law, economy and foreign policy to education, social policy and culture. It is also the first political program since World War II that features a generalized stance towards a single religious group.

Chapter 7 on 'Culture, Language and Identity' features a sub-item called 'Islam and its tense relationship to our order of values' which states that Islam doesn't belong to Germany, that criticism has to be allowed as well as that face veils have to be forbidden. In its essence, this means that 'in its [Islam] expansion and the ever increasing presence of Muslims, the AfD sees a threat to our state, our society and our values' which is why they oppose 'the defamation of critics of Islam as islamophobic or racist.'⁹⁰

In regard to refugees, the program acknowledges to right to asylum for genuinely persecuted people and those fleeing war. However, the AfD believes that only a small amount of the people reaching Germany should be classified as refugees: 'The outdated policy of generously granting asylum while knowing of the massive abuse of this right will lead to a quick and irresistible settlement of people in Germany that are foreign in culture and origin.'⁹¹ The AfD also sees massive abuse of the German social systems by

⁸⁹ Alternative für Deutschland (2016): Grundsatzprogramm der Alternative für Deutschland, 01.05.2016, available online

⁹⁰ Ibid., p.49

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 59

regular immigration from poor EU countries and wants to eliminate incentives. Furthermore, the party demands that the duty to integrate becomes a legal requirement for a residence permit which includes learning the German language but also an ‘active affirmation of the German legal and societal order.’⁹² Immigrants who do not achieve these goal are intended to be sanctioned or deported in a swift and resolute manner. In addition, the criminality among foreigners is featured prominently. It is said that not only due to the massive influx of migrants but also due to porous borders in the East, the crime rates in Germany are increasing. Consequently, foreign criminals should easily and quickly lose their residence permits and ‘the protection for Germans against migrant-related crime should be given the highest priority.’⁹³ Further remarks directed against Muslims and foreigners occur in the chapters on ‘School, University and Research’ (Koran schools have to be closed!), ‘Family and Children’ (More children rather than mass immigration!) and ‘Inner Security’ (Most organized criminals are foreigners!).

Addressed in two substantial chapters of the fundamental program, the xenophobic, anti-Muslim and outright racist tendencies can hardly be denied. In its position towards immigration, the AfD clearly has to be classified as a far-right, nationalistic party. In addition, the consistent fearmongering in the program in regard to the threats of Islam and migrants is a classical populist tool, used by far-right populist movement across Europe.

While nationalistic and xenophobe in its stance towards migration, the program is ultraconservative regarding social and family policy. The AfD opposes abortion, gender studies in universities and ‘a misunderstood feminism’⁹⁴ that dictates women to work instead of taking care of the family. Consequently, the program demands the valorization of ‘the mother’ as a job, social protection mechanisms for traditional families and the establishment of an environment that leads to more children.

Regarding economic issues and foreign affairs, the AfD follows in general a strictly neo-liberal and EU skeptic course with some exceptions that are usually to find in the left of the political spectrum. These include for example a reasonable minimum wage, the

⁹² Ibid., p. 63

⁹³ Ibid., p. 65

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 41

opposition to the TTIP and other free trade and investment agreements, a non-intervention principle in foreign policy and the confinement of trans-national corporations. Apart from these exceptions, the program consists of great amount of policies that would benefit the financial elite and big companies. It demands a less regulated and open competition in the economy, wants to reduce taxes for the companies as well as wealthy persons and explores the possibility of fracking and the longer running the run-time of nuclear power plants. It furthermore speaks of gradually downgrading the EU to an association of sovereign nation states and to significantly decrease its competences.

If we take this most recent fundamental program of the AfD as a measure, its shift to the far-right is completed. Although differing in minor issues, the party resembles the European far-right as whole with its focus on anti-Muslim and anti-immigration policies, ultraconservative social ideas, EU skepticism and a nationalist, protectionist economic strategy. It is clearly a process initiated by personal internal conflicts and the composition of the basis of the party, however the push to the right was also carried by voting behavior and the public debate surrounding the party.

Reception & Political Success

When analyzing the public reception of a rather newly founded party, the obvious measure are the results at the polling stations.

In 2013, the AfD premiered at the state elections in Hesse as well as in the elections for the Bundestag. In both cases, the party didn't make the 5% necessary to enter the respective parliament. In Hesse the AfD got 4,1%⁹⁵ of the votes, in the German general elections it was close to making the cut with 4,7%.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Statista (2016): Stimmenanteile der AfD bei den jeweils letzten Landtagswahlen in den Bundesländern bis März 2016, [statista.de](https://www.statista.de), 2016, available online

⁹⁶ Bundeswahlleiter (2013): Endgültiges Ergebnis der Bundestagswahl 2013, [bundeswahlleiter.de](https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de), 2013, available online

In the following year, the AfD was able to achieve its first electoral successes. The 7,1%⁹⁷ in the European elections secured 7 seats, although when Bernd Lucke and his allies left the AfD, the party lost 5 of them to Lucke's new party Alfa. The AfD furthermore participated in the regional elections of Saxony (9,7%), Thuringia (10,6%) and Brandenburg (12,2%) resulting three new, strong factions in the regional parliament of the states.⁹⁸

In 2015, the party saw a drawback in the city states of Hamburg (6,1%) and Bremen (5,5%)⁹⁹ but achieved impressive results in the most recent significant elections – the regional elections in Baden-Württemberg, Saxony-Anhalt and Rhineland-Palatinate in 2016. In Baden-Württemberg, the party got 15,1% which makes them the third strongest party behind the Greens (30,3%) and the CDU (27%).¹⁰⁰ The AfD is also the third political force in Rhineland-Palatinate with 12,6% while the two major parties SPD and CDU gathered 36,2 and 31,8 respectively. In the east German state of Saxony-Anhalt, the party celebrated its best results with achieving 24,2% of the votes only beaten by the governing CDU with 29,8%.¹⁰¹

Although the results would qualify for participating in the government in the form of coalitions, the established parties unanimously refuse to work with the AfD. The CDU, as the most likely coalition partner, has repeatedly eliminated the possibility for a partnership on a federal level. Although, there were voices among the Christian Democrats recommending a content based analysis¹⁰², leading figures of the party were clear in their assessment. CDU General Secretary Peter Tauber said: 'The AfD allows that large parts of its members have the far-right as their political home, using a language that isn't appropriate for a democrat and the C in our name dictates a clear separation from the far-right.'¹⁰³ All other parties, which are also the direct competitors of the AfD,

⁹⁷ Bundeswahlleiter (2014): Endgültiges Ergebnis der Europawahl 2014, bundeswahlleiter.de, 2014, available online

⁹⁸ Statista (2016): Stimmenanteile der AfD bei den jeweils letzten Landtagswahlen in den Bundesländern bis März 2016, statista.de, 2016, available online

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Neuerer, Dietmar (2014): AfD-Erfolg alarmiert Thüringer CDU, Handelsblatt Online, 26.05.2014, available online

¹⁰³ N24 (2016): CDU-Koalition mit AfD kommt nicht infrage, N24 online, 14.03.2016, available online

the question of a possible coalition doesn't rise. However, also the Greens and the SPD are struggling to formulate clear strategies. SPD Deputy Chairperson Olaf Scholz presented in May 2016 a paper that recommended to change the harsh rhetoric that puts the AfD close to right extremists and rather attack the party solid, factual grounds.¹⁰⁴ The Greens bluntly attack the AfD in every aspect and launched a social media campaign against right-wing party in 2016. Party Secretary Kellner who initiated the campaign said that 'the AfD is not a citizen's party. It stands for agitation, violence, racism, exclusion, homophobia and sexism.'¹⁰⁵

The relation between the media and the Alternative für Deutschland is of a particular nature. Although the AfD is heavily criticized and condemned for its racist, nationalist rhetoric by large parts of the German media, the party entertains a beneficial game of provocation and attention. Certainly, in 2016 there was not a single week in Germany so far in which worrisome statements made by AfD officials wouldn't have featured prominently in the newspapers. These are then in some form denied by those responsible for the remarks but naturally remain in the public discourse nevertheless. There is a pattern in this media strategy: First causing as much attention as possible by provocative, extreme remarks and then, in a second step, relativize the content or deny the actual phrasing while discussing the same issue on a more factual level.¹⁰⁶

An illustrative example for this phenomenon is an incident from January 2016. AfD chairperson Frauke Petry and other prominent figures of the party said that the German border police has to make use of its guns as a measure of last resort in order to prevent refugees from crossing the border in an uncontrolled manner.¹⁰⁷ The same day, the head of the AfD in Berlin and member of the European parliament, Beatrix von Storch, specified that this would also include women and children.¹⁰⁸ The media and politicians

¹⁰⁴ Seisselberg, Jörg (2016): Auseinandersetzung statt Attacke, ARD Online, 07.05.2016, available online

¹⁰⁵ Eubel, Cordula (2016): Die Grünen starten Kampagne gegen die AfD, Der Tagesspiegel Online, 19.02.2016, available online

¹⁰⁶ Steffen, Tilman (2016): Provozieren, relativieren, dementieren, Zeit Online, 31.05.2016, available online

¹⁰⁷ Mack, Steffen; Serif, Walter (2016): Sie können es nicht lassen!, Mannheimer Morgen Online, 30.01.2016, available online

¹⁰⁸ Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (2016): AfD-Vizechefin will Polizei sogar auf Kinder schießen lassen, FAZ Online, 31.06.2016, available online

of other parties were outraged by the comments and condemned the attacks, calling the remarks ‘terrible’ and seeing the AfD on the course of ‘developing into a party that betrays our constitution and values of our country and the civilization in general.’¹⁰⁹ Shortly after the remarks had been thoroughly addressed in the media, the AfD relativized by saying that Petry and von Storch ‘only discussed the legal circumstances of border policing’ and didn’t actually recommended to shoot on migrants.¹¹⁰

Generally speaking, the media has a highly critical stance towards the AfD and doesn’t exercise much restraint in its adversity and its assessment of the AfD as a dangerous, populist far-right party. The AfD, well aware of this reception, uses the constellation to be overrepresented in the German media and thus amplify its impact. By applying the strategy applied above, the AfD manages to shape and poison the political debate while it at the same assumes the role of a victim of the media hysteria.

3.1.3 The ‘New Right’ as ideological foundation of PEGIDA and the AfD

The far-right ideology of PEGIDA and the AfD heavily relies on the ideas discussed among representatives of the so-called ‘New Right’ in several European countries. In this sense, the demonstrations of PEGIDA and the political program of the AfD are the public and political manifestation of this phenomenon.

The ‘New Right’ has been described as the ‘intellectual right’ and is a political movement in Europe that tries to embed a nationalist, racist ideology in a civil narrative.¹¹¹ Therefore, a clear separation to the ‘old right’ which holds on to the historical fascist ideology is a formative aspect of their ideas. In this sense, the representatives of the ‘New Right’ are arguing at the intersection between conservatism and the radical far-right. The most important element of such an adjusted narrative are the renunciation of a racism based on biological differences and the focus on the concept of ‘ethnopluralism’ as the

¹⁰⁹ Meiritz, Annett (2016): Spitzenpolitiker entsetzt über Waffeneinsatz-Äußerungen von AfD-Frauen, Spiegel Online, 31.01.2016, available online

¹¹⁰ Die Welt (2016): Von Storch bejaht Waffengebrauch auch gegenüber Kindern, Die Welt Online, available online

¹¹¹ Gebhardt, Richard (2014): Ihr Feind steht links, Die Zeit Online, 14.04.2014, available online

opposing force to universalist and egalitarian approaches.¹¹² Consequently, the ‘New Right’ argues that it is not about the value of a certain group of people, but about the appreciation for the plurality of cultural identities which are to be separated and by that protected.¹¹³ The projected enemy of the far-right are ‘politically correct’ leftists and greens which are also attacked on issues like LGBTI rights and modernized sexual education.¹¹⁴ The ‘New Right’ furthermore uses positions that are usually used by the far-left, in particular the critique on the globalization and the international paternalism exercised by the USA.¹¹⁵

The ‘New Right’ in Germany is organized in a network of media outlets, foundations and publishing houses. ‘Die Junge Freiheit’ (The Young Freedom) is often referred to as speaking tube of the ‘New Right’ and the most influential newspaper in far-right political spectrum. The mission statement of the newspaper states that Die Junge Freiheit vision is the ‘regeneration of the German national identity’ and lists as values ‘Nation, Liberty, Conservatism and Christianity’.¹¹⁶ When exploring the website of the newspaper, the stories follow represent the issues dear to the far-right in a very concentrated manner. There are numerous articles on sexual harassment committed by Muslim men¹¹⁷, articles that attack the ongoing ‘Gender Mainstreaming’ in Germany¹¹⁸ and endorsement for the AfD in any shape and form.¹¹⁹ The approach is almost identically pursued by other influential media outlets of the far-right, e.g the discussion forum *politically incorrect*¹²⁰ and the Sezession –Blog¹²¹.

As the most influential source for far-right political research serves the foundation Institut für Staatspolitik (Institute for State Policy), an ultraconservative, far-right think tank

¹¹² Stöss, Richard (2007): Die "neue Rechte" in der Bundesrepublik, Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 17.12.2007, available online

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Gebhardt, Richard (2014): Ihr Feind steht links

¹¹⁵ Stöss, Richard (2007): Die "neue Rechte" in der Bundesrepublik

¹¹⁶ Junge Freiheit (2013): Leitbild der JF, Junge Freiheit Online, available online

¹¹⁷ e.g Junge Freiheit (2016): Sex-Täter umringen und begripschen Studentin, Junge Freiheit Online, 07.06.2016, available online

¹¹⁸ e.g Junge Freiheit (2016): Gender-Wahnsinn stoppen!, Junge Freiheit Online, available online

¹¹⁹ e.g Junge Freiheit (2016): Thema: AfD, Junge Freiheit Online, available online

¹²⁰ see: www.pi-news.net

¹²¹ see: www.sezession.de

founded by Götz Kubitscheck, a former editor for the *Junge Freiheit*.¹²² The organization organizes seminars and conferences and publishes a study series dealing with issues like immigration policy, national identity, gender mainstreaming as well as education and upbringing.¹²³ The IfS appears professional and dedicated to a scientific approach and tone. However, when elaborating on the foundations work on immigration policy, the website reads: ‘Many migrants come from completely different cultures, have completely different ethical values, including an adversity against the state which threatens the principle of law and order and a contempt towards the German society.’¹²⁴ Consequently, the studies that are undertaken are compromised by ideological elements and serve merely as pseudo-intellectual ammunition for public figures and publicists associated with the ‘New Right’.

3.2 The far-right’s relation to the media – The historical origin and the current emergence of the ‘lying press’- narrative

3.2.1 The origin and historical concept of the ‘lying press’- narrative

There is not a single occasion or a single person that coined the German term ‘Lügenpresse’ in the sense of a definition as a concept. In its literal meaning ‘lying press’, the term appeared along the history of newspapers themselves as part of a general critique. Especially in the very early stages of journalism, when news were exchanged and traded via an unprofessional courier system and often impossible to verify, the press was often rightfully accused of distorting the truth whether intentional or not.¹²⁵

However, there are certain periods that can be distinguished in which the term was used as symbolizing a certain general concept or statement.

Already in the late 19th century in Vienna, where a lot of newspapers were owned and operated by Jewish publishers and journalists, emerged a sentiment against the press as

¹²² Institut für Staatspolitik (2016): Chronik des IfS, staatspolitik.de, available online

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Institut für Staatspolitik (2016): Arbeitsgebiete, staatspolitik.de, available online

¹²⁵ Bellingradt, Daniel (2015): Die Kritik an Zeitungen ist so alt wie das Medium selbst, Die Zeit Online, 29.06.2015, available online

part of the Jewish world domination efforts with the aim of dulling the German race.¹²⁶ In this context, the word ‘Journaille’ (from the French word *kanaille*) was used to defame the press. Directly used as reference to a specific concept was the term ‘Lügenpresse’ in Germany’s World War I propaganda. In Reinhold Anton’s ‘Der Lügenfeldzug unserer Feinde: eine Gegenüberstellung deutscher, englischer, französischer und russischer Nachrichten’ (The campaign of lies by our enemies: a comparison of German, French, English and Russian news) of 1914, the press of the other warring parties was accused of distorting the truth. The book was so successful, that he wrote a follow up called ‘Die Lügenpresse’ in 1916.¹²⁷ The propaganda intended to counter the reports on the massive destruction the German military campaign caused in France and Belgium.¹²⁸ Also the germanophone press saw a ‘monster of the lying press rising from the seas’ to form a ‘conspiracy of the lying world newspapers against our monarchy and Germany.’¹²⁹

In 1923, Alfred Rosenberg, Chief Ideologist of the NSDAP, authored ‘Wesen, Grundlagen und Ziele der national-sozialistischen deutschen Arbeiterpartei’ (Nature, Basis and Objective of the national-socialist worker’s party of Germany). In the political program of the Nazi movement it read under chapter 10: ‘The people won’t perceive its artists, commanders and statesmen as opposing anymore – like the lying press tries to present them- but, in the contrary, as a symbol for its often dark, yet vague desire.’¹³⁰ Also Adolf Hitler already said in 1922 regarding its stance to monarchy that ‘due to the lying press, the Marxists think we are reactionary monarchists.’¹³¹ Reich Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels used the term in his texts and speeches in which he inter alia claims that ‘more inhibited than ever does the red lying press peruse its campaign of defamation.’¹³² The Nazi propaganda also applied the narrative of the lying press

¹²⁶ Blasius, Rainer (2015): Von der Journaille zur Lügenpresse, *Franfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 15.01.2015, available online

¹²⁷ Katzenberger, Paul (2015): Kampfbegriff gegen die Demokratie, *Süddeutsche Zeitung Online*, 13.01.2015, available online

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Haller, Günther (2015): "Lügenpresse!" - Ein neuer alter Kampftruf, *Die Presse Online*, 03.01.2015, available online

¹³⁰ Buggisch, Christian (2015): Die “Lügenpresse” – ein Begriff und seine Geschichte, *publikative.org*, 01.01.2015, available online

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

similarly to its use during World War I. When the national-socialist legion Condor bombarded the Spanish town of Guernica in 1937, the propaganda machinery accused the opposing side in the civil war and stated that ‘the Jewish lying press claims that German planes have bombarded the town. However, the international press had to brand it quickly as press maneuver of the Bolshevik, which themselves burned down the city house by house when they left.’¹³³ After 1945, the term didn’t disappear but was less wildly in use and often lacked a concept. Only in regard to the East-West relation in divided Germany, the term was used on both sides to discredit the press in the respective other part of Germany.¹³⁴

As illustrated above, the term ‘Lügenpresse’ was used in a variety context. This is due to the generic nature of the word and the possibility to interpret the term according to one’s believes. In the context of war and in the propaganda machinery of the Nazis, the term symbolized a narrative that was supposed to discredit the press, to disguise grave wrong-doings and also to justify attacks on journalists. The similar conceptualization of the term is what relates the historic meaning and usage to the narrative of the lying press today.

3.2.2 The re-emergence of the ‘lying press’ - narrative along the rise of the far-right movement

PEGIDA and the media

The term ‘Lügenpresse’ did not appear in the public debate before PEGIDA entered the stage with its demonstrations in late 2014. However, already in the years before, the word was used in the context of demonstrations and assaults by members of the Neo-Nazi scene.¹³⁵ This has to some extent also a connection to the only context in which it has been regularly used outside a strictly extreme right environment. The ultras of Dynamo

¹³³ Katzenberger, Paul (2015): Kampfbegriff gegen die Demokratie, Süddeutsche Zeitung Online, 13.01.2015, available online

¹³⁴ Blasius, Rainer (2015): Von der Journaille zur Lügenpresse, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 15.01.2015, available online

¹³⁵ Von Bullion, Constanze (2012): "Lügenpresse halt die Fresse", Süddeutsche Zeitung Online, 15.05.2012, available online

Dresden, some of which indeed have close ties to the Neo-Nazi scene in East Germany, shouted ‘Lügenpresse’ in stadiums to complain about the - in their view – unjustified representation in West German media. As Stefan Locke, correspondent for the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung in Dresden, stated in an interview with the author, some newspapers in the west had repeatedly used footage from riots involving Dynamo ultras in other contexts, e.g. when they covered a riot at games between two teams from the west. As many Dynamo ultras joined the PEGIDA protests at the very beginning, the catchy term ‘Lügenpresse’ found its way into the vocabulary of demonstrators.¹³⁶

Due to the reasons stated above, the specific nature of the word led to its widespread use among people who might have had a different idea about what it exactly means, but found the term sufficiently summarizing their concerns with the media. Hence, the word became part of the rhetoric inventory of PEGIDA demonstrations, which is documented in countless video clips in the internet. There is a deep reluctance among PEGIDA demonstrators to give interviews to begin with. In an uncut 13 minutes – video, freelancer Alvar Freude tries to motivate protesters at a PEGIDA event in Munich to speak about the reasons for their participation but fails to acquire in almost all cases.¹³⁷ As a man tries to talk about his aversion towards Islam, a second man appears and reminds that protesters should not talk to the media. He explains that they would inform incorrectly and not objective, filtering the news and cutting remarks in order to show them out of context. As the surrounding crowd recognizes the journalist, it intonates ‘Lügenpresse’. Two other videos show PEGIDA demonstrators in Hamburg and Dresden, marching towards the publishing houses of Morgenpost and the Sächsische Zeitung and shouting ‘Lügenpresse’ and ‘Volksverräter’ (betrayer of the nation) in full strength.^{138 139} It also in the immediate surrounding of PEGIDA demonstrations that a majority of the violent attacks happen against journalists covering the events. The specifics of the attacks will be

¹³⁶ Locke, Stefan (2016): Interview with the author, 25.05.2016

¹³⁷ Freude, Alvar (2015): „Warum lügt die Presse so?“, 29.01.2015, available online

¹³⁸ Youtube (2015): Spaziergang PEGIDA Dresden zur MOPO24 ("Lügenpresse"), 21.09.2015, available online

¹³⁹ Youtube (2015): 7.000 PEGIDA-Demonstranten in Dresden vor dem Haus der Lügenpresse (SZ und Morgenpost), 27.07.2015, available online

discussed in more detail in a later chapter about the inquiries of governmental and civil society actors.

The organization team of PEGIDA fuels the aggression against the media with their own rhetoric and behavior. In his opening speech at a PEGIDA demonstration in Dezember 2014 for example, Lutz Bachmann elaborate on a 'Lügenpresse-Ranking', in which he picked out newspapers and TV stations that allegedly reported incorrectly or manipulative. Since the beginning and through the entire existence of PEGIDA, the media critique featured prominently in his and other's speeches.¹⁴⁰ In the beginning, the PEGIDA organization team had established a rule of refusal in terms of cooperating with the so-called mainstream media, which was followed by large parts of demonstrators, e.g. as seen above.¹⁴¹ However, this changed for certain period within the in the first months. In January 2015, Kathrin Oertl, member of the organization team, had a first appearance as official representative on the influential political talk show of TV host Günther Jauch.¹⁴² The next day PEGIDA hosted a first press conference with Kathrin Oertl and Lutz Bachmann.¹⁴³ Still, when Kathrin Oertl left PEGIDA just a couple of weeks later, Lutz Bachmann did not carry on the tasks of representative to the media but restraint himself to speak at PEGIDA rallies or posts in social media. Consequently, PEGIDA never established a real representation in the media, which might be due to Lutz Bachmann's inappropriate public behavior and personal records or be based on the idea of a relation to the press that is more coherent with the anti-media rhetoric.

Regarding the reasons for the aversion towards the press, the inquiries into the demographics and opinions undertaken by Hans Vorländer demonstrate that there is a pattern in opinions of the press which constitute the current 'Lügenpresse' - narrative.¹⁴⁴ According to this data, demonstrators are of the opinion that the media is 'conceited, self-

¹⁴⁰ e.g Youtube (2016): PEGIDA Dresden 04.01.2016 Rede von Lutz Bachmann Teil 1 Presse will Deutschland spalten, 04.01.2016, available online

¹⁴¹ Vorländer, Hans (2016): PEGIDA - Entwicklung, Zusammensetzung und Deutung einer Empörungsbewegung, Springer Verlag, Wiesbaden, 2016, p. 18

¹⁴² ARD (2015): Politik trifft auf Protest – Pegida bei „GÜNTHER JAUCH“, Das Erste Online, 18.01.2015, available online

¹⁴³ Youtube (2015): Pegida Pressekonferenz 19.01.2015, available online

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 111-113

referred, arrogant and following their own political agenda.’¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, the accusation that political and media elites are interwoven tightly and prevent independent journalism culminates in the idea of the ‘Systempresse’ (term coined to describe a media that is controlled by the political system). This ‘Systempresse’ has allegedly the intention to ‘whitewash political decisions in regard to the asylum policy, the integration of Muslims into the German society and the war in the Ukraine, to fill the media with pseudo problems and to ultimately prevent the concerns of the ordinary prevent from being put on the agenda.’¹⁴⁶ In addition to that, the coverage of PEGIDA itself is seen particularly skeptical. In two studies of the PEGIDA demographics it was shown that 95% of PEGIDA demonstrators find the coverage of the movement unjust and defaming and 20% even stated that unfair reporting about PEGIDA is their main motivation to join the demonstrations.¹⁴⁷

In summary, the PEGIDA organization team has taken up the anti-media environment at their early demonstrations and embedded it successfully into their rhetoric and action. Apart from a short period in the first months of its existence, the persons behind the movement have remained a distant relation towards the media and did not hinder the demonstrators to live out their aversion, in parts even violently. However, it is not necessarily a symbolic for the demonstrators. The studies by Vorländer also revealed that in inquiries in the early stages stated that only 30 – 50 % (depending on income and education, the higher the education and income, the higher the media aversion) see the critique of the media as a motivation for their participation.¹⁴⁸ It seems very likely that the very negative reporting on PEGIDA was perceived as so unjustifiably unfair, that the already established ‘Lügenpresse’ – narrative could spread also among those who didn’t have the initial idea of protesting against it.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

The AfD and the media

Naturally, the relation between the AfD and the media is very different from the relation a public movement like PEGIDA could entertain. As a political party with considerable successes at the polling stations and representatives in a number of Germany's states, the leading figures, its rhetoric and political positions are experiencing a much higher scrutiny and attention. Hence, to keep the relation distant is impossible, would partially be contra productive and requires a much more offensive approach. As touched upon above, the AfD uses the media and the rules of the media business to generate awareness and public attention as well as to push the boundaries of public debate. The consistent game of provocation-outrage-relativization is featured so prominently and regularly that the overrepresentation of AfD is complained about by 40% of the interviewees at a Forsa survey.¹⁴⁹

However, this is not to say that the AfD entertains a friendly relationship with the media. Also the AfD nurtures the 'Lügenpresse' – narrative, applying a similar concept as it is formulated among followers of PEGIDA. As a political party, the AfD is required to be much subtler and strategic in its media critique. This also means that violent hostilities and attacks are not a stylistic device in the repertoire of its officials and members. A good example for how the AfD uses its beneficial relation to the press to simultaneously poison the public opinion about the media, is the 'Jerome Boateng' – incident. Alexander Gauland said in what he perceived as unofficial background talks, that 'the people like him as a football player. But they don't want to have a Boateng as their neighbor.'¹⁵⁰ After the racist remark about the German-Ghanaian football player had caused considerable outrage, Gauland accused the newspaper of misrepresenting him in order to make him look like a racist. In his opinion, the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung had used a remark from a confidential background talk and intentionally extracted it from the context to

¹⁴⁹ Spiegel Online (2016): Forsa-Umfrage: 40 Prozent der Deutschen beklagen Überpräsenz der AfD in den Medien, 18.02.2016, available online

¹⁵⁰ Wehner, Markus (2016): Gauland beleidigt Boateng, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung Online, 29.05.2016, available online

make him appear racist. The newspaper had to justify itself in the consequence, denying Alexander Gauland's allegations.¹⁵¹

There have been also incidents in which the AfD excluded journalists from covering party events like regional conventions. In January 2014 the AfD was heavily criticized for excluding all journalists from its convention in Hesse. Bernd Lucke justified the secrecy by explaining that 'a lot of our speakers are unfamiliar with speaking in front of cameras.'¹⁵² In 2016, the freelance journalist Anja Röpke was arbitrarily excluded from a meeting of members in February, which the Deutsche Journalisten Verband called 'a blatant breach of the media freedom'.¹⁵³

Apart from the rhetoric of the AfD's public relation strategy, the fundamental program demonstrates how the party views the media and contemplates its re-design. The critique towards the media is hereby twofold. On the one hand, the program criticizes that the left-liberal media would promote alternative lifestyles like gay marriage and single parent families. The AfD states that they 'are opposing fiercely the attempts by organizations, the media and the political sphere to promote single parent families as a progressive or even desirable lifestyle.'¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, the party insists on a more positive image of children as they 'are portrayed [by the media] as dead weight, inhibiting professional careers.'¹⁵⁵

On the other hand, and quite in the line with PEGIDA's 'Lügenpresse' – narrative, the AfD implies that the media, orchestrated by the political establishment, is intentionally misrepresenting the negative effects of mass immigration and the multi-cultural model of society. It demands first of all, that the public broadcasting systems should be reformed as to have it no longer 'dependent on politics' and suggest a pay-tv model. Such a model

¹⁵¹ Reinbold, Fabian (2016): AfD-Vize Gauland: "Habe Boateng nie beleidigt", Spiegel Online, 29.05.2016, available online

¹⁵² Focus Online (2014): Journalisten-Verband kritisiert Medien-Ausschluss bei AfD-Treffen, 13.01.2014, available online

¹⁵³ Ludmann, Stefan (2016): Journalistenverband: AfD verletzt Pressefreiheit, NDR Online, 22.02.2016, available online

¹⁵⁴ Alternative für Deutschland (2016): Grundsatzprogramm der Alternative für Deutschland, 01.05.2016, available online, p. 44

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 37

would then truly deserve the label ‘non-governmental’.¹⁵⁶ In the chapter on the legal implications of deportation, the AfD laments that ‘campaigns by the immigration lobby and the media are aimed at more and more residence permits.’¹⁵⁷ The media is also accused of being accomplice to the political establishment in ignoring, covering up and falsifying the ethnic background of criminals for political reasons. The program claims that ‘public and media institutions conceal or trivialize the problems caused by the immigration of asylum seekers.’¹⁵⁸

In summary, the AfD uses the media as platform to shape its profile, to influence and stay in the public debate as well as to simply advertise for voter’s. Although very much dependent on the media as consequence of this strategy, the AfD fuels the distrust in the media that has been established in the public debate and the ‘new right’s social media activities. This is happening subtle but very targeted nevertheless, including the very obvious allegation of misrepresenting the dangers of immigration and allegedly expanding Islamic influence.

General distrust in the media

The AfD’s and PEGIDA’s success in spreading and establishing this narrative is not necessarily based in their convincing argumentation and also not entirely on the obsessive activities of its followers. It is rather building up on an already existing distrust in the media, which is manifested in several surveys and inquiries that were conducted in the course of the last two years.

A survey conducted by the opinion research center infratest dimap¹⁵⁹ (commission by the public WDR) revealed that although a majority (52%) view the media in Germany as generally credible, 37% of the interviewees stated that their trust has decreased in the last year. In addition, 42% are of the opinion that the media in Germany is somehow directed by the government/state. And although a large majority (70%) doesn’t want to use the

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 48

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 61

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 64

¹⁵⁹ Infratest Dimap (2015): Glaubwürdigkeit der Medien, November 2015, available online

term ‘Lügenpresse’, 37% stated that they think the media is frequently lying. Naturally, a particularly firm distrust in the media is demonstrated among AfD voters and non-voters. More than half of the AfD constituency and 40% of non-voters find the term ‘Lügenpresse’ suitable to describe the German media landscape. Two-thirds of the AfD supporters believe that the media is directed by the government and in general not credible. In another study conducted by TMS emnid (commissioned by the public BR)¹⁶⁰, more than half of the interviewees don’t believe the media is independent from the state, big business or other powerful actors and in addition support the claim that journalists are not always allowed to write their opinion as they please.

These results illustrate that by no means did the far-right political movement alone establish the distrust in the media in Germany. It much rather feeds on the already existing concerns, consolidates diverse, unspecific opinions into a more or less coherent narrative and, in the case of PEGIDA, use the ‘Lügenpresse’ as a symbolic slogan.

4. Inquiries and statistics by the state and civil society on journalist safety in Germany

Methodological remarks

This chapter is the first analytical part, contribute to a conclusion regarding the research question(s). It was intended to be an empiric part in order to measure attacks, threats and harassment against journalists in Germany on a fact-based level. However, in the course of the research for this paper, it became clear that there is by far too few substance in data in order to apply a mere statistical approach. In the absence of the possibility to interpret numbers, the chapter will instead cover as completely as possible all sorts of inquiries, statistics and also responses on the matter by two very important actors when dealing with human rights issues: the state and civil society.

¹⁶⁰ Bayerischer Rundfunk (2016): BR stellt Studie vor: Medien in der Glaubwürdigkeitskrise?, BR Online, 02.05.2016, available online

The first subsection summarizes the response of the state towards the increasing amount of reported attacks, threats and harassment against journalists. This includes official hearings and public statements. The second subsection portrays the efforts by civil society actors to shed light on the issue in form of inquiries, interviews and a collection of cases. Both sub-sections have informational as well as interpretive value, in particular the response by the state will flow in the assessment of whether or not it is fulfilling its obligations.

4.1 Inquiries, statistics and responses by the state

This section was intended to feature inquiries and statistics, conducted by state organs in order to demonstrate the government's action in regard to the increased reports of attacks on journalists. However, the author wasn't able to find any official data on the issue in the statistical and thematic publications by the relevant institutions.

Consequently, the author conducted a personal inquiry by contacting all relevant state agencies that might have collected data on the reported events. The most detailed reply came from the German Ministry of the Interior and Consumer Protection (BMJV). The letter stated that the Federal Statistical Office doesn't provide data on victims in the context of the inquiry within the justice and law enforcement chapters of its 'Statistical Yearbook'. The Bundeskriminalamt, Germany's federal criminal police, confirmed this information and wrote that profession is unlike sex or age none of the classification criteria in the statistics compiled in the annual publication 'Polizeiliche Kriminalstatistik'. The cabinet itself also has no knowledge of any data being collected on a federal level. On a state level, the situation is similarly dire. This is particularly questionable for the state criminal police in Saxony, where most of the reported incidents had happened. Still, the report uses the classification as the federal report does, which means that attacks on journalists do not appear. Only the police department of the city of Leipzig published a statement featuring data on how many journalists pressed charges based on attacks, insults and threats. The chief director Bernd Merbitz said that his police department had

counted ‘a dozen’ journalists that notified the police after being harassed or attacked.¹⁶¹ He furthermore condemned the events in drastic terms, stating that ‘it is an unbearable situation in Saxony right now’ and that ‘it cannot be tolerated when journalists have to hide their press id’s at certain events for security reasons. [...] Something has to happen here in Saxony, the lying press allegations are not acceptable.’¹⁶²

In the absence of more reliable official data, the only way to assess the authority’s stance on the development is by considering the statements made by government officials and parliamentary discussions.

The issue of attacks and threats against journalists in the surroundings of demonstrations of PEGIDA did definitely sparked the attention of the German political sphere. The cultural and media committee of the German Bundestag organized a conference on the topic and invited several experts of civil society organizations to elaborate and inform on the issue in front of the committee members.¹⁶³ The statistic provided by the European Institute for Press Freedom (presented in detail in the next sub-section) at the conference might be interpreted as the numbers the German Bundestag and the German government are considering in regard to the matter. However, as an informational conference, the discussions didn’t define a clear stance, something that could serve as a symbolic reaction to the events.

The ministry of the interior of the federal state of Saxony saw itself obliged to react to a free expression alert, triggered by the CoE’s monitoring mechanism in December 2015. The reason for the alert were attacks on several journalists at the PEGIDA rally, celebrating the first anniversary of the movement. The allegations said that ‘two journalists and a media worker were assaulted on 25 October 2015 at a large rally held by PEGIDA.’¹⁶⁴ Journalist Jaafar Abdul Karim had reported that he had been surrounded by protesters who shouted racial slurs at him and blocked his camera. The German

¹⁶¹ Focus Online (2016): Polizeipräsident verurteilt Angriffe auf Journalisten, Focus Online, 03.03.2016, available online

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Deutscher Bundestag (2016): Fachgespräch über Angriffe auf Journalisten, Medien- und Kulturausschuss des deutschen Bundestages, 13.01.2016, available online

¹⁶⁴ Council of Europe (2015): Three media staff assaulted at Pegida rally, All media freedom alerts – Germany, 12.11.2015, available online

Journalist Association stated that those who assaulted Karim were not arrested by the police as other demonstrators claimed that Karim was lying. At the same demonstration, Jose Sequeira had his camera equipment thrown to the ground and been beaten. In response to the attacks, the Ministry of the Interior wrote a letter to the CoE, ‘representing the official German position’¹⁶⁵:

“On the basis of a criminal complaint filed by Deutsche Welle, this matter is currently being processed by the state security department of the Dresden District Police Headquarters working on behalf of the Dresden Public Prosecution Office. The investigations have yet to be completed; in particular, the available video material is currently being analysed. In general, it should be noted that, prior to any assembly or demonstration, an individual assessment of the situation is carried out on the basis of which specific security measures are decided. The purpose of these security measures is to repel any attacks on the event or originating from it as effectively as possible and thereby to provide everyone, including journalists, with the greatest possible protection.”

As of now, there is no information if the attackers were brought to justice or if they were any results regarding the analysis of the video material. Consequently, as the investigation might still be ongoing, a final remark on the handling of the matter is not possible at this moment.

Apart from these two events, high-ranking German politicians made several remarks on the issue. The German President Joachim Gauck said in an interview that ‘here is a lot of stupidity, and also a certain joy of being stupid. I have lived 50 years with a real ‘lying press’ and for this reason he would be getting emotional on the subject and just can’t remain silent on that matter.’¹⁶⁶ In another interview he also denied that the press in

¹⁶⁵ Council of Europe (2015): Response by Germany to the entry “Three Media Staff Assaulted at Pegida Rally” as of 26 October 2015, State Replies, 09.11.2015, available online

¹⁶⁶ Hausner Joseph (2016): Bundespräsident kritisiert ‘Lügenpresse’-Schreier, Focus Online, 08.04.2016, available online

Germany would be somehow directed by an elitist or foreign force.¹⁶⁷ However, he also insinuated that the current discussion should trigger a process of self-reflection within the media to answer crucial questions. In regard to the notorious new year's eve 2015 in Cologne, when hundreds of migrants from North Africa sexually assaulted and robbed women, Gauck asks: "Did worries about the stigmatization of foreigners lead to a reluctant reporting on crimes committed by migrants? Why were the events of Cologne only covered days later?"¹⁶⁸ He furthermore urged journalists to be very thorough in separating reporting from commenting.

Chancellor Angela Merkel commented the attacks and harassment against journalists as well as the generalizing term 'lying press' in her podcast in May 2016. She thinks that 'the generalization of the German media as 'lying press is absolutely wrong. The quality of German media is also in international comparison very good. Their research is plenty and good and they offer many interesting things.'¹⁶⁹ However, also Angela Merkel chooses a diplomatic approach by adding that 'naturally, also the media has to reflect if it is reaching the people, if it is reporting in-depth, collecting all the opinions and finding constructive approaches.' Regarding violent attacks on journalists at demonstrations, Angela Merkel said that these were 'shameful for a country that considers itself enlightened'¹⁷⁰. Again, she combined her stance with a soft critique against the media, calling for 'clear professional ethics that include incorruptibility, professionalism, quality research and the clear separation of advertising and content.'

The most decisive reaction on behalf of the German cabinet stems from Heike Maas, Minister of Justice. Concerning the AfD, he told Zeit Online that it was 'hard to discuss with people who ignore the facts, consistently suspect deceit by the elite and press and just collect conspiracy theories from the internet.'¹⁷¹ When the AfD tried to trivialize an attack on ZDF journalist Britta Hilpert, Maas responded that 'those who are trying to

¹⁶⁷ Sueddeutsche Zeitung Online (2016): Gauck: Habe 'Lügenpresse' in DDR erlebt, 12.05.2016, available online

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Merkel, Angela (2016): Merkel: Lokalzeitungen haben Zukunft, bundeskanzlerin.de, 07.05.2016, available online

¹⁷⁰ Reuters (2016): Merkel – Angriffe auf Journalisten in Deutschland 'beschämend', 10.05.2016, available online

¹⁷¹ Zeit Online (2016): Die AfD führt in das Deutschland von vorgestern, 17.05.2016, available online

justify attacks on journalists are leaving the realm of the Basic Law.’ In the same context, he twittered that ‘every attack on a journalist is an attack on our democracy.’¹⁷²

4.2 Inquiries, statistics and responses by civil society actors

Reporters without Borders

On April 20th 2016, the Reporters without Borders, an internationally active non-governmental organization dedicated to media freedom and the safety of journalists, published its annual ranking “Freedom of the Press Worldwide”. Germany lost four ranks in comparison to 2015, now being placed 16th.¹⁷³ Although Germany is still a ‘white’ area¹⁷⁴, the drop has been significant.

The organization identifies flaws in several areas to be responsible for this drop. These include the targeting of journalists and their informants by law enforcement and intelligence services, the increased use of native advertising in online presences of quality media outlets and the advancing of mass surveillance. Most prominently featured however, and supported by a list of selected cases to demonstrate the severity, is the ‘erratic’ rise of attacks, insults and threats against journalists covering far-right populist movements.

The Reporters without Borders registered at least 39 violent attacks on journalists in 2015 with the negative trend continuing in 2016.¹⁷⁵ Most of these attacks took place ‘in the surrounding of demonstrations of the PEGIDA movement and their local branches’, at protests of right extremists and respective counter-demonstrations. Around two thirds of the attacks occurred in the state of Saxony, birthplace of the PEGIDA movement. To

¹⁷² NTV (2015): Maas wirft AfD Demokratiefeindlichkeit vor, 27.11.2015, available online

¹⁷³ Reporter ohne Grenzen (2016): ‘Rangliste der Pressefreiheit 2016 – Nahaufnahme Deutschland’, Reporter ohne Grenzen (2016): ‘Rangliste der Pressefreiheit 2016 – Nahaufnahme Deutschland’, available online

¹⁷⁴ Reporter ohne Grenzen (2016): ‘Weltkarte der Pressefreiheit 2016’, available online

¹⁷⁵ Reporter ohne Grenzen (2016): ‘Rangliste der Pressefreiheit 2016 – Nahaufnahme Deutschland’, p. 2

illustrate the quality of attacks, the organization annexed a list of exemplary cases, three of which shall be displayed here¹⁷⁶:

- On January 21st 2015, at a LEGIDA demonstration in Leipzig, several journalists were the victims of massive assaults on media representatives, including beatings and insults.
- On September 28th 2015, at a PEGIDA demonstration in Dresden, two journalists got kicked and beaten by protesters who successfully submerged in the crowd after the attack.
- On January 1st 2016, at an AfD demonstration in Magdeburg, a team of two journalists got attacked with pepper spray by unknown individuals within the crowd of protesters

Regarding hostilities against journalists, the Reporters without Borders state that in 13 cases, journalists pressed charges based on insults and violent attacks at the police department in Leipzig (the biggest city in Saxony) in 2015.¹⁷⁷ However, the organization does not provide for further statistics, e.g. on the amount of insults and threats for Germany as a whole. It does assert that there has been a ‘rapid rise’ of such cases but merely gives grave examples, like the cases of Constantin Schreiber who produced an Arabic speaking TV program dedicated to refugees who received hate mails and calls for the boycott of his program and Dunja Hayali, whose facebook account was the target of countless racist and otherwise insulting slurs.¹⁷⁸

In a blunt manner, the report emphasizes criticism against the police, stating the officers seemed to be often overburdened with the protection of journalists covering demonstrations or even chose to ignore harmful situations. Furthermore, in some incidents the police ordered the journalists to leave the area instead of those threatening them.¹⁷⁹ This led to media outlets providing for security on their own in the form of

¹⁷⁶ Reporter ohne Grenzen (2016): ‘Rangliste der Pressefreiheit 2016 – Ausgewählte Übergriffe auf Journalisten 2015/2016’, available online

¹⁷⁷ Reporter ohne Grenzen (2016): ‘Rangliste der Pressefreiheit 2016 – Nahaufnahme Deutschland’, p. 2

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 3-4

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 2

bodyguards accompanying their journalists. Also, it was reported that in some cases the police refused accept complaints by reporters who were attacked or threatened. In one case, at a LEGIDA demonstration in January 2015, the police themselves attacked a reporter who covered a police operation, with a police officer beating a journalist and trying to take away his camera. In the aftermath, the police pressed charges against the journalist for obstructing a police officer in the course of his duty.¹⁸⁰

European Centre for Press and Media Freedom

In December 2015, the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom published “The concept of the Enemy”, an inquiry into attacks on journalists covering right-wing demonstrations.¹⁸¹ The investigators counted 29 physical attacks in 2015, calling it a massive increase as in the past years only a few, isolated cases were reported.¹⁸² Martin Hoffmann, director of the study, added in an interview in April 2016, that there were also 7 cases of serious threat and 13 incidents of material damage. He also said that until April 28th, his team counted 11 physical attacks on journalists in 2016.¹⁸³

The study also featured interviews with victims of violent assaults and tried to shed light on the perpetrators and their motivation.

Merten Waage, a journalist for a small, local radio station, was attacked in January 2015 by a masked, organized group of 20 people acting out of crowd of protesters. He emphasizes that the aggressive, violent potential of this group of people had been very obvious already beforehand, yet the police did nothing to protect Mr. Waage and his colleagues from being beaten and insulted.¹⁸⁴ Martin Schümann, columnist for the ‘Tagesspiegel’, was attacked near his home in Berlin, one day after he published a very critical article on the PEGIDA movement. For Mr. Schümann, the troubling aspect of the

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Hoffmann, Martin (2015): ‘The Concept of the Enemy’, Inquiry for the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom, December 2015, available online

¹⁸² Ibid., p. 1

¹⁸³ Hoffmann, Martin (2016): Interview with Bund deutscher Zeitungsverleger, April 2016, available online

¹⁸⁴ Waage, Merten (2015): Interview with the European Center for Press and Media Freedom, 2015, available online

attack on him is that didn't happen in his professional environment. As the reporting on a demonstration would bring a certain calculable risk with it, being attacked in the private sphere is from a different quality.¹⁸⁵

Regarding the perpetrators, the authors noted that even before PEGIDA and its offshoots started its weekly demonstrations in Dresden, there had been threats and attacks against journalists in Brandenburg, Saxony and the city of Dortmund in North-Rhine Westphalia, attributable to individuals known to be affiliated with the extreme-right neo-Nazi scene in Germany.¹⁸⁶ This suggest that a majority of the attacks is perpetrated by already radicalized people who use the seemingly civil demonstrations as platform and as disguise. However, in order to be used as such a platform, the notion of a general distrust against the media has to be accepted by a large majority of those providing it.

Similar to the report by Reporters without Borders, the ECPMF pays special attention to the role of the police. In particular, at demonstrations of LEGIDA (Leipzig), attacks and hostilities towards journalists remained unaddressed by the police although a thousand officers were on duty. The police in Leipzig explained that it would not be able to provide for personal security but admitted that has been an 'inglorious low' that journalists were attacked and spit upon, standing right next to the police forces.¹⁸⁷ However, also in Dresden, the report finds the police inadequately reacting to such incidents.

Unlike other inquiries or statements by civil society actors, the ECPMF also gives a voice to media critics defending and explaining the hostilities towards journalists. The publicist Vera Lengsfeld regularly attacks the German 'mainstream' media, accusing them of violating the right to free expression by only portraying what is assumed to be the opinion of the majority. Furthermore, she alleges the media to knowingly misrepresent those protesting at the PEGIDA as Nazis and right extremists.¹⁸⁸ The report also mentions Udo Ulfkotte, who wrote a book about the connections between media, business and the

¹⁸⁵ Schülmann, Helmut (2015): Interview with the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom, 2015, available online

¹⁸⁶ Hoffmann, Martin (2015): 'The Concept of the Enemy', pp. 3-4

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 5

¹⁸⁸ Lengsfeld, Vera (2015): Interview with the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom, 2015, available online

political sphere which renders German journalism untrustworthy in its entirety.¹⁸⁹ As both are former insiders of the media landscape in Germany, they can be assumed to play an important role in legitimizing media distrust and criticism for the political right.

Reactions by special interest groups

The most important special interest groups for journalists and publishers, and also member of the German Press Council, a self-regulatory body of the German media industry, are the *Deutscher Journalistenverband* (DJV), the *Bund Deutscher Zeitungsverleger* (BDZV), the *Deutsche Journalistinnen- und Journalisten-Union* (dju). At all of these organizations, the perceived increase of violent attacks and other hostilities against journalists is seen as a very worrisome trend, which has been regularly stated in public. However, none of the special interest groups or unions has conducted research in that matter.

The DJV has been vocal on the rise of attacks and hostilities against journalists in several statements. In the context of a press conference dedicated to the issue of attacks on journalists at demonstrations, DJV chairman Frank Überall gave an interview in which he declared that although hostilities at far-right extremist demonstrations were never a rarity, the magnitude and quality of attacks have increased in worrisome extent.¹⁹⁰ He also criticized the police and the political sphere for not acting swift and decisive enough which he believes is due to a media critical attitude among officials. He added that also the quality of threats that reach journalists for example via email has increased. Some journalists would be afraid to do their work and rather switch to other topics. The DJV has also established *augenzeuge.info*, a platform to which journalists can send the stories of attacks or threats against them. As the data to these cases is protected by the organization, there are no exact numbers available however.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ Hoffmann, Martin (2015): 'The Concept of the Enemy', p. 8

¹⁹⁰ Überall, Frank (2015): Interview with Deutschlandradio, 24.11.2015, available online

¹⁹¹ Zörner, Hendrik (2016): Re: Angriffe, Drohungen und Beleidigungen gegenüber Journalisten in Deutschland, DJV, 12.05.2016, Email

The DJU, a journalist union that is part of the federation of unions *verdi*, condemned the attacks on journalists at PEGIDA demonstrations as attacks on the freedom of the media and called for the authorities in Saxony to better protect journalists doing their work.¹⁹² Also the arrest of three photo journalists at an AfD event was heavily criticized by the organization, regretting the ‘scandalous treatment’ of the three journalists by the police. These arrest were made public after other journalists covering the event notified *Demo Watch*, a Whats-app-group of DJU members in which attacks, arrests and hostilities against journalists can be reported.¹⁹³

The BDZV has also consistently addressed the issue in numerous publications. In the Press Freedom section of its Yearbook 2015, the organization refers to particularly to the Neo-Nazi scene in Dortmund, North Rhine Westphalia and large parts of Saxony as the most dangerous source for attacks on journalists. The authors also discussed the general distrust in the media which cumulates in term ‘Lügenpresse’.¹⁹⁴ Similarly to the other unions, the BDVZ published press releases whenever an incident involving an attack on journalists became public.¹⁹⁵ The president of BDZV, Helmut Heinen, lamented the steady increase of attacks against journalist and said that although press freedom as a whole is well established in Germany, the freedom of the media is in distress. He added that the fact that some reporters only cover demonstrations with personal security was indeed worrisome.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹² Deutsche Journalistinnen- und Journalisten-Union (2015): DJU verurteilt erneuten Angriff auf Journalisten durch Pegida-Anhänger, DJU website, 29.09.2015, available online

¹⁹³ Deutsche Journalistinnen- und Journalisten-Union (2016): DJU kritisiert scharf die Inhaftierung von Pressefotografen, DJU, 01.05.2016, available online

¹⁹⁴ Bund Deutscher Zeitungsverleger (2015): BDZV-Jahrbuch 2015/16: Pressefreiheit, 16.10.2015, available online

¹⁹⁵ e.g Bund Deutscher Zeitungsverleger (2015): Dresden: Attacke auf die Pressefreiheit/ BDZV verurteilt Angriff auf Journalisten, 30.09.2015, available online

¹⁹⁶ Heinen, Helmut (2016): Interview with Neue Osnabrücker Zeitung, 03.05.2016, available online

5. Empirical Study: Qualitative Interviews

Methodological remarks

This chapter forms the core of the analysis. The author conducted interviews with six journalists of regional and national media, with personal or professional experience with the increase in number and severity of attacks, threads and harassment against journalists in Germany. The selection of journalists is based on the media landscape in Germany. The first aspect is the division between those working for public and private media, as public broadcasters might be in a different situation due to their affiliation with the state. The second aspect is the division between regional and national media, according to the epicenter of reported attacks. Hereby, the intention is to assess the extent to which the more personal contact between journalists and those attacking the media, changes the conditions. The selection of specific journalists was based primarily on availability and the recommendation by the participating media.

Each of the interviews featured a set of nine questions which are representing three fields of interests and were asked in only slight variation due to the journalists' contexts. The three fields of interest and their corresponding questions are structured as follows:

1. Nature, Frequency and Magnitude of Attacks, threads and harassment against journalists
 - Is there a rise in attacks, threads and insults against journalist in your professional surrounding and if so, how is this rise demonstrated?
 - How often do these incidences take place in relation to the coverage of far-right political movements or sensitive topics in this regard, e.g. the refugee crisis?
 - What is the nature and quality of these incidences? Please give examples.
 - In your experience, is there a connection between these incidences and the 'lying press' – narrative as spread by the political far-right movement in Germany?

2. Perceived and actual impediments to journalistic work and the freedom of expression
 - How do the journalists themselves perceive the distrust in their credibility and neutrality?
 - In what way are the hostilities against journalists influencing their work? Are there actual impediments to their work and if so, which ones?
 - How do journalists, or publishers respectively, react to such incidences?

3. Response of the state towards attacks, threats and harassment against journalist in Germany
 - Are these incidences to be classified as crimes or have they reached an extent in which press freedom in Germany isn't secured anymore?
 - Do you think the state, as responsible for protecting and guaranteeing press freedom, fulfills its obligations? If not, which response by the state would you deem adequate?

The interviewees are:

- Stefan Locke, a free-lance journalist employed by the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung as correspondent for Dresden since 2011
- Ulrich Wolf, reporter at the Sächsische Zeitung, a regional newspaper in Saxony with its offices in Dresden since 1989
- Carsten Thureau, journalist and director of the regional studio of the public broadcaster ZDF in Saxony since 2010
- The East Germany correspondent of a national newspaper, who asked to remain anonymous
- Stefan Schölermann, reporter and expert for right-wing extremism at the public broadcaster *Norddeutsche Rundfunk* (NDR) since 1990

- Stefan Raue, chief editor 'news' at the *Mitteldeutsche Rundfunk* (MDR) since 2011

The interviews were conducted via telephone. The conversations were recorded and transformed into transcripts which were then authorized by the interviewees in regard to the use in this master thesis.

The analysis itself consists of comparing the answers given to the individual question and drawing conclusions from similarities and differences. In some cases, the interviewees gave responses which, regarding content, deal with aspects that are enquired in another question of the set. In this case, the response is used within the thematically more suitable context. For clarification and reference, the complete transcripts of the interviews are featured in the appendix. Only direct quotes from these transcripts are used. The answers will help not only measure the significance of the issue as perceived by journalists but also aid in getting a clear and more detailed image of the situation as constituted in the reality of journalistic work. This will further specify the actual danger to free expression and press freedom in Germany which will, as consequence, also allow an assessment on whether or not the reaction of the state on the issue is appropriate.

5.1 Nature, Frequency and Magnitude of Attacks, Threads and Insults against Journalists in Germany

5.1.1 Responses to Questions 1 - 4

Q1: Is there a rise in attacks, threads and insults against journalist in your professional surrounding and if so, how is this rise demonstrated?

In the last two years the amount of reported attacks on journalists increased drastically or, in other words, reached an extent that indicated a certain worrisome trend. Apart from very isolated cases, often with personal particularities, attacks on journalists did not occur frequently. However, it does not suffice to proof that such trend actually exists in the sense of a pattern that would affect press freedom as such. The purpose of this question

is therefore to draw a more detailed picture of the situation by asking how the interviewee perceives the development based on personal experience but also on the experiences made in his or her professional environment and in the interaction with colleagues.

Most of the reported violent attacks happened in the surroundings of PEGIDA demonstrations, particularly in Dresden. Stefan Locke, who works in Dresden for the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, sees the city as a center in this regard:

“[...] we are in the eye of the hurricane so to speak. Here, the development of the PEGIDA movement has its origin, also the AfD is quite strong, and this civil movement, if you want to call it that way, has brought the term ‘Lügenpresse’ on the streets.”

For Locke, the increasing reports of attacks on journalists and the increasingly media-adverse atmosphere strongly correlated with the beginning of the PEGIDA movement:

“It was audible for the first time here in fall 2014, which irritated us as we had heard the term before but it wasn’t really in use for a long time, especially not as a general critique towards the entire media. There were isolated cases, but this complete, solid block of critique was new, especially given that the term has such a historically negative connotation. It started in Dresden and then spread quickly as it is such a concise term.”

However, Locke also stresses that this is not just a problem of East Germany but follows a more general development in Germany:

“It was also surprising for me that, already in fall 2014 when I wrote the first reports on PEGIDA, I received a flood of letters, often with full name and address, from the middle class in the Swabian Alb, from Bavaria, from Hesse, really from everywhere. It was people who wrote that the demonstrators are right to take their concerns to the street and of course also alleged not only politicians but also the media to be somehow synchronized, while using again the term ‘Lügenpresse’.”

Also for Carsten Thureau who directs the ZDF studio in Saxony, the origin of the issue lies in East Germany and came much to the surprise of the journalists. In particular, the magnitude of hate and aggressiveness seem to have left a mark when he states:

“I would say we were noticing it as the first ones here in Saxony, already in fall 2014 along with the first PEGIDA demonstrations. The slogan ‘Lügenpresse’ emerged very quickly and it irritated me a lot as I didn’t expect this hostility, even hate, against journalists at all. I could imagine that a lot of people were concerned, that they want to enunciate their concerns on the street and that they are just not satisfied with many of the political developments. This is legitimate. But these extremely hateful slurs against the media and politicians, the harassment which then sometimes turns violent, I didn’t consider this possible. It is not a very nice feeling to stand in the middle of a PEGIDA crowd, back then together with 20.000 people, and be shouted down by the ‘Lügenpresse’ chants. [...] The continuance and extent of this development are really surprising to me.”

Thureau refrains from loading the responsibility for the worsening situation on the people in East Germany. However, he also emphasizes that there are regional particularities which are enforcing the media aversion in the East:

“I would say in Saxony the issue is more visible. Here the people, though not as many anymore, go to the streets which makes the protest, and the attitude behind it, physically visible. I also believe that there are a lot of Saxon particularities that made PEGIDA so extraordinarily strong in the East. However, this movement, together with the AfD, has caused the bursting of a dam in large parts of the society. Independently from the region, the insults and anonymous hate mails have become socially acceptable. Suddenly people dare to say and do things that they wouldn’t have dared to say or do before. It affected the general atmosphere negatively, however here in Dresden it also becomes physically visible. But I also don’t want to stigmatize the region, it started here but has followers everywhere.”

The anonymous East Germany correspondent of a national Newspaper in Germany (hereafter referred to as ‘East Germany correspondent’), makes the clear distinction between verbal use on the one hand and physical attacks on the other. In regard to the digital world, the East Germany correspondent says:

“I do notice this rise, yes. This has also something to do with increasingly widespread use of social media. Before, the people maybe also have held such opinions and maybe insulted a journalist from their yard if he was standing on the other side of the street. This is just different now, writing a quick post on the social media is easier than an actual letter. So there is less restraint. That’s why I would say that PEGIDA is maybe the trigger but not necessarily the cause of the issue.”

In contrast to the structural issue of enhanced communication technology, the rise in physical attacks, according to the East Germany correspondent, can be attributed to a rather small but active group of people:

“In the physical world, in the confined framework of the demonstrations every Monday, these incidences have increased. However, outside of this framework, I would say they didn’t. On these Monday demonstrations it happens that you get insulted, pushed, sometimes spit upon. However, without trivializing it, you have to keep in mind that these incidences originate from an intense but very small group, and this group is frequently present at these Monday events. That is why I try to loosen myself from the thought that the whole world became crazy. It is a very confined, very small group of people.”

Ulrich Wolf, who as reporter for the local *Sächsische Zeitung*, won several awards for his research and reporting on PEGIDA, emphasizes in his response to Question 1 the concrete situation surrounding demonstrations:

“There is a significantly more aggressive attitude towards journalists, regardless the political motivation of the demonstration. I am doing this job for 30 years now and I have never experienced anything alike. [...] At

the beginning, these demonstrations were direct against the asylum policy, now they have a more and more racist message and are directed against the people, against the refugees. We, as journalists on the ground, are the most accessible representative of a political system, which, according to asylum opposers, is a regime, the so-called Merkel-regime. For many of the protesters, we are symbol for this political system. [...] Last year, we had 35 confirmed incidences, ranging from simply pushing to bodily injury, meaning beatings and kicks in the abdomen.”

Stefan Schölermann, reporter for the Norddeutsche Rundfunk (NDR) and right-wing extremism, refers to the already existing issue of hostilities against the press at events of the extreme right:

“I [also] have to say that the issue of threats against journalist is by no means a new issue. This is frequently occurring for already for many years at demonstrations of the extreme right. This particularly the case for press photographers due to a strong aversion towards cameras on behalf of the participants. This seems also be the case at Pegida demonstrations, so there seems to exist a certain commonality to what we are experiencing in extreme right sector. In addition, journalists who compiled a certain profile in this scene, who might be in a way dangerous for them, are singled out and targeted. They are getting photographed, for example, in order to intimidate them.”

Regarding his own experience with PEGIDA, Schölermann stated the he didn’t cover the demonstrations much, however at the ones he attended in Hannover, he ‘didn’t experience the atmosphere as very threatening”

Stefan Raue, chief editor at the Mitteldeutsche Rundfunk (MDR), would like to see the issues of verbal abuse and physical attacks differentiated, similarly to the East Germany correspondent. In regard to verbal attacks, for example via social media, he notes:

“I didn’t experience this magnitude until around 6 years ago. However, it reminds me very much at the conflict related to the first book of Thilo

Sarrazin which emotionalized a lot of people and led to the allegation, that the media wouldn't cover Thilo Sarrazin's insights and wisdoms in an appropriately vocal manner. Insofar, it is not a completely new phenomenon, however the intensity and emotionality are extraordinary."

In regard to physical attacks, Raue recognizes a significant rise due to the PEGIDA demonstrations, however he also emphasizes that the development saw its peak already months ago with the phenomenon declining ever since. He says:

"The rise in physical attacks on MDR employees was a phenomenon, which I, in my decades as a journalist, have never experienced in this form. It ranged from threats to actual beatings and the damaging of equipment, like cameras and vehicles. This development had its peak maybe half a year ago, when also the Pegida demonstrations peaked in regard to participants. In the last few months, the situation has significantly eased. This has to do *inter alia* with the decreasing approval for these organizations and events in all the region. In all Central Germany, even in Dresden, we are witnessing that less and less people are marching along and consequently, that less aggression is emerging at these events."

Q2: How often do these incidences take place in relation to the coverage of far-right political movements or sensitive topics in this regard, e.g. the refugee crisis?

Although attacks and hostilities against journalists are mostly visible in relation to the far-right and Neo Nazi scene, in particular 'milder' forms of such incidents, like online harassment, seem to appear in a broader spectrum of society. The question tries to shed light on how close the link between attacks, hostilities but also media-critique and the political far-right movement. In other words, is the media aversion in Germany based on far-right political ideology or does it follow a more general development which finds in the far-right spectrum its most visible manifestation?

Stefan Locke doesn't seem to want to overstate this relation, although confirming that far-right populism had its effect on the development:

“Well, they have something to do with it, but more as the catalyst. However, the dissatisfaction is already smoldering for a long time.”

As response to a follow up question, if there was similarly pronounced media-aversion among the political left, Locke replied:

“Absolutely, that becomes obvious when you consider all the different reactions you receive as journalist. But from the far-right wing, there are coming a lot more of these messages of course, there the dissatisfaction is stronger, and already for a long time there is the allegation that the media and the political sphere are both part of one system, working together in a reciprocally beneficial way.”

For Carsten Thureau, the relation between hostilities and the political far-right is very obvious. It is especially this close connection which, in light of the widespread use of the term ‘Lügenpresse’, is particularly distressing:

“Of course, the big majority of insulting posts regarding our coverage of the refugee crisis, on facebook for example, are racist and far-right. In the demonstrations of PEGIDA and also in the AfD, there is always a group people involved that is associated with the extreme right and the Neo Nazi scene. The lines are a bit blurred in this regard. This is also what I blame many people for, protesting on the street together with Nazis. It was the morals I was raised with, that you don’t collaborate with Nazis. Not all of them are Nazis of course, but the thing you hear on the streets now are dangerous. [...] Maybe a lot of them don’t even realize that they are openly xenophobe and racist. I could very well imagine that.”

The East Germany correspondent is keen to emphasize the current societal circumstances in Saxony, in regard to deteriorating social manners. Only the current situation of journalists at demonstrations is very much linked to right-wing populism, as he notes:

“That’s a bit difficult to say because I am in the eye of the hurricane, so to speak. I have to admit that I have a problem with differentiating in this regard. I was born in the region and I am a citizen of this region and am therefore very much focused on what happens *here*. And I have the feeling that there is fewer public space and social life here, that there is less social interaction and that people are less forced to deal with each other in a respectful manner. [...] In relation to journalists I would say there is a clear majority of hostilities coming from followers of right-wing populism. If you look to the left, I think they actually never really thought much of journalists, particularly in far-left. But again, regarding the current situation is very much related to the political right.”

Ulrich Wolf doesn’t want to pinpoint the development to people with a right-wing mindset. He offers a different explanation for the correlation between right-wing populism and the increased manifestation of hate:

“The majority of people marching with PEGIDA were very much unpolitical before. Apart from political stereotypes, I would say it are ‘the frustrated’. They are caught in a vicious circle that begins with an already existing material insecurity which is further intensified by the immigration of refugees, meaning potential competition for jobs. A lot of those marching with PEGIDA can be referred to as the ‘service precariat’, without meaning this in a pejorative way. However, they provide services to the middle and upper classes. Those ‘frustrated’ people started in a phase of insecurity and then entered one of fear, then one of anger and, finally, one of hate. This frustration and bitterness was then supported by angry seniors in the last 15 months and materializes then from time to time.”

Also for Stefan Schölermann, it is impossible to link the phenomenon to just to right-wing populism. He rather sees structural changes in the media landscape as responsible for the spread of conspiracy theories and particular political mindsets. He states:

“I don’t think it is justified to discuss this matter as only having a single cause. There is also critique among the political left because the media is perceived as a part of the ruling regime and as not able to freely express opinions. However, it is much more apparent in the far and extreme right spectrum. There are different aspects to this. The social media, for example, which I don’t consider very social. Also, not to long ago we had a very limited media landscape, also regarding what was editorially processed, so some issues were just not covered. Now, there is a media sub-level with a highly impactful network of social media. Many people perceive reality almost entirely from within their personal social media environment. And because such prejudices are then repeated over and over again in this environment, they perceive this prejudices as reality.”

Stefan Raue doesn’t see a clear, exclusive causal link between the rise of right-wing populism in the last years, but emphasizes that there had been already a development before PEGIDA marched against the refugee policy. He explains:

“[I]t developed over time. I already mentioned the Sarrazin debate. I was still with the ZDF back then, as deputy chief editor in the politics department, and all reporting that didn’t portray him as man of wisdom was met with a sheer wave of hate. This hate came also from very educated people, large parts of the middle classes solidarized themselves with Sarrazin. Also at there was the accusation, that we conceal the public debate about him, that we belittle Sarrazin, although he became more and more popular, sold a lot of books and received a lot of media attention by us.”

Raue gave additional examples of events, like the ‘Monday demonstrations’ by a small pro-russian group directed against the Ukraine and NATO as well as the AfD’s strategy to target public broadcaster. He concludes:

“[T]he fact that this ‘lying press’ concept has gained so much momentum and became so strong, cannot only be explained with the aforementioned aspects. I think the reason is that there is a discomfort towards a critical media environment in which the reality, that a lot of people perceive or believe in, is constantly challenged.”

Q3: What is the nature and quality of these incidences? Please give examples.

This question is important to get a more detailed picture of the incidents that are actually taking place. The purpose is hereby twofold: The details of attacks, threats and insults are an indication on the extent of the problem, on the one hand in the sense of clarifying necessary and appropriate measures and on the other in the sense of the consequences for affected journalists. Therefore, the author refrained from shortening the answers to a very large extent.

In his answer, Locke described typically incidences in the surroundings of PEGIDA demonstrations, but mostly warns of overstating the issue. For him, the hostility that journalists are experiencing, is considerably less problematic in comparison to the situation of journalists in other countries:

“What I experienced myself is, when you take out your notebook and start taking notes, the atmosphere becomes chilly. There are odd comments then, to which I don’t reply, and then the situation is over for me. There has been some pushing and some bargaining but there were no attacks on me and also not on the most of my colleagues. I can recall a case in Leipzig where a journalist got beaten the camera out of the hands and was pushed to the ground. But I believe that in general, the response by the media has been bigger than the actual incidents. For me, it also went a little bit too far, how the media - this is maybe a harsh word - pitied itself. [...] Also,

when comparing the situation to our colleagues' in other countries like Ukraine for example. We are still quite lucky here, although the basic atmosphere towards journalists has become a lot more aggressive, this is definitely true. But it is not like that journalists couldn't go near those demonstrations because it was too dangerous, this is not the case."

The situations that Carsten Thureau recounted are pointing in a quite different direction. The ZDF journalist is emphasizing the consequences of being constantly verbally attacked and physically threatened at rallies. He also elaborates on the severe psychological impact this harassment has:

"The most common thing are verbal attacks, meaning insults, threats and harassment. We are frequently insulted and threatened at shootings for our programs. It was said they will chase us out of the country with Kalashnikovs, things that are not just an insult but a threat. When a PEGIDA demonstration is passing you, you get touched and pushed, they try to block the view of your camera with their flags or to get hold of them. Colleagues of mine experienced such things also at AfD demonstrations. If we shoot footage with our camera at a PEGIDA demonstration for just three minutes, there is almost nobody silently passing without insulting us in one way or another. If you look into their faces, you can see the deep hatred. At the beginning I always tried to remain calm, but it is getting harder and harder. It is difficult because I also want answers and to tell the people how it feels to be constantly insulted. You don't want to stand there like a little lamb for the people to abuse without any reaction. This is extremely difficult for me; I have to control my emotions in order to prevent these situations from escalating. There are also of course 'nice' moments when you are able to discuss with the people. Although you won't be able to convince anybody, you can listen to what motivates them and often they speak very openly about it. This is actually the purpose of journalism, to capture the opinion of these people in order to report about them. Our strategy was trying to get interviews when the people were

gathering before the events had started. As soon as the people are agitated and adrenalized it simply doesn't make sense anymore"

The East Germany correspondent reports a similar range of hostilities and attacks but also puts the quality and frequency of such attacks in perspective:

"There is a very broad spectrum. Everybody was at least met with silent hostility or suspicion, the majority was also verbally attacked in some way and a minority experienced physical attacks. Sometimes a journalist just gets constantly poked in order to annoy him, sometimes they get pushed and sometimes somebody also throws a punch. However, the more severe the attacks are, the fewer of them occur. I don't want to trivialize it but it's just also not the case that we all got beaten up here."

Also Ulrich Wolf doesn't want to overestimate the situation at PEGIDA demonstrations. He sets it in contrast to rural areas of Saxony, in which more extreme groups operate:

"Some incidences have been made bigger than they are, also by the media. I personally don't think that PEGIDA demonstrations are that unpleasant or threatening. In more rural areas, this is however different. At PEGIDA it is mostly the Dynamo Dresden hooligans, who are hired as security personnel and have no motivation to deescalate when some agitated pensioner attacks you, together with three others. In rural areas, where more radical groups like the NPD are still very apparent, it is worse. [...] I experienced this myself, when working in places like Heidenau or Chemnitz-Einsiedel."

Stefan Schölermann names a similar range of attacks and hostilities like his fellow interviewees and considers the extent of the threat as to requiring specific preparations and security measures:

"The range of incidence begins with verbal abuse, threatening behavior, spitting and throwing objects and ends with attacks on technical equipment, physical attacks and actual beatings, situations in which the police has to intervene. Every journalist is well advised to be perceptive to

threads, to consider the distance to protesters, and police respectively, at any time. Normally nobody talks about security measures, however, this perceptiveness is absolutely necessary.”

Also Stefan Raue would classify the attacks and hostilities along the aforementioned spectrum. In addition, he names concrete examples and describes the effects on journalists in more drastic terms:

“The spectrum of threats is relatively broad. It indeed goes up to physical attacks, beatings, material damage. Amongst others, a MDR radio journalist and camera crew were affected. In addition, there is consistent verbal aggression and abuse, for example via threatening mails, including death threats. Especially worrisome is, that at some AfD and Pegida events, journalists are singled out and named publicly. This creates an atmosphere in which the journalists are downright mobbed by the thousand people who follow the organizations’ appeal. For the reporter, covering the event on the ground, this is an extremely difficult experience. You have to be very experienced and hard-boiled in order to remain a distant, factual view on the issue.”

Q4: In your experience, is there a connection between these incidences and the ‘lying press’ – narrative as spread by the political far-right movement in Germany?

This question tries to shed light if and how the media aversion is purposefully spread and repeated by associated groups, e.g. PEGIDA and other organizations associated with the ‘New Right’. It is to distinguish between a specific critique or aversion against the media, e.g. against a single journalist, newspaper or article, and a generalized critique that serves as an umbrella in order to subsume different kinds of diffuse forms of distrust. Consequently, responses to this question can contribute to clarifying the extent to which the media aversion, and also attacks and hostilities in this regard, builds on the intention by the described organizations to discredit the media.

Stefan Locke wouldn't go as far as to call 'lying press'- narrative as the all defining element behind the media aversion. Still, he shows himself surprised by how wide-spread this conspiracy theory, even among educated people, is:

“I wouldn't say that it is the central element of all those reactions, but it is one of the main allegations that we receive. Even well-educated people believe that we are not free in our reporting in Germany. So maybe in that sense it is the central element, but I wouldn't say that the direct allegation of the press actually lying is central. It is more the allegation that somebody is directing the media, that there is something in the background pulling the strings, and it is really remarkable how many people believe that.”

In contrast, for Carsten Thureau, the 'lying press'- narrative is indeed the central element of the media aversion. He also believes, that public broadcasters like the ZDF are even more in the cross lines in this regard:

“Yes, of course, that is the central allegation. It is the theory that we, but also other media, are the media tool of the chancellor. This is an accusation against public broadcasting that is naturally the core of this critique. [...] There are conspiracy theories that the ARD and the ZDF receive orders from the government via secret communication. Also, that we intentionally leave out certain aspects, falsify numbers and commit other similar manipulations. There is also a lot of hostility against teams from other media like RTL or NTV, but in our case this frustration and suspicion is also linked to the fees that people have to pay for the public broadcast. It enforces the anger, if the people have the impression they even have to pay for a directed media that is lying to them. It is interesting, the extensive and diverse offer of information, by us and many other media, doesn't reach the people. Facebook and other internet sources seem to be the preferred way of acquiring information now. [...] I have the feeling that the East is a bit more receptive for this narrative, also because many of the people grew up with an actually directed press and think history repeats itself at the moment.”

Also for the East Germany correspondent, the narrative is a central element. Furthermore, the correspondent emphasizes that the all-encompassing concept is indeed very attractive to people, and therefore, easily spread:

“It is very much a central element, yes. Also, there is no ‘in dubio pro applied in that accusation, it is impossible to rebut. For example, in parts I disclosed the process of my research for people who accused me in this sense. However, that doesn’t help. It’s such a nice, confused idea, *especially* because it is so hard to refute, and this makes the theory that we are all directed in some way attractive. [...] There is to some extent an atmosphere of a distrust, recognizable even in the circle of friends, which is different from a healthy skepticism towards media coverage which everybody should apply. It is more the idea of, look, those journalists, way too long, allied with other elites, getting nicely along with each other - but now there is the time to fight back. “

A completely different take on the subject, has Ulrich Wolf. For him, this generalizing ‘lying-press’-allegation is irrelevant. He much more emphasizes the targeted attacks or threats against specific journalists as the core of the problem:

“I find threats and insults that target the psychology of a person much more troublesome. I am at the forefront in this regard, because I researched the organization team so thoroughly, including their lives before PEGIDA, their biographies and their leisure time activities. [...] I find it much worse if I find a little note in my personal mailbox, saying: ‘We know where your little daughter goes to elementary school’. [...] My older daughter was affected by the events of new year’s eve 2015¹⁹⁷, not in Cologne but in Hamburg, and we notified the police which PEGIDA found out somehow. They posted online: ‘That is the journalist who sacrifices his daughter on

¹⁹⁷ See for more information: <http://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2016-01/koeln-silvester-sexuelle-uebergriffe-raub-faq>

the shrine of the multicultural society', accompanied by 500 hate comments."

Stefan Schölermann explains that the 'lying press'-narrative used to be a central element in the media aversion of right-wing extremist groups but is becoming more and more popular in other social classes as well. He doesn't suggest a targeted spreading of the narrative, but bases this development on a psychological effect:

"These allegations, that we do not control our work, that we are following orders, that there are clear directives, these prejudices are coming frequently from the extreme right scene, and nowadays also from other circles. However, this is merely an effort to justify and defend one's own perception of reality against the reality as depicted by quality journalism, which is based on thorough, precise research. [...] Consequently, if one doesn't share the reception of reporting, he or she can claim that it's not a perception at all, but directed on orders from others. This is not just a narrative but an ideology that leads certain versions of reality to be pushed aside."

Also Stefan Raue offers an explanation for why the concept is so attractive and central in the allegations against the press. For him, it has to do with a common misunderstanding of journalism as a craft:

"Concerning the accusation of being directed, I want to start by saying that I usually attend every civil or political event I get invited to, as long it is not extremists. And at these events, the first accusation is that we are assessing a whole variety of facts wrong. Then you answer, that the work is based on thorough and precise research and because also other media are doing it this way, a majority of them will come to similar conclusions. This is exactly the moment, when the accusation turns from being wrong into being directed. This theory has the purpose of explaining why so many, independent media arrive at very similar conclusions as opposed to how the person itself perceives reality. As nobody is able to provide

evidence, the justification is that every news channel starts with the same headline and has the same style of reporting. The fact, that our profession has something to do with methods, with competence, that it is a craft, this isn't well-understood by many."

Regarding the special status of the MDR as public broadcaster but also regional medium, Mr. Raue reported the phenomenon that 'there is, on the one hand, a peak in insults and threats against our journalists but also the print media. On the other hand, however, there is also a peak in affirmation and appreciation for our programs, for our information offer, for our news and political programs, that we haven't experienced either in the last years.'

5.1.2 Analysis 1-4

Within this sub-section of 'Nature, Frequency and Magnitude of Attacks, Threats and Insults against Journalists in Germany', Question 1 & 3 concern the hard aspects, so to speak, in terms of the incidences that are occurring. Question 2 & 4 are dedicated to classify the motivation behind the incidences and clarify on the perceived relation to the rise of right-wing populism as portrayed in the background part.

Regarding Question 1, the journalists that have been interviewed, unanimously stated to have recognized more verbal and physical attacks in the last two years. However, Stefan Schölermann and Stefan Raue reminded, that the phenomenon as such is far from being a new one. Schölermann emphasized the threat at events of right-wing extremists which already existed before and seems to now have entered a bigger stage at PEGIDA demonstrations. Raue highlighted the difference between verbal attacks and physical attacks, with verbal attacks having played a role on other occasions as well. A similar answer gave the East Germany correspondent, who furthermore sees the physical attacks perpetrated by a small and confined group of people as opposed to a general rise. This regional aspect of PEGIDA plays a role in all answers given by the journalists, which suggest a strong regional physical outbreak of a more general development in which verbal harassment of journalists becomes more and more socially accepted. Although only Stefan Raue directly addressed the easing of the situation in the last 6 months, there

are frequent mentioning of situations at times when PEGIDA still brought up to 20,000 people on the streets. Considering all this, it seems fair to summarize that, according to the interviewees, there has been a rise in such incidences, that build up on existing, mostly regional, phenomena which entered a broader public stage and were multiplied accordingly. Whether or not this is a continuing development didn't become clear only considering the answers given, however, in regard to physical attacks, the development might have peaked together with the numbers of participants at certain demonstrations a few months ago.

The chronological correlation between the rise of right-wing populism and the perceived rise of reported attacks were the initial motivation for Question 2. Except of Carsten Thureau, none of the journalists clearly identifies a causal link between the two developments. However, every of the interviewees speaks of a majority of attacks and verbal abuse to be motivated either by the media coverage on PEGIDA or on the refugee crisis, topics which are very sensitive to the political right. Still, all interviewees notice also a rise in media aversion and consequent acts, in other societal and political groups, respectively, stating that such media aversion already existed. In particular, the answers of Stefan Schölermann, Ulrich Wolf and the East Germany correspondent are enlightening in this regard, as they, in similar tones, describe the media aversion as targeting journalism as a symbol for the actual concept of the enemy, which is the political system. The aversion is consequently describe as originating in a frustration, which is politically whether right nor left. In summary, the answers of the interviewees do not suffice to establish a clear, causal link between the rise of right-wing populism and media averse opinions and acts. It is only possible to establish that attacks occurring in the surroundings of far-right demonstrations are the most physically visible manifestation of a broader societal mind set.

The analysis for Question 3, on the nature of attacks and hostilities, can be summarized quite quickly. The journalists described the range of incidences in the physical world very similar. The range starts with an aggressive atmosphere and silent hostility and goes over from insulting and threatening slurs up until physical attacks that include pushing and material damage but also, in severe cases, beatings. The answer of the East German

correspondent seems to be exemplary regarding the frequency, in saying that the more severe the cases are the fewer of them occur. In the digital world, the incidences are mostly cases of hate speech, but also include threats to journalists and their family and the publishing of personal information, combined with threats. Regarding the quality of the attacks and hostilities, the answers of the journalists were not conclusive. While the East Germany correspondent, Stefan Locke and Ulrich Wolf warn of overestimating the quality of the attacks, the other three interviewees emphasize the severe consequences of the incidents.

The predominance of the ‘lying press’ – narrative in the hostilities is subject of the analysis regarding Question 4. Except of Ulrich Wolf, who didn’t really address the issue but focus on, in his opinion, more severe accusations and insults, all interviewees confirmed that the ‘lying press’ – narrative, meaning that the media is actually controlled to some extent by a larger power, is indeed the central element of media aversion as reflected in the interaction with citizens. Concerning the reason for the widespread affiliation to this concept, varied between the interviewees from the all-explaining nature of the concept, to a lack of understanding of journalistic method and craft, until the specific nature of communication in social media. Hence, there is not *the* final explanation for the phenomenon offered by the journalists.

5.2 Perceived and Actual Impediments to Journalistic Work and the Freedom of Expression

5.2.1 Responses to Questions 5-7

Q5: How do the journalists themselves perceive the distrust in their credibility and neutrality?

This question aims at clarifying the extent to which journalists perceive the underlying reasoning for attacks and hostilities, meaning the distrust in neutrality and credibility, as justified. This is done, not to clarify in which situation an attack on a journalist would be justified, but for the journalists to assess if a lack in accountability and professionalism

has attributed to an atmosphere in which attacks occur. There are indeed also obligations to the press from a human rights perspective, e.g. the prohibition of propaganda for war or hate speech, as mentioned in the background part. Responses to this question are an indication for how journalists perceive a more general, societal distrust, as also suggested by studies above.

Stefan Locke views this aspect as an actually positive outcome of the public debate regarding the use of the ‘lying press’ – narrative, as the media would be forced to work even more precise and multi-dimensional. However, he excludes any criminal behavior from his consideration:

“We have always been in the position of writing about others and judge others. It was very surprising for a lot of journalists to be suddenly attacked and criticized themselves. So if there is a good thing about this whole issue, it is that the media now maybe also questions itself and reflects on how it is working, if what it does is justified and correct. And that has really led a lot of colleagues to think about their profession, and I think it also led to better journalism, in the sense that the reports were not that one-dimensional anymore, as they indeed had been for a while. There is definitely more coverage from all angles now. I wouldn’t say that it was completely one-dimensional but when you look at the AfD for example, and it’s still that way, the coverage is certainly tendentious. There has to be some verbal disarmament and a more relaxed approach, but of course only as long as their affiliates act according to the law. Otherwise you have to act immediately, that’s obvious.”

Carsten Thureau wouldn’t confirm that the general distrust in the media is as common as often portrayed but admits that the attitude towards journalist has changed. Similar to Locke, he sees it as motivation to follow the ethical and professional rules even more strictly:

“I make contradicting experiences. A lot of people, not only in my personal surrounding, view the heute journal for example as a very credible source.

A lot of people also tune in ARD and ZDF in times of crisis because they feel well informed. [...] However, something definitely changed in the attitude towards the press and for us, it carries the responsibility to be even more meticulous in our work. It motivates to do the research and reporting even more accurately, following a clear and strict professional ethics. It is necessary to apply these ethics consistently and to deal openly with mistakes. It is essential as a reaction to the distrust, to be transparent and to explain our working methods more precisely. However, we should also not lose our confidence.”

The East Germany correspondent also doesn't want to overestimate the extent of distrust but feels encouraged to adjust his working methods as well. In particular, the allegation of lacking neutrality isn't a completely unreasonable for the correspondent:

“It think it exists. However, you also have to be a bit careful to not only consider those who have this distrust and express it but also the thousands who have subscriptions to newspaper and don't do that. Still, I think there is more distrust. I also believe it is legitimate and good to have certain degree of distrust because the journalistic rule of not making cause with anything, even if it is a good cause, this rule was broken quite some times. There are journalists who are also activists and also those who take pride in belonging to the inner circles of politicians' periphery. In some parts, the distrust is justified. But again, there are things that are not justified and simply irritate me. In the past, I didn't consider it to be necessary to explain my work methods. I changed my mind in this regard and I try the best I can to do my part in demystifying these theories, at least in my personal surrounding.”

Like Locke, Ulrich Wolf calls it a positive aspect of the development that journalists started discussing and elaborating on where the distrust and hostility against the media is coming from. He also identified a lack of understanding for the working methods as a key element:

“The allegation of a lack in credibility and neutrality of the media, is indeed not a new one. In Saxony it escalated because PEGIDA became a subject of national and international media coverage. [...] The positive aspect of the discussion is, that we, particularly in the Dresden region, started to question ourselves. There have been discussions about this issue, where reporters, correspondents of the big newspapers as well as bloggers and TV journalist exchanged their ideas. PEGIDA managed to make ourselves question whether or not we’re doing anything wrong, and if so, what it is. We also exchanged thoughts with PEGIDA-affiliated citizens and realized that there is little understanding on how media works. Also that, apart from the public broadcasters, media are products and people can freely choose which to purchase, isn’t understood very well.”

In contrast, Stefan Schölermann is of the opinion that journalists shouldn’t question themselves too much in regard to the ‘lying press’- accusation. Although mistakes have to be handled professionally, he refrains from assessing a real justification for the distrust:

“I can’t speak for the majority of journalists but only for myself. There is no agreement on how to deal with this. I, as very experienced in the media industry, worry that journalists might take the accusation as ‘lying press’ too seriously in respect of being even more thorough and cautious. Mistakes are always made, it’s human. Decisive is how you deal with mistakes, that you are transparent and take responsibility. Of course, you always have to work on improving the quality, but I don’t see any reason, to view this allegation as the sword of Damocles, and to lose the courage to take a stand. Facts are facts, whether people claim the reporting to be directed or not.”

In the opposite, Stefan Raue clearly distinguishes between the allegation the media would be outright controlled by the government and the mere claim that media and political sphere are too much interwoven. In addition, also he states that reflection on own mistakes is vital:

“Apart from [the ‘lying press’-narrative], I want to avoid at any cost to call the allegation absurd, that some media are too close to the political sphere or political parties. This has also to do with the fact, that the media have a unique position within a society. We are, so to speak, contemporary, critical observers, in a way positioned a bit outside society. We are investigating the nuisances in every social and political class regardless of any hierarchy. The question is, do we, because of that, just have to live with the fact that actually nobody really likes us. The other question is, something I also discuss with my colleagues and supervisors, did we choose to make it ourselves too easy? Did we enjoy it too much, being in the surrounding of the powerful? Not in relation to a specific party or politician, but did we overestimate our significance because we are so close to the powerful? Does it damage our reputation when we are on pictures with top politicians at receptions organized by the press? Doesn’t it lead to the impression that we are in cahoots with each other? Did we perceive ourselves too much as political actors? Do we make proposals and suggestions that we are not entitled to make? At the end of the red-green government, for example, there was a certain mainstream within the media to work towards the end of this political experiment. I think the debate on our relation with the political sphere provides us with important, thought-provoking ideas for us to reflect upon.”

Q6: In what way are the hostilities against journalists influencing their work? Are there actual impediments to their work and if so, which ones?

This question has a clear human rights perspective. It aims to clarify if there is an interference with their right to free expression, regardless if any interference would then also constitute a violation. It is a measure to identify facts on which a case concerning a possible interference could be based upon. Such impediments to the work of journalists

could be, for example, that journalists are prevented from accessing public events or are threatened to an extent which prevents specific articles to be published.

Stefan Locke answered this question in large parts already in relation to Question 1. He makes the case for a less dramatic assessment of the practical effects on journalists:

“I personally didn’t experience anything like that but I also have to say that I don’t appear like a journalist on first sight. The colleagues with cameras and microphones, they have reported more severe cases. But I also have to say that given the incredible amount of journalists covering PEGIDA here, only a very small amount was actually affected. [...] You have to keep in mind that although the basic atmosphere has become a lot more aggressive, compared to other professions –for example civil servants, nurses, the police or ticket inspectors in trains – in comparison to the hostilities that those people have to endure because somebody feels treated unjust, we as the press have it quite good actually.”

Carsten Thureau confirms practical impediments regarding his own work, but also in relation to the media strategy of PEGIDA, which seeks media attention but refuses to give interviews to the press:

“Well, not everybody is willing to take the risk of being targeted at PEGIDA demonstrations and I perceive it of course as an impediment of my capability to report when I get constantly insulted. If I get attacked, if I have to protect myself, if I can only report from outside the demonstration and not move freely, then this is a drastic impediment to my work. It is also important to note that this movement has managed to survive for a long time via the help of the media. They are of course yearning for being featured in the heute journal or the Tagesthemen as much as possible. And consequently, they continuously gave good reasons for us to observe AfD or PEGIDA demonstrations. At the same time, it is impossible to have an interview with Lutz Bachmann or the people who participate in rallies.”

The East Germany correspondent speaks of rather mild restrictions on his work, such kind that can be circumvented by easy measures. The restrictions are not inevitable, according to the correspondent, which would mean that one can't speak of an actual interference with press freedom:

“Sure, there are people who don't want to go there anymore, so maybe some articles were never written in first place. Regarding myself, I stopped taking notes in a notebook because if you get seen, you are a light bulb with all moths around you. Some people will immediately start harassing you. I am using my smartphone because everybody is constantly staring at their phones anyway. This is the practical impediment to my work personally. Also my girlfriend is more worried, however I would never arrive at the conclusion of not going there anymore. That will be the day, when it is impossible to go to a public place and do my work as a journalist!”

If there are practical impediments to the work of journalist, is for Ulrich Wolf a question that has to be answered on an individual level. Wolf, who, in this sense, chooses not to experience such an impediment, refers to the specific personal situation, including the involvement of a journalist's family:

“I can imagine that there are journalists who are afraid. There are, like with any aspect of life, more anxious and less anxious types of people. However, the constant critique below the belt does leave its mark. And you ask yourself why you are enduring all this. [...] Maybe there are colleagues who choose to not write an article then. But there are also colleagues, and I consider myself one of them, who just accept the problems associated with it. It is part of the job to cope with that. However, there is of course a limit. If threats are directed to my family, I also begin to wonder if I rather take it down a notch to not get my family involved even more or if still do it in order to not appear intimidated.”

Stefan Schölermann believes that there are no general impediments neither but offers a different explanation for this is a matter depending on circumstances. For him, it is related to size of medium the respective journalist is working for:

“Well, that depends on the attitude towards risk. In general, I would say ‘no’. There is definitely no structural, systematic impediment to the work of journalists. Another aspect, however, is the size of the respective medium. Somebody, like me, who works for a large TV station, has of course also have the corresponding protection in every shape or form. We have a constantly available legal department, there is a certain market power, a certain respect for the size of the station, there is certain anonymity to which one can retreat. Colleagues how work in regions in which certain phenomena are much more obvious than in major cities, local newspapers for example that have to deal with this issues every day, are under a completely different level of pressure. I don’t think these colleagues are afraid to do their work, but in these circumstances it is necessary to develop strategies on how to deal with it.”

Stefan Raue, strictly speaking for the situation at the MDR, doesn’t see any impediments. This is, however, due to swift reaction of the MDR to the issue:

“No, however we are also prepared for threat scenarios. We only send journalists who volunteer, so if somebody says that it’s too risky, for example in regard to the family, then this is of course accepted. We only send people who are experienced enough to assess the level of threat and how to behave in these situations.”

He further elaborated on these measures, which is thematically more suitable to portray within the answer to Question 7.

Q7: How do journalists, or publishers respectively, react to such incidences?

The reactions of journalists, publishers as well as TV and Radio stations, be it legal, practical or journalistic reactions, provide information in regard to more than just one aspect. First, it is a further indication on how much the work of the press is interfered with, in the sense of requiring more or less drastic counter-measures. Second, concerning legal action, the responses allow to estimate in what form and on what scale journalists themselves trigger criminal investigations on behalf of the state. This is an indicator for how much state activity is actually necessary in this regard in order to fulfill the obligation of access to justice. As a third aspect, the responses show how offensively the media raises awareness for the issue or, respectively, defends itself in the public debate.

Stefan Locke sees decisive, legal action only required in regard to physical attacks. Concerning hostilities, insults and critique, he believes it to better to react with good journalistic work instead of complaining:

“[W]hen there are violent attacks, there is nothing to contemplate about of course. There have charges to be pressed, so the people realize the boundaries. In terms of hostilities in general I think we try to react with a very objective coverage, with good journalism, asking ‘What happened? What has been said?’” and that is what I am reporting in the end. And if a comment is necessary then the facts are going to be interpreted. But it has to be independent from one’s own opinion, which is of course always difficult because everyone has one, but necessary because you have to put it aside a bit every day, and reflect on whether you portrayed people or situations the right way or in an unjust way.”

The ZDF provides support in every aspect possible, says Carsten Thureau. He emphasizes as the psychological support and practical preparation for high-risk situations as extremely positive:

“We have the full support of our legal counsels in relation to hate speech or defamation in the internet. We are able to call an emergency number to

make use of our attorneys. We are also receiving a lot of moral support on behalf of our chief editorial office. There are also, in my opinion, very useful seminars for affected colleagues, providing guidelines on the right course of action in such situations and helping to deal with the mental consequences of these incidents. For me, this is a particularly important aspect because it is just getting harder every day not to react to being insulted for 30 minutes straight. It is very good that the journalists are now being trained, prepared and receive guidelines on how to deal with that.”

Speaking on a general note, the East Germany correspondent states that journalists but also publishers react very differently, in particular in a legal sense. The correspondent’s employer rather applies restraint:

“That is varying, depending on the case. There are colleagues and also publishers who are very consistent in reporting every single incident. In our newspaper, we are more reluctant in this regard. I wouldn’t press charges just because some people are shouting slurs. I also don’t take the insults personally because I honestly don’t think they are directed at me as a person. So I usually don’t act upon that. However, this is how I and also my newspaper deals with it and there are a lot of varying approaches.”

Also Ulrich Wolf finds it better to restrain to the extent possible, referring to legal action as often very counter-productive:

“We are debating of course if we take legal action, however art. 5 of the German Basic Law is superior to the criminal code. [...] One has to decide if the effort of pressing charges is worth it in the end. These hostilities have the sole purpose of intimidating and one should consider very carefully, whether or not to allow being intimidated. Because, the more I act upon such hostilities with legal action, there more aggressive the situation gets. Sometimes, it is maybe better to remain cool and just cover other topics for a week or two.”

Stefan Schölermann emphasizes the support of the medium, which he also considers absolutely necessary in some cases. Like Wolf, he names a temporary retreat as the most effective measure:

“I am working as a journalist for many years, and I have much understanding for those who inform themselves on the level of threat. Some journalists are single out and pilloried by media of the far-right spectrum, with huge articles and photos. That isn’t easy to take, also because oneself as a person is in the crosslines and more and less directly threatened. The NDR shows full support and understanding for such case, and if there is somebody who would like to retreat for a while, can definitely do so. In general, there is good colleagueship, great solidarity and empathy.”

The MDR is, regarding the ones involved in this study, the medium with the most extensive set of measures, legally and practically speaking. Stefan Raue elaborates on security measures, workshops, psychological support and the legal counsel provided for the journalists:

“We [...] started to send employees that have a look on technical equipment and the the task to protect it. This is necessary because if there are thousands of people and some start to shake the broadcast van, sensitive equipment can be damaged which also constitutes a fire hazard. We employ security personnel in order to protect the equipment, and in particular circumstances, also to support the camera crew by watching their backs as they can’t just look around. [...] We already had a working group on right-wing extremism. This working group has been expanded and meets regularly with experts, with members of the police, with members of the office for the protection of the constitution, with legal experts, and inquires on recent developments. In such threatening situations, it is very important that experiences are shared quickly so that our directorate can react in a swift manner. This was the case in regard to our technical equipment and our communication with the police, for

example. We also have an internal supervision system in order to maintain constant communication between the chief editorial office and the reporters on the ground, also to clarify in which way we can offer support to them. Then, there is legal counsel in order to assess which incidences should be reported to the police and which ones should be ignored. The policy of our legal counsel, and also my own, is to of course provide full legal protection but at the same time not to force anybody to press charges. There cases of both types, there are some who prefer to ignore incidences but also some, especially those affected by more severe incidents like beatings, who choose to report to the police. All our employees are experienced grown-ups and can very well decide for themselves on how to react. Naturally, we support and protect our journalists by all means, however only an individual person can press charges and start a criminal investigation anyway.”

5.2.2 Analysis 5-7

The analysis for this section covers three issues associated with the second research question, on how the development as described in the first thematic field impacts the work of journalists and to which reactions it leads. Question 5 is dedicated to assess, how much the journalists are influenced by the media critique, aversion and distrust, based on their own impressions. The purpose of Question 6 is to estimate the extent of the direct, practical impediments, meaning, for example, the inaccessibility of public spaces or the inability to cover topics due to personal threats. Finally, answers to Question 7 should give an indication on responses to these impediments on the behalf of the journalists and publishers, respectively.

Regardless whether this sort of influence constitutes an impediment in the sense of the word or if it has rather to be placed within the answers to Question 7, all journalists, except of Stefan Schölermann, reacted the same way to Question 5. The distrust, critique and accusations do have a positive influence on their work. While Schölermann appealed

to the confidence of journalists, not to be intimidated by the critique, the rest of the interviewed journalists unanimously called the distrust a motivation to work even more thorough, precise and according to an ethical and professional code of conduct. This clearly suggest that the journalists reflect very much on possible mistakes and shortcomings that contributed to the increasing distrust in the media.

Answers to Question 6, on the other hand, have been very much diverse. Carsten Thureau and the East Germany correspondent named concrete impediments as not being able to move freely at demonstrations and the precaution to not appear as journalists on first sight, respectively. However, these practical impediments seem to be associated very much with the specific circumstances. As Schölermann and Raue explained on their own situation as journalists of large public broadcasters, the extent to which the practical work is restricted is partially based on the power, size and resourcefulness of the respective medium. Another aspect is, according to the rest, the very individual handling of risk, meaning that the effectivity of an impediments depends on the person affected.

Regarding Question 7, there is a decisive gap between the journalists working for public broadcasters and those working for private media, in this case newspapers. While Carsten Thureau, Stefan Schölermann and Stefan Raue were able to name a whole variety of measures undertaken by their employers, the journalists of private media confirmed the support of their newspapers and discussions within the editorial office, but highlighted that every individual journalist would have decide on a reaction him- or herself. Similar to the impediments, the reaction of a media is very much based on the status of the publisher or broadcaster and the respective resources at hand. Concerning a strategy in a legal sense, the interviewees similarly saw it as something best to be decided individually, as an offensive but also a defensive approach have specific consequences. In summary, it can be said that the reaction of the media is very much context-dependent, but increase along the possibilities of a certain medium

5.3 Response of the state towards attacks, threats and harassment against journalist in Germany

5.3.1 Responses to Questions 8-9

Q8: Are these incidences to be classified as crimes or have they reached an extent in which press freedom in Germany isn't secured anymore, as special interest groups suggested?

This is the direct question to journalists to assess whether or not press freedom, and, consequently, the human right to free expression is interfered with. More specific, it is to clarify if the attacks on journalists, whether physically or verbally, constitute mere crimes or outright affect press freedom in Germany. Should the answers suggest, that the media isn't able to freely conduct its work because of the actions of a third party, it would trigger the state's positive obligation to safeguard, guarantee and protect this human right. Should the answers be in the negative, it would mean that state action, in addition to normal criminal investigation and due judicial process, wasn't necessary. Therefore, the answers to these questions shall have highest consideration in the conclusion on the articulated research questions.

Stefan Locke views the attacks as both criminal acts and an attack on press freedom. However, rather than painting a drastic picture, he finds a reason to discuss formerly self-evident values:

“Well, both of course. If it is criminally viable, it has to be prosecuted. However, of course it is also an attack on press freedom when free reporting isn't warranted anymore. You realize that certain fundamental rights that have been self-evident for a long time, are not so self-evident anymore. Naturally, you have to try to enforce these fundamental rights again. So you also shouldn't shy away. I don't find it very smart that public broadcasters are accompanied by private security at the demonstrations, that's too much, it's tax payer money and it also provokes the people. One has to find the right measures, but that is a development and you can't just act and react perfectly right away.”

Carsten Thureau answers the question in the negative. According to him, press freedom is not endangered in Germany. Although there are certain troublesome restrictions, he thinks it is still possible to freely report:

“I don’t think so. I believe we have to be very careful that it doesn’t develop into such a situation but I don’t think the press freedom as such is in danger in Germany. It would be that way if it were entirely impossible to report or if we were limited in what we can report. Press freedom is maybe not a self-evident virtue anymore but I don’t believe its threatened in its entirety. It is more a culmination of little things, for example when the press is excluded from AfD conventions and is maybe allowed to come in afterwards to ask some questions and take some pictures. In this handling of the media by a political party, I do see serious danger. We also have to communicate that clearly, that we can’t report properly on it because we were not allowed to enter. This is actually a scandal and it happened a couple of times now. However, I wouldn’t go that far and say that in Germany a fundamental right is in danger.”

The East Germany correspondent doesn’t believe press freedom is actually interfered with and under attack. The correspondent refrains from calls for legislative measures and suggest to solve issues in the concrete situation:

“I understand that point of view. However, I believe it to be a bit over the top because we are talking about a certain social dynamic in a very confined environment in which these incidents take place. Of course when a camera crew can’t go there anymore then it is an attack on press freedom, yes. But I don’t think that laws should be changed now or anything like that. These are problems that are to be solved locally and in the concrete situation. This includes for example a constructive dialogue with the police but not legislative measures. Again, the point of view is reasonable but it has to be addressed by concrete actions on the ground and not by general measures.”

Neither does Ulrich Wolf an attack on press freedom in Germany. He identifies rather a broader societal issue but also understands why some would classify it as an attack:

“In my opinion, this is not an attack on press freedom. It is an attack on the ‘living together’ in our society. It is an attack on our representative democracy, of which press freedom is of course an elemental part. In the eye of the attacker, an attack on a journalist is an attack on the political system with us being the most accessible member of that system. I find some things that are said in this regard to be very exaggerated, although it is the job of the lobbyists who make such statements. A real attack on press freedom is what is happening in Turkey, or already for a long time in Russia. We tend to an emotional exaggeration in Germany. For a long time, we lived in a kind of ‘cuddly democracy’ and this doesn’t exist anymore. Now is the time to take a stance and not to see press freedom in danger in such a hysterical manner. Of course, I was never beaten up, so it’s easy to say. There is of course a latent aggression from parts of the AfD and PEGIDA and we have to deal with it. But that is not the beginning of the end of press freedom in Germany. Those circles are simply not that powerful.”

Stefan Schölermann refers to other countries as well, urging journalists not overdramatize the situation. Also he recognizes that there are worrisome structural restrictions surrounding some organizations, these would however not interfere with the right to freely report and express opinions:

“The intention is very often to restrict press freedom, because those talking about a ‘lying press’ don’t have any interest in free reporting. Insofar, yes. However, we are not in a situation in which free reporting isn’t possible anymore. In regard to the NDR, I have no knowledge of any attempts to restrict free reporting. Journalists should be cautious in victimizing themselves. We live in a very free country, colleagues in other countries have to with restrictions on a whole different level. In comparison, we are in a very lucky situation. I don’t see any actual restriction of press freedom

in practice. [...] Of course press freedom is endangered when parties and civil movements exclude us from the gatherings and say: “You are not allowed to report and form an opinion!”. That is a restriction of press freedom! However, that is a structural issue. It is not the case that journalists in Germany are prevented from expressing their opinion or present the results of their research.”

Finally, also Stefan Raue demonstrates sympathy for the calls of special interest group but doesn't want exaggerate the issue. Also according to him, free reporting is very much possible in Germany, particularly in comparison to other countries:

“I have a lot of understanding for the DJV and the BDVZ to discuss this aspect. However, it would be wrong to push this debate too far and say that press freedom is strongly restricted in Germany. We are still able to report freely. Everybody with an understanding of the situation in Turkey, or Poland, knows how a truly restricted press looks like. In Germany, this is absolutely not the case. The problem is, that a permanent aggression and hostility towards representatives of the media mean certain restrictions to reporters. However, we have covered Pegida for months in such an intense way, exactly because we were targeted by them. We could have covered a lot more and different topics, if we weren't blocked by this constant pseudo civil war that was proclaimed. That is of course restriction, but such kind, that we have to be able to handle as professionals. Such a situation bears its dangers and reporting would be different if there weren't such threats and attacks, that is correct. That's why I understand when special interest groups try to politicize the issue and to raise awareness. I find that justified and it's also their job. However, we shouldn't pretend that free reporting was impossible in Germany, there are much more severe cases around the world.”

Q9: Do you think the state, as responsible for protecting and guaranteeing press freedom, fulfills its obligations? If not, which response by the state would you deem adequate?

Finally, the last question tackles the main research question of this paper. Does the state, ultimately responsible for protection of the human right to free expression, appropriate act according to its positive obligations under the national and international human rights standards as described in the very beginning. Clearly, in a human rights case in front of a court, the ECtHR for example, it would be judges to assess whether or not the state actions have been appropriate and not those affected, in this case the journalists. However, should those affected deem the actions by the state appropriate, it would be a very strong indication for this issue not being one of a possible human rights violation on behalf of the state. Contrary opinions in this regard naturally can't serve as a proof of human rights violation but would suggest that the issue has to be discussed in this way.

Stefan Locke clearly sees the state fulfilling its obligations. Apart from isolated cases due to concrete circumstances, the police do a good job in protecting journalists:

“There is certainly room to improve but I also don't envy the police for their job. They have to keep the two sides [PEGIDA and counter-protesters] apart from each other, and then also would have to make sure that somebody can freely place his camera somewhere. That is not such a simple task in the concrete circumstances. I would say 95% of the time, the security of journalists is warranted and they are provided with reasonable working conditions. It is just also a matter of perspective, if it happened two times to you then it is of course already too much. For example, when the police block the entrance to an area or blocks the objective of your camera. These things happen in the heat of the moment and yes, maybe the police are not always 100% neutral. However, I would say that in general the state lives up to its obligation to protect press freedom and the security of journalists.”

Carsten Thureau assess a grave deficit in the protection of journalists and a certain lack of neutrality. However, he also realizes that required measures would be counter-productive, as personal police protection would actually signify the end of press freedom:

“It is a fundamental right to demonstrate as well and also that demonstrations are protected even if it is PEGIDA and alike. But one should also question why there is such inappropriate ferocity in the police action against counter-demonstrators for example. It is also questionable that PEGIDA in Dresden is always allowed to use the nicest streets and places for its demonstrations. I think this could be handled differently, like it is done in other cities like Leipzig. The minister for economy here in Saxony said once: “The police here is in large parts PEGIDA” and you have to admit that also the police resembles the society which is just noticeable in some situations. However, I don’t want to generalize, not at all. I expect the police to protect me, but again, I want to be able to do my work without specific protection. It would be the beginning of the end of press freedom in Germany if I was required to hire security personnel or demand police protection in order to be able to do my work. In the end, I don’t see any way how the police could protect press freedom at demonstrations better without applying counter-productive measures.”

Neither does the East Germany correspondent see much aspects that could have been handled better. The correspondent rather wishes for societal debate on respect in human interaction than strong statements or measures by the government:

“It is just that I am missing a concrete, practical idea of handling the matter differently. It is discussed as a fundamental rights issue, what else should be done for us? We are talking about a loss in authority, which I believe can’t be solved when one authority, the media, is protected by another authority, the government. That just might not work in this context. I rather wish for a more peaceful atmosphere, for a society that discusses and

argues with a minimum of respect. That would be my objective. Regarding the question of how to get there, I think we are rather talking about upbringing, education, culture than about laws or clear statements by the chancellor. That's why I don't want to pinpoint my critique in the political realm. [...] I do believe that the police have to be sensitized more on who they have to protect and on doing their job regardless of personal opinions and convictions. There is a big majority of policemen and policewomen who are doing a great job but I also feel a lack of understanding for the protection needs of journalists sometimes.”

For the particular case in Dresden, Ulrich Wolf assesses major shortcomings of the police and questions their neutrality with detailed examples. However, he also notices that the police have significantly improved in this regard and in general fulfill their duties to the extent possible:

“The police are also just humans and a resemblance of the regional society. How intense the affiliation to PEGIDA is, I can't tell exactly but I think it exists. After we pressed charges concerning my older daughter, it was demonstrated that there are contacts between the police and PEGIDA. [...] I find it remarkable, however, that at PEGIDA's best time, the police always positioned themselves with their backs towards PEGIDA and face towards the counter-protests. [...] It is also remarkable that PEGIDA usually applauds and praises the police and tries to tear them on their side. However, we are now just talking about Dresden, in Leipzig for example, we have police president who has a very clear stance on PEGIDA. In general, I have the strong feeling that there has been a change in the police this year. There are more criminal investigations and trials and the police shows off its power towards radical far-right groups. There is also a higher success rate in finding those responsible for attacks on refugee shelters. There has been a change within the police, also due to the pressure by the media, to clearly name attacks on our democracy as such and strictly react to these attacks.”

Stefan Schölermann also focuses on the role of the police and recognizes a similar change within police culture. According to Mr. Schölermann, the relation is consistently improving and sees problems only occurring in concrete situations:

“[M]y concrete experiences with the police have been improving over the years. The appreciation for the role of free reporting, in relation to the extreme right and those at margins like PEGIDA, is much higher. The relation between journalists and the police is dynamic, in my opinion. What goes around, comes around. It is poor to say the police would restrict free reporting because it prioritizes harm reduction or because the reporting is against their interest. Maybe in isolated cases, but then it is about single persons. It is definitely not a general issue and there have been massive improvements in the last years. The police culture has changed, the way how journalists approach the police has changed and there is recognition for the different roles that media and police play in a society. The police can be the subject of media coverage as much as journalists can become involved in criminal investigations. There is, of course, still conflicts that have to be addressed and discussed. However, I don’t see any general issue in that.”

Stefan Raue vocally defends the police against allegations of inappropriate conduct. He appeals to the self-responsibility of journalists and to react more relaxed to the isolated cases in which there have been problems:

“Also in this regard, I would advise a more relaxed approach. These situations are also extremely stressful for the police. It is not their purpose at demonstrations to ensure a perfect working environment for the press, but to maintain order and also protect the demonstration as such. I don’t think that journalists have to have a privileged status in their relation to the police. We are responsible for ourselves just as the police has to set its priorities. I can’t demand from the police to come running in full strength, just because I was insulted or harassed. We as journalists also have to know our limits and recognize our self-responsibility. However, it needed a

learning process. At the beginning, it seemed that the police had underestimated the aggression towards journalists when planning their operational strategy. Now, the sensitivity for the issue has risen and there have been talks between the media and the police on how to improve the situation. [...] In regard to violent cases, there are some in which the police could identify perpetrators, and others in which the perpetrators managed to get away without the police investigating further. Still, to say the police would fail in protecting journalists is simply not true. They have a very difficult job and we can't expect to be permanently guarded by 3-4 police officers. You also have to realize that the police were in a 'state of emergency', so to speak, with the weekly demonstrations and football games every weekend. There is already a lot of potential for aggression. [...] This issue has to be addressed on case-by-case basis, and if there is a problem, the police should be notified and alerted. In my opinion, it shouldn't be portrayed as a major conflict."

5.3.2 Analysis 8-9

The analysis of this section resembles the core of the interview section. Question 8 and 9 are based on strict human rights perspective. Answers to Question 8 should contribute in assessing whether or not there is an actual interference with the human right to free expression in the eyes of the journalists, meaning a situation that requires the state to actively safeguard this human right. Answers to Question 9 shed light on how the state response is perceived by the journalists as either appropriate or inappropriate. A possible human rights violation on behalf of the German state can only be inferred, if there was clear agreement among the journalists interviewed, that Question 8 has to be answered with 'Yes, the development as an extent that harms free expression in Germany' and that Question 9 has to be answered with 'No, the state is not acting appropriately'.

Within Question 8, the only aspect that was described varyingly was the question, what an attack on press freedom means and what it means to assess press freedom as

endangered. While most of the journalists affirmed that we are witnessing an attack on press freedom and classified a physical attack on a journalist as also an attack on press freedom, not one of the journalist assess the situation as leaving press freedom questions, interfered with or actually endangered. The explanation for this was either the comparison to the situation in other countries or the lacking severity of interferences in Germany.

Similarly, while journalists in answering Question 9, discussed the issue of police neutrality and conduct in the concrete situation, not one of the journalists expressed a systematic, structural problem in the relation between journalists and the police. In addition, none of the journalists demanded further action of the state, as existing structural problems with the police have been described as improved. However, the police in Dresden is assessed more problematic, also due to demographic of the city, the police culture and the top-management of the police. This became very clear in the statements of Ulrich Wolf and Carsten Thureau, still, both of them assessed an improving situation rather than a deteriorating one.

In summary, the interviewed journalists do neither assess press freedom to be endangered nor do they believe that the state is acting inappropriately.

6. Conclusion

In order to articulate concluding remarks concerning the research questions posed in the beginning, the results of the portrayed inquiries by state and non-state actors as well as the result of the analysis of the interviews are combined and put in perspective. According to these results, the author identifies the following three conclusions:

I) There is a rise in attacks, insults and threats against journalists Germany, particularly in state of Saxony.

The inquiries undertaken by civil society actors demonstrate a clear rise in attacks, insults and threats against journalists. The reports published by the Reporters without Borders and the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom in Leipzig recount incidences in detail and assess the situation as being interlinked with rise of right-wing populist groups

such as PEGIDA. However, both reports work with absolute numbers which emphasizes the severity of isolated cases but not necessarily allow for an assessment of the general situation.

Special interest groups such as the DJV and BDZV are serving as the lobbying organization for journalists and publishers, respectively. These organizations also voiced their concern about the development towards more attacks and hostilities and demanded appropriate action. The quality of the attacks is being described in a more drastic tone than in the case of the NGO's.

Inquiries on behalf of the state do simply not exist. Within the government and the relevant institutions like the police and the Ministry of Justice, there are no statistics on crimes related to the profession of the victim. The German parliament felt the need to be informed by experts on this issue, however, apart from political statements of single politicians, there haven't been any proposals for measures regarding the issue. This is an indicator for an existing awareness of a worrisome development but also for the fact, that the German government doesn't see any reason to act upon it.

The journalists who were interviewed in relation to this study, unanimously confirmed a rise in such incidences. Although there were different explanations regarding the origin and cause of the development, there was agreement on an increasingly aggressive atmosphere towards journalists, which the interviewees described along examples of such incidences. The quality of attacks was assessed differently by each of the interviewees, in general however, the journalists refrained from using drastic terms.

II) There are no systematic, practical impediments to the work of journalists.

Neither the NGOs nor the special interest groups did report on a systematic interference with press freedom in Germany. Their reports and statements rather highlighted the rise in attacks as an effort to document the incidences and raise awareness for the issue. Hence, their contributions do not really provide for an assessment in this regard. Naturally, this also counts for state as, again, no inquiries have been undertaken.

Consequently, it is up to the interviewed journalists to shed light on that matter. Several journalists name specific restrictions and affirm, that, depending on the circumstances, some of them constitute actual impediments for the work of journalists. However, none of the journalists saw any systematic impediments to an extent in which free reporting would be interfered with. Also, the interviewees confirmed that only under very specific conditions are journalists not able to counter impediments with rather easy measures. This means, that journalists are not powerless against the interference, especially because it is a third party and not the state who imposes the impediments. Hence, although there are inevitable impediments for journalists in very specific cases, the general situation doesn't allow for such an assessment.

III) Press Freedom, and consequently the human right of free expression, are not endangered in Germany, nor does the state fail on its positive obligation to protect this human right.

If an assessment was based merely on the reports and statements by civil society actors, the conclusion would be a very different one. NGO's and special interest groups alike, frequently debated the issue as an attack on press freedom and portrayed press freedom at least harmed by this development. Furthermore, the reports and isolated comments by lobbyists suggested a major conflict with the police in this matter, that was demonstrated in a variety of isolated cases. However, regarding the purpose of human rights organizations and special interest groups, this assessment doesn't necessarily qualify for an analysis of the issue, based as much as possible on the factual situation. It is indeed highly important that these organizations are not satisfied with a mere reference to the overall situation but to put their fingers into every detail and every single case. This is essential for the victims of attacks, insults and threats but also vital to the public debate about the right course of action and further improvements regarding the protection of journalists. As this, however, does not suffice to actually accuse the German government of committing a human rights violation by failing on positive obligations as enshrined in national and international standards, the author tends to follow the assessment of the interviewed journalists.

Although it was very much debated if an attack on a journalist constitutes an attack on press freedom as a matter of principle. And although, it was very much debated if the motivation behind an attack is relevant in that regard; none of the journalists saw press freedom actually endangered in Germany nor did they demand further actions by state.

There is no doubt, also when considering the whole set of answers given by the journalists, that these incidences are tragic and have severe consequences on the affected victims. That's why it is important for the NGO's to push this issue into the public debate and that's why it's important to raise awareness and consistently improve the relation between all actors, meaning the journalists, the police and the public. However, this study isn't a piece of human rights activism. Its purpose is a rational assessment of the factual effects of this development on the human right of free expression. Following this assessment, the attacks, insults and threats against journalists are deplorable crimes but the research for this study didn't reveal any clear indication that the state actually fails in providing adequate protection, access to justice, proper criminal investigation or a fair trial.

7. Bibliography

Adam, Heribert (2015): Xenophobia, Asylum Seekers, and Immigration Policies in Germany, *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol 21, No 4, pp. 446-464

Alternative für Deutschland (2016): Grundsatzprogramm der Alternative für Deutschland, 01.05.2016, available on: https://www.alternativefuer.de/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2016/05/2016-06-27_afd-grundsatzprogramm_web-version.pdf [accessed 30.05.2016]

ARD (2015): Politik trifft auf Protest – Pegida bei „GÜNTHER JAUCH“, Das Erste Online, 18.01.2015, available on: <http://daserste.ndr.de/guentherjauch/rueckblick/Politik-trifft-auf-Protest-Pegida-bei-GUeNTHER-JAUCH,pegida270.html> [accessed 13.06.2016]

Arzheimer, Kai (2015): “The AfD: Finally a Successful Right-Wing Populist Eurosceptic Party for Germany?”, *West European Politics*, Vol. 38, No. 3, pp. 535-556

Augstein, Jakob (2014): Null Toleranz für PEGIDA, *Spiegel Online*, 18.12.2014, available on: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/jakob-augstein-ueber-pegida-eine-folge-von-angst-und-armut-a-1009297.html> [accessed 21.05.2016]

Barendt, Eric (2005): *Freedom of Speech*, 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, 11.08.2005, Oxford, ISBN 0199244510, 9780199244515

Bayrischer Rundfunk (2016): BR stellt Studie vor: Medien in der Glaubwürdigkeitskrise?, *BR Online*, 02.05.2016, available on: <http://www.br.de/presse/inhalt/pressemitteilungen/glaubwuerdigkeitsstudie-br-b5-geburtstag-100.html> [accessed 15.05.2016]

Bellingradt, Daniel (2015): Die Kritik an Zeitungen ist so alt wie das Medium selbst, *Die Zeit Online*, 29.06.2015, available on: <http://www.zeit.de/wissen/geschichte/2015-06/luegen-presse-zeitungen-kritik> [accessed 10.06.2016]

Beitzer, Hannah (2015): So viel Dresden steckt in Deutschland Süddeutsche Zeitung Online, 17.01.2015, available on: <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/pegida-so-viel-dresden-steckt-in-deutschland-1.2308951> [accessed 23.05.2016]

Blasius, Rainer (2015): Von der Journaille zur Lügenpresse, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung Online, 15.01.2015, available on: <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/gesellschaft/unwort-des-jahres-eine-kleine-geschichte-der-luegenpresse-13367848.html> [accessed 10.06.2016]

Buggisch, Christian (2015): Die "Lügenpresse" – ein Begriff und seine Geschichte, publikative.org, 01.01.2015, available on: <http://publikative.org/2015/01/01/die-luegenpresse-ein-begriff-und-seine-geschichte/> [accessed 11.06.2016]

Bullion, Constanze von (2012): "Lügenpresse halt die Fresse", Süddeutsche Zeitung Online, 15.05.2012, available on: <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/neonazis-attackieren-lokalzeitung-luegenpresse-halt-die-fresse-1.1346930> [accessed 11.06.2016]

Bund Deutscher Zeitungsverleger (2015): BDZV-Jahrbuch 2015/16: Pressefreiheit, 16.10.2015, available on: http://www.bdzv.de/fileadmin/bdzv_hauptseite/pressefreiheit/Pressefreiheit_aus_Jahrbuch_2015.pdf [accessed 24.05.2016]

Bund Deutscher Zeitungsverleger (2015): Dresden: Attacke auf die Pressefreiheit/ BDZV verurteilt Angriff auf Journalisten, 30.09.2015, available on: http://www.bdzv.de/nachrichten-und-service/presse/pressemitteilungen/artikel/detail/dresden_attack_eauf_die_pressefreiheit_bdzv_verurteilt_angriff_auf_journalisten/ [accessed 24.05.2016]

Bundeswahlleiter (2014): Endgültiges Ergebnis der Europawahl 2014, bundeswahlleiter.de, 2014, available on: https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/de/europawahlen/EU_BUND_14/ergebnisse/bundesergebnisse/ [accessed 30.05.2016]

Bundeswahlleiter (2013): Endgültiges Ergebnis der Bundestagswahl 2013, bundeswahlleiter.de, 2013, available on:
https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/de/bundestagswahlen/BTW_BUND_13/ergebnisse/bundesergebnisse/ [accessed 30.05.2016]

Council of Europe (2016): Recommendation CM/Rec (2016)4[1] on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors, 13.04.2016, available on:
https://search.coe.int/cm/pages/result_details.aspx?objectid=09000016806415d9#_ftn1 [accessed 28.06.2016]

Council of Europe (2015): Three media staff assaulted at Pegida rally, All media freedom alerts – Germany, 12.11.2015, available on:
https://www.coe.int/en/web/media-freedom/all-alerts?p_p_id=sojdashboard_WAR_coesojportlet&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_p_col_id=column-4&p_p_col_count=1&sojdashboard_WAR_coesojportlet_mvcPath=%2Fhtml%2Fdashboard%2Fsearch_results.jsp&sojdashboard_WAR_coesojportlet_yearOfIncident=0&sojdashboard_WAR_coesojportlet_selectedCategories=11709520&sojdashboard_WAR_coesojportlet_fulltext=1 [accessed 03.07.2016]

Council of Europe (2015): Response by Germany to the entry “Three Media Staff Assaulted at Pegida Rally” as of 26 October 2015, State Replies, 09.11.2015, available on:
<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168048ac9f> [03.07.2016]

Council of Europe (2016): All media freedom alerts, available on:
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/media-freedom/all-alerts> [accessed 28.06.2016]

Council of Europe (2016): Resources on Threats to Media Freedom, available on:
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/media-freedom/resources> [accessed 28.06.2016]

Council of Europe (2016): Factsheet Attacks on the physical integrity of journalists, June 2016, available on:

<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680665ae0> [accessed 26.06.2016]

Council of Europe (2007): Freedom of expression in Europe - Case-law concerning Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, Human Rights Files no. 18, available on [http://www.echr.coe.int/LibraryDocs/DG2/HRFILES/DG2-EN-HRFILES-18\(2007\).pdf](http://www.echr.coe.int/LibraryDocs/DG2/HRFILES/DG2-EN-HRFILES-18(2007).pdf) [accessed 23.06.2016]

Derfluegel.de (2015): Die ‘Erfurter Resolution’ – Wortlaut und Erstunterzeichner, derfluegel.de, 14.03.2015, available on: <http://www.derfluegel.de/2015/03/14/die-erfurter-resolution-wortlaut-und-erstunterzeichner/> [accessed 28.05.2016]

Deutscher Bundestag (2016): Fachgespräch über Angriffe auf Journalisten, Medien- und Kulturausschuss des deutschen Bundestages, 13.01.2016, available on: <https://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/textarchiv/2016/kw02-pa-kultur-medien/400394> [accessed 03.07.2016]

Deutsche Journalistinnen- und Journalisten-Union (2016): DJU kritisiert scharf die Inhaftierung von Pressefotografen, DJU website, 01.05.2016, available on: <https://dju.verdi.de/presse/pressemitteilungen/++co++1c7a2532-0fb6-11e6-89bc-525400438ccf> [accessed 24.05.2016]

Deutsche Journalistinnen- und Journalisten-Union (2015): DJU verurteilt erneuten Angriff auf Journalisten durch Pegida-Anhänger, DJU website, 29.09.2015, available on: <https://dju.verdi.de/presse/pressemitteilungen/++co++6672f708-66a7-11e5-9d3d-525400248a66> [accessed 24.05.2016]

Die Welt (2016): Von Storch bejaht Waffengebrauch auch gegenüber Kindern, Die Welt Online, available on: <http://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article151685758/Von-Storch-bejaht-Waffengebrauch-auch-gegenueber-Kindern.html> [accessed 02.06.2016]

Durchgezaehlt.org (2016): Statistik zu PEGIDA in Dresden, available on:

<https://durchgezaehlt.org/pegida-dresden-statistik/> [accessed 14.05.2016]

Eubel, Cordula (2016): Die Grünen starten Kampagne gegen die AfD, Der Tagesspiegel Online, 19.02.2016, available on: <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/vor-den-landtagswahlen-die-gruenen-starten-kampagne-gegen-die-afd/12987624.html> [accessed 01.06.2016]

European Court of Human Rights (2005): Gongadze v. Ukraine, no. 34056/02, judgement, 08.11.2005

European Court of Human Rights (2000): Özgür Gündem v. Turkey, no. 23144/93, judgement, 16.03.2000

Facebook (2016): Official pages of CDU, SPD and PEGIDA e.V, available on: <http://www.facebook.com> [accessed 21.05.2016]

Focus Online (2014): Journalisten-Verband kritisiert Medien-Ausschluss bei AfD-Treffen, 13.01.2014, available on: http://www.focus.de/regional/hessen/parteien-journalisten-verband-kritisiert-medien-ausschluss-bei-afd-treffen_id_3536527.html [accessed 14.06.2016]

Focus Online (2016): Polizeipräsident verurteilt Angriffe auf Journalisten, Focus Online, 03.03.2016, available on: http://www.focus.de/regional/leipzig/demonstrationen-polizeipraesident-verurteilt-angriffe-auf-journalisten_id_5333232.html [accessed 03.07.2016]

Focus Online (2015): AfD-Vize Gauland sieht PEGIDA als Verbündete, 07.01.2015, available on: http://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/wir-sind-sehr-nahe-afd-vize-gauland-sieht-pegida-als-verbuendete_id_4386735.html [accessed 26.05.2015]

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (2016): AfD-Vizechefin will Polizei sogar auf Kinder schießen lassen, FAZ Online, 31.06.2016, available on: <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/fluechtlingskrise/beatrix-von-storch-afd-vizechefin-will-polizei-sogar-auf-kinder-schiessen-lassen-14044186.html> [accessed 02.06.2016]

- Freude, Alvar (2015): „Warum lügt die Presse so?“, 29.01.2015, available on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O7vcl0Ud2OA> [accessed 12.06.2016]
- Gathmann, Florian (2015): SPD weist CSU-Vorstoß für schärfere Asylgesetze zurück, Spiegel Online, 02.01.2015, available on: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/unions-umgang-mit-pegida-merkels-machtwort-umarmung-der-csu-a-1011026.html> [accessed 24.05.2016]
- Gebhardt, Richard (2014): Ihr Feind steht links, Die Zeit Online, 14.04.2014, available on: <http://www.zeit.de/kultur/literatur/2014-04/debatte-intellektuelle-rechte-in-deutschland> [accessed 03.06.2016]
- Geiges, Lars; Margs, Stine; Walter, Franz (2015): ‘PEGIDA – Die schmutzige Seite der Zivilgesellschaft?’, transcript Verlag, Bielefeld, 2015
- German Bundestag (2012): German Basic Law, English Translation, Language Service of the German Bundestag, 2012, available on: https://www.bundestag.de/blob/284870/ce0d03414872b427e57fccb703634dcd/basic_la-w-data.pdf [accessed 22.06.2016]
- Gleis, Mathias (2013): Wie rechts ist die Alternative für Deutschland?, Zeit Online, 18.04.2013, available on: <http://www.zeit.de/2013/17/alternative-fuer-deutschland-ausrichtung> [accessed 28.05.2016]
- Grimm, Robert (2015): The Rise of the German Eurosceptic Party Alternative für Deutschland between ordoliberal critique and popular anxiety, International Political Science Review, Vol 36, No 3, 2015, pp. 264 – 278
- Grimm, Dieter (1994): Human Rights and Judicial Review in Germany, in: Human Rights and Judicial Review – A comparative perspective, David M. Beatty (Editor), Springer Netherlands, 1994, pp. 267 – 285
- Haller, Günther (2015): "Lügenpresse!" - Ein neuer alter Kampf, Die Presse Online, 03.01.2015, available on: <http://diepresse.com/home/zeitgeschichte/4628933/Lugenpresse-Ein-neuer-alter-Kampf> [accessed 11.06.2016]

Häusler, Alexander (2016): Die Alternative für Deutschland: Programmatik, Entwicklung und politische Verortung, Springer Verlag, Wiesbaden, 2016

Hausner Joseph (2016): Bundespräsident kritisiert ‚Lügenpresse‘-Schreier, Focus Online, 08.04.2016, available on: http://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/joachim-gauck-bundespraesident-kritisiert-luegenpresse-schreier_id_5418984.html [accessed 04.07.2016]

Heinen, Helmut (2016): Interview with Neue Osnabrücker Zeitung, 03.05.2016, available on: <http://www.noz.de/deutschland-welt/politik/artikel/707876/bdzv-prasident-mich-bedrucken-angriffe-auf-journalisten#gallery&0&0&707876> [accessed 24.05.2016]

Hoffmann, Martin (2015): ‘The Concept of the Enemy’, Inquiry for the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom, December 2015, available on: https://ecpmf.eu/files/ecpmf_untersuchung_luegenpresse_14122015.pdf [accessed 13.04.2016]

Hoffmann, Martin (2016): Interview with Bund deutscher Zeitungsverleger, April 2016, available on: https://www.bdzv.de/fileadmin/bdzv_hauptseite/pressefreiheit/Interview_Hoffmann_EC_PMF_lang.pdf [accessed 08.05.2016]

Infratest Dimap (2015): Glaubwürdigkeit der Medien, November 2015, available on: <http://www.infratest-dimap.de/umfragen-analysen/bundesweit/umfragen/aktuell/glaubwuerdigkeit-der-medien/> [accessed 15.05.2016]

Institut für Staatspolitik (2016): Chronik des IfS, staatspolitik.de, available on: <http://staatspolitik.de/institut/chronik/> [accessed 07.06.2016]

Institut für Staatspolitik (2016): Arbeitsgebiete, staatspolitik.de, available on: <http://staatspolitik.de/institut/arbeitsgebiete/> [accessed 07.06.2016]

International Committee of the Red Cross (2010): How does international humanitarian law protect journalists in armed-conflict situations?, 27.10.2010, available on <https://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/interview/protection-journalists-interview-270710.htm> [accessed 24.06.2016]

Junge Freiheit (2013): Leitbild der JF, Junge Freiheit Online, available on: <http://assets.jungefreiheit.de/2013/08/leitbild-der-jf-2.jpg> [accessed 03.06.2016]

Junge Freiheit (2016): Gender-Wahnsinn stoppen!, Junge Freiheit Online, available on: https://jungefreiheit.de/gender?utm_content=sidebar [accessed 03.06.2016]

Junge Freiheit (2016): Sex-Täter umringen und begripschen Studentin, Junge Freiheit Online, 07.06.2016, available on: <https://jungefreiheit.de/politik/deutschland/2016/sex-taeter-umringen-und-begrapschen-studentin/> [accessed 07.06.2016]

Junge Freiheit (2016): Thema: AfD, Junge Freiheit Online, available on: <https://jungefreiheit.de/thema/afd> [accessed 07.06.2016]

Katzenberger, Paul (2015): Kampfbegriff gegen die Demokratie, Süddeutsche Zeitung Online, 13.01.2015, available on: <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur/luegenpresse-ist-unwort-des-jahres-kampfbegriff-gegen-die-demokratie-1.2301815> [accessed 10.06.2016]

Korge, Johannes (2014): Merkel prangert Hass bei PEGIDA-Märschen an, Spiegel Online, 31.12.2014, available on: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/merkel-kritisiert-pegida-bei-neujahrsansprache-scharf-a-1010785.html> [accessed 21.05.2016]

Kuhr, Uwe (2015): Dresdner Bürger lehnen Pegida überwiegend ab, freiepresse.de, 12.02.2015, available on: <http://www.freiepresse.de/NACHRICHTEN/SACHSEN/Forsa-Umfrage-Dresdner-Buerger-lehnen-Pegida-ueberwiegend-ab-artikel9112784.php> [accessed 24.05.2016]

LEGIDA (2015): Dresdner Thesen, Legida.eu, 15.02.2015, available on: https://legida.eu/images/legida/Dresdner_Thesen_15_02.pdf [accessed 16.05.2016]

Lengsfeld, Vera (2015): Interview with the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom, 2015, available on: https://ecpmf.eu/files/ecpmf_interview_lengsfeld_dt.pdf [accessed 13.04.2016]

Lewandowsky, Marcel (2014): Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) – A New Actor in the German Party System, International Policy Analysis, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Berlin, March 2014, available on:

[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Marcel_Lewandowsky/publication/268513057_Alternative_für_Deutschland_\(AfD\)_A_New_Actor_in_the_German_Party_System/links/546e079b0cf2b5fc176030ec.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Marcel_Lewandowsky/publication/268513057_Alternative_für_Deutschland_(AfD)_A_New_Actor_in_the_German_Party_System/links/546e079b0cf2b5fc176030ec.pdf) [accessed 28.05.2016]

Locke, Stefan (2016): Interview with the author, 25.05.2016, see appendix

Locke, Stefan (2014): Die neue Wut aus dem Osten, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 07.12.2014, available on: <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/pegida-bewegung-gegen-islamisierung-des-abendlandes-13306852.html> [accessed 21.05.2016]

Ludmann, Stefan (2016): Journalistenverband: AfD verletzt Pressefreiheit, NDR Online, 22.02.2016, available on: <http://www.ndr.de/nachrichten/mecklenburg-vorpommern/Journalistenverband-AfD-verletzt-Pressefreiheit,afd518.html> [accessed 14.06.2016]

Lucke, Bernd (2015): Weckruf 2015, bernd-lucke.de, 18.05.2015, available on: <https://bernd-lucke.de/weckruf-2015/> [accessed 28.05.2016]

Lühmann, Michael (2014): PEGIDA passt nach Sachsen, Zeit Online, 21.12.2014, available on: <http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2014-12/pegida-dresden-politische-tradition> [accessed 21.05.2016]

Mack, Steffen; Serif, Walter (2016): Sie können es nicht lassen!, Mannheimer Morgen Online, 30.01.2016, available on: <http://www.morgenweb.de/sie-können-es-nicht-lassen-1.2620328> [accessed 02.06.2016]

McGonagle, Tarach (2013): The role of the Council of Europe in protecting journalists and other media actors, Expert Paper for the Council of Europe Conference of

Ministers, 07.11.2013, available on: <http://dare.uva.nl/document/2/162484> [accessed 23.06.2016]

Meiritz, Annett (2016): Spitzenpolitiker entsetzt über Waffeneinsatz-Äußerungen von AfD-Frauen, Spiegel Online, 31.01.2016, available on: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/afd-beatrix-von-storch-schiessbefehl-aeusserung-loest-entsetzen-aus-a-1074937.html> [accessed 02.06.2016]

Menschen-in-Dresden.com (2014): Das PEGIDA Positionspapier, 21.12.2014, available on: <http://www.menschen-in-dresden.de/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/pegida-positionspapier.pdf> [accessed 16.05.2016]

Merkel, Angela (2016): Merkel: Lokalzeitungen haben Zukunft, bundeskanzlerin.de, 07.05.2016, available on: http://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Webs/BKin/DE/Mediathek/Einstieg/mediathek_einstieg_podcasts_node.html;jsessionid=BB1E7B91DEE2E2025D48B22545CEF2F0.s6t1?id=1948082&cat=podcasts [accessed 04.07.2016]

Neuerer, Dietmar (2014): AfD-Erfolg alarmiert Thüringer CDU, Handelsblatt Online, 26.05.2014, available on: <http://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/deutschland/schweigen-ist-keine-loesung-afd-erfolg-alarmiert-thueringer-cdu/9952126.html> [accessed 01.06.2016]

N24 (2016): CDU-Koalition mit AfD kommt nicht infrage, N24 online, 14.03.2016, available on: <http://www.n24.de/n24/Nachrichten/Politik/d/8218130/cdu-koalition-mit-afd-kommt-nicht-infrage.html> [accessed 01.06.2016]

NTV (2014): Özdemir wettert gegen 'weinerliches Gesülze', NTV online, 22.12.2014, available on: <http://www.n-tv.de/politik/Oezdemir-wuetet-gegen-weinerliches-Gesuelze-article14203341.html> [accessed 26.05.2016]

NTV (2015): Maas wirft AfD Demokratiefeindlichkeit vor, 27.11.2015, available on: <http://www.n-tv.de/politik/Maas-wirft-AfD-Demokratiefeindlichkeit-vor-article16451686.html> [accessed 04.07.2016]

OSCE (2015): Conference on Journalists' Safety, Media Freedom and Pluralism in Times of Conflict, 15.06.2015, available on: <http://www.osce.org/fom/151466> [accessed 25.06.2016]

Pinker, Steve (2015): Why free speech is fundamental, Boston Globe, 27.01.2015, available on: <https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2015/01/26/why-free-speech-fundamental/aaAWVYFscrhFCC4ye9FVjN/story.html> [accessed 21.06.2016]

Reimann, Anna (2014): Krawalle zwischen Kurden und Salafisten, Spiegel Online, June 2014, available on: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/demonstration-gegen-is-gewalt-zwischen-kurden-und-salafisten-a-995972.html> [accessed 08.05.2016]

Reimann, Anna; Hebel, Christina (2014), Die wirre Welt der Wohlstandsbürger, Spiegel Online, 16.12.2014, available on: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/pegida-in-dresden-die-kruden-aussagen-der-demonstranten-a-1008735.html> [accessed 19.05.2016]

Reinbold, Fabian (2016): AfD-Vize Gauland: "Habe Boateng nie beleidigt", Spiegel Online, 29.05.2016, available on: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/alexander-gauland-habe-jerome-boateng-nie-beleidigt-a-1094721.html> [accessed 14.06.2016]

Reporter ohne Grenzen (2016): 'Rangliste der Pressefreiheit 2016 – Nahaufnahme Deutschland', available on: https://www.reporter-ohne-grenzen.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Presse/Downloads/Ranglisten/Rangliste_2016/Nahaufnahme_Deutschland_2016.pdf [accessed 07.05.2016]

Reporter ohne Grenzen (2016): 'Rangliste der Pressefreiheit 2016 – Ausgewählte Übergriffe auf Journalisten 2015/2016', available on: https://www.reporter-ohne-grenzen.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Presse/Downloads/Ranglisten/Rangliste_2016/Uebergriffe_auf_Journalisten_2015-16_-_Ausgewaehlte_Beispiele.pdf [accessed 07.05.2016]

Reporter ohne Grenzen (2016): 'Weltkarte der Pressefreiheit 2016', available on: <https://www.reporter-ohne-grenzen.de/weltkarte/> [accessed 07.05.2016]

Reuters (2016): Merkel – Angriffe auf Journalisten in Deutschland ,beschämend', 10.05.2016, available on: <http://de.reuters.com/article/deutschland-medien-merkel-idDEKCN0Y1188> [accessed 04.07.2016]

Rucht, Dieter: „Pegida und Co. – Aufstieg und Fall eines populistischen Unternehmens“, In: betrifft: Bürgergesellschaft. Hrsg. von der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2015, Nr. 41, pp. 1 – 15

Sächsische Zeitung (2016): AfD zeigt PEGIDA die kalte Schulter, Sächsische Zeitung Online, 01.03.2016, available on: <http://www.sz-online.de/sachsen/afd-zeigt-pegida-kalte-schulter-3336511.html> [accessed 26.05.2016]

Schuh, Mathias (2015): Interview with Deutschlandfunk, 26.10.2015, available on: http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/pegida-teilnehmerzahlen-in-zeitlupe-jeden-demonstranten.680.de.html?dram:article_id=335089 [accessed 14.05.2016]

Schülmann, Helmut (2015): Interview with the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom, 2015, available on: https://ecpmf.eu/files/ecpmf_interview_schuemann_dt.pdf [accessed 13.04.2016]

Seisselberg, Jörg (2016): Auseinandersetzung statt Attacke, ARD Online, 07.05.2016, available on: <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/scholz-afd-101.html> [accessed 01.06.2016]

Spiegel Online (2016): Forsa-Umfrage: 40 Prozent der Deutschen beklagen Überpräsenz der AfD in den Medien, 18.02.2016, available on: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/forsa-umfrage-medien-berichten-zu-viel-ueber-die-afd-a-1078193.html> [accessed 13.06.2016]

Spiegel Online (2015): Jaafar's Videoblog #3: Hauen Sie ab! Sie lügen nur!, 20.10.2015, available on: <http://www.spiegel.de/video/jaafar-vlog-beim-pegida-jahrestag-in-dresden-video-1618384.html> [accessed 04.03.2016]

Statista (2016): Stimmenanteile der AfD bei den jeweils letzten Landtagswahlen in den Bundesländern bis März 2016, statista.de, 2016, available on: <http://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/320946/umfrage/ergebnisse-der-afd-bei-den-landtagswahlen/> [accessed 30.05.2016]

Steffen, Tilman (2015): Buhrufe und rote Karten, Zeit Online, 04.07.2015, available on: <http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2015-07/bernd-lucke-frauke-petry-afd-parteitag-essen> [accessed 28.05.2016]

Steffen, Tilman (2016): Provozieren, relativieren, dementieren, Zeit Online, 31.05.2016, available on: <http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2016-05/afd-jerome-boateng-alexander-gauland-frauke-petry-medien-bjoern-hoecke> [accessed 01.06.2016]

Stöss, Richard (2007): Die "neue Rechte" in der Bundesrepublik, Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 17.12.2007, available on: <http://www.bpb.de/politik/extremismus/rechtsextremismus/41435/die-neue-rechte-in-der-bundesrepublik?p=0> [accessed 03.06.2016]

Stern (2016): Dunja Hayali's geniale Reaktion auf einen Hassbrief, 19.05.2016, available on: <http://www.stern.de/kultur/tv/dunja-hayali--zdf-moderatorin-antwortet-hassbrief-schreiber-auf-facebook-6857500.html> [accessed 05.06.2016]

Sueddeutsche Zeitung Online (2016): Gauck: Habe ‚Lügenpresse‘ in DDR erlebt, 12.05.2016, available on: <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/news/wirtschaft/medien-gauck-habe-luegenpresse-in-der-ddr-erlebt-dpa.urn-newsml-dpa-com-20090101-160512-99-923376> [accessed 04.07.2016]

Sydow, Christoph (2015): Eklat bei Pegida-Demo: "Die KZs sind ja leider derzeit außer Betrieb", Spiegel Online, 20.10.2015, available on: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/akif-pirincci-rede-bei-pegida-in-dresden-abgebrochen-a-1058589.html> [accessed 16.05.2016]

UNESCO (2012): UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, UN Chief Executives Board, 12.04.2012, available on <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/freedom-of-expression/safety-of-journalists/un-plan-of-action/> [accessed 25.06.2016]

UN General Assembly (1966): International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 16.12.1966, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 999

UN Human Rights Committee (2004): General comment no. 31 [80], The nature of the general legal obligation imposed on States Parties to the Covenant, 26 May 2004, CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.13

UN Human Rights Committee (2011): General comment no. 34, Article 19, Freedoms of opinion and expression, 12 September 2011, CCPR/C/GC/34

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2014): Safety of journalists: States must act to end impunity, 13.06.2014, available on: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/SafetyOfJournalists.aspx> [accessed 26.06.2016]

Überall, Frank (2015): Interview with Deutschlandradio, 24.11.2015, available on: http://www.deutschlandradiokultur.de/gewalt-gegen-journalisten-das-kannte-ich-nur-aus.1008.de.html?dram:article_id=337757 [14.04.2016]

Vorländer, Hans (2016): PEGIDA - Entwicklung, Zusammensetzung und Deutung einer Empörungsbewegung, Springer Verlag, Wiesbaden, 2016

Waage, Merten (2015): Interview with the European Center for Press and Media Freedom, 2015, available on: https://ecpmf.eu/files/ecpmf_interview_waage_dt.pdf [accessed 13.04.2016]

Wehner, Markus (2016): Gauland beleidigt Boateng, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung Online, 29.05.2016, available on: <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/afd-vize-gauland-beleidigt-jerome-boateng-14257743.html> [accessed 14.06.2016]

Youtube (2015): Spaziergang PEGIDA Dresden zur MOPO24 ("Lügenpresse"), 21.09.2015, available on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UAefkj3xTHI> [accessed 12.06.2016]

Youtube (2015): 7.000 PEGIDA-Demonstranten in Dresden vor dem Haus der Lügenpresse (SZ und Morgenpost), 27.07.2015, available on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ohcmzn2RBCK> [accessed 12.06.2016]

Youtube (2016): PEGIDA Dresden 04.01.2016 Rede von Lutz Bachmann Teil 1 Presse will Deutschland spalten, 04.01.2016, available on:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C47BnMqNQGE> [accessed 12.06.2016]

Youtube (2015): Pegida Pressekonferenz 19.01.2015, available on:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4GNoZyzPbA> [accessed 13.06.2016]

Zeit Online (2014): Jeder Zweite sympathisiert mit Pegida, Die Zeit Online, 15.12.2014, available on: <http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2014-12/islam-pegida-fluechtlinge-deutschland-umfrage> [accessed 24.05.2016]

Zeit Online (2016): Die AfD führt in das Deutschland von vorgestern, 17.05.2016, available on: <http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2016-05/heiko-maas-afd-kritik-rechtspopulismus> [accessed 04.07.2016]

8. Appendix

8.1 Interview with Stefan Locke, FAZ, 25.05.2016

Question: In the last two years, there has been a rise in attacks, threats and other hostilities against journalists in Germany, mostly in the surroundings of PEGIDA demonstrations. How would you describe the situation for the FAZ in that regard? Has there also been a rise? And if so, how is it demonstrated?

Stefan Locke: Well, I can't speak for the FAZ as a whole but I can of course account for what I experience here as correspondent for Dresden. In this sense, we are in the eye of the hurricane so to speak. Here, the development of the PEGIDA movement has its origin, also the AfD is quite strong, and this civil movement, if you want to call it that way, has brought the term 'Lügenpresse' on the streets. It was audible for the first time here in fall 2014, which irritated us as we had heard the term before but it wasn't really in use for a long time, especially not as a general critique towards the entire media. There were isolated cases, but this complete, solid block of critique was new, especially given that the term has such a historically negative connotation. It started in Dresden and then spread quickly as it is such a concise term. For a long time then, journalists thought about where this is coming from and it became clear that a lot of different aspects have been subsumed under that term. It was people who are generally not satisfied with what the newspaper writes, with how it is decided which topics are covered and with the tone of the comments. Also by people who can't really separate comment and report. There was also people for whom everything written was just too left and even people who complained about grammatical mistakes. All that was subsumed in the term 'Lügenpresse'. Essential is, that not only mistakes were complained about but also just the fact that the opinion of the respective person was not shared by the media. This is what we experienced immediately. The term 'Lügenpresse' normally entails the allegation of intent, however this was not really the case. Not a lot of people accused the media of lying but the critique happened along the whole spectrum that I just mentioned. And maybe just quickly on the origin of the word. The colleagues in the sport department informed us that 'Lügenpresse' is shouted for already some years at games of Dynamo Dresden. The club, in my opinion in some cases

rightfully, complains that the media is partially responsible for its bad reputation. Even if there were riots during matches of other German clubs, especially west German newspapers and media often used pictures and video clips of Dynamo Dresden riots to illustrate violent behaviour. The club and its fans feel treated in an unjust manner by the media which led to the coining of the word 'Lügenpresse'. And in the beginning of PEGIDA, when a lot of demonstrators were from the hooligan- and ultra-scene of Dynamo Dresden, they brought this term to the streets and due to its concise nature, it was quickly used also by others.

Question: Would you say that this is an Eastern German problem?

Stefan Locke: No, definitely not. I realize this when reading letters of readers, and remember, the FAZ is less widespread in the East. It was also surprising for me that, already in fall 2014 when I wrote the first reports on PEGIDA, I received a flood of letters, often with full name and address, from the middle class in the Swabian Alb, from Bavaria, from Hesse, really from everywhere. It was people who wrote that the demonstrators are right to take their concerns to the street and of course also alleged not only politicians but also the media to be somehow synchronized, while using again the term 'Lügenpresse'.

Question: So you would agree that the hostilities are clearly related to the coverage of the far-right political spectrum, meaning PEGIDA, the AfD or the Refugee Crisis?

Stefan Locke: Well, they have something to do with it, but more as the catalyst. However, the dissatisfaction is already smoldering for a long time.

Question: So you would say that there is also a dissatisfaction from the left?

Stefan Locke: Absolutely, that becomes obvious when you consider all the different reactions you receive as journalist. But from the far-right wing, there are coming a lot

more of these messages of course, there the dissatisfaction is stronger, and already for a long time there is the allegation that the media and the political sphere are both part of one system, working together in a reciprocally beneficial way. Also already earlier, in 2013 or in early 2014, in the surrounding of the regional elections in Saxony, when the AfD became stronger and made it into the parliament, it was recognizable that the people have a massive problem with the press. At campaigning events of the AfD and several citizen assemblies, there was always a skeptical atmosphere but in the end you could always talk to them quite well, especially on smaller ones with 30-40 people. There, the allegation of the synchronization of political sphere and media, always floated in the room. For a lot this is linked to a higher power that controls everything. So the chancellery is directing the media, but is itself controlled by the USA that are controlled by the CIA which often then ends with the Rothschilds at some point.

Question: So is the allegation that the media is directed by a foreign force or the elites, meaning this narrative of the 'Lügenpresse', is this usually the central element of the comments you receive in that regard?

Stefan Locke: I wouldn't say that it is the central element of all those reactions, but it is one of the main allegations that we receive. Even well-educated people believe that we are not free in our reporting in Germany. So maybe in that sense it is the central element, but I wouldn't say that the direct allegation of the press actually lying is central. It is more the allegation that somebody is directing the media, that there is something in the background pulling the strings, and it is really remarkable how many people believe that.

Question: I would like to turn now to the quality of attacks and hostilities against journalists. What did you experience yourself and what did you observe regarding other journalists?

Stefan Locke: I personally didn't experience anything like that but I also have to say that I don't appear like a journalist on first sight. The colleagues with cameras and

microphones, they have reported more severe cases. But I also have to say that given the incredible amount of journalists covering PEGIDA here, only a very small amount was actually affected. However, every single incident is one too much. What I experienced myself is, when you take out your notebook and start taking notes, the atmosphere becomes chilly. There are odd comments then, to which I don't reply, and then the situation is over for me. There has been some pushing and some barging but there were no attacks on me and also not on the most of my colleagues. I can recall a case in Leipzig where a journalist got beaten the camera out of the hands and was pushed to the ground. But I believe that in general, the response by the media has been bigger than the actual incidents. For me, it also went a little bit too far, how the media - this is maybe a harsh word - pitied itself. You have to keep in mind that although the basic atmosphere has become a lot more aggressive, compared to other professions –for example civil servants, nurses, the police or ticket inspectors in trains – in comparison to the hostilities that those people have to endure because somebody feels treated unjust, we as the press have it quite good actually. Also, when comparing the situation to our colleagues' in other countries like Ukraine for example. We are still quite lucky here, although the basic atmosphere towards journalists has become a lot more aggressive, this is definitely true. But it is not like that journalists couldn't go near those demonstrations because it was too dangerous, this is not the case.

Question: How do journalists cope with the fact that there is in general a mistrust and to what extent has a journalist to endure in regard to the participation of the reader?

Stefan Locke: Well, basically I think quite a lot. We have always been in the position of writing about others and judge others. It was very surprising for a lot of journalists to be suddenly attacked and criticized themselves. So if there is a good thing about this whole issue, it is that the media now maybe also questions itself and reflects on how it is working, if what it does is justified and correct. And that has really led a lot of colleagues to think about their profession, and I think it also led to better journalism, in the sense that the reports were not that one-dimensional anymore, as they indeed had been for a while. There is definitely more coverage from all angles now. I wouldn't say

that it was completely one-dimensional but when you look at the AfD for example, and it's still that way, the coverage is certainly tendentious. There has to be some verbal disarmament and a more relaxed approach, but of course only as long as their affiliates act according to the law. Otherwise you have to act immediately, that's obvious. However, this general hysteria and the immediate outrage when an AfD politician says something provocative, is just too much.

Question: PEGIDA received similar reactions by the German media....

Stefan Locke: Yes, especially at the beginning and also due to a lack of knowledge. All of us, we asked ourselves: Where does this movement come from? What do they actually want? This was hard to investigate at the beginning because first of all, nobody of the organization team or the protesters really talked, and if somebody talked there were very diverse and diffuse opinions. In order to get that into a 1 min 30 report, many colleagues especially from outside the region have simply, very one dimensionally, described it as a Neo Nazi thing, which was partially correct but simply not true for a large majority of demonstrators. And this also led a bit to a vicious circle, because then 'Lügenpresse' was shouted more than ever. I think this has resulted in a lot of reflection among journalists regarding their own way of working. I don't find that a bad thing. The general atmosphere which is extremely aggressive, is of course unbearable, but as journalist you just have to take that for at least a while now.

Question: So you would say the FAZ reacts rather contemplative on hostilities, apart of course from the violent attacks?

Stefan Locke: I mean, when there are violent attacks, there is nothing to contemplate about of course. There have charges to be pressed, so the people realize the boundaries. In terms of hostilities in general I think we try to react with a very objective coverage, with good journalism, asking 'What happened? What has been said?' and that is what I am reporting in the end. And if a comment is necessary then the facts are going to be interpreted. But it has to be independent from one's own opinion, which is of course

always difficult because everyone has one, but necessary because you have to put it aside a bit every day, and reflect on whether you portrayed people or situations the right way or in an unjust way.

Question: Do you think that journalists rather react decisively by pressing charges or do you think journalists are rather reluctant?

Stefan Locke: No, the journalists of which I know were attacked, they all reported it. I know the concrete case of a journalist who also pressed charges. That also has to be done, you have to report something like that, yet just to make it appear in the statistics and to raise a certain public awareness. Otherwise it remains covered, which would be fatal.

Question: Many journalist and representatives of journalist associations have condemned the attacks as attacks on Press Freedom itself. Do you also think that we have to talk about Press Freedom here or are we still talking just about crimes?

Stefan Locke: Well, both of course. If it is criminally viable, it has to be prosecuted. However, of course it is also an attack on press freedom when free reporting isn't warranted anymore. You realize that certain fundamental rights that have been self-evident for a long time, are not so self-evident anymore. Naturally, you have to try to enforce these fundamental rights again. So you also shouldn't shy away. I don't find it very smart that public broadcasters are accompanied by private security at the demonstrations, that's too much, it's tax payer money and it also provokes the people. One has to find the right measures, but that is a development and you can't just act and react perfectly right away.

Question: Speaking of the necessity to bring bodyguards to the demonstrations, do you think the state does enough to protect journalists? I am speaking of the police but also the about the political sphere and its stance on it.

Stefan Locke: There is certainly room to improve but I also don't envy the police for their job. They have to keep the two sides [PEGIDA and counter-protesters] apart from each other, and then also would have to make sure that somebody can freely place their camera somewhere. That is not such a simple task in the concrete circumstances. I would say 95% of the time, the security of journalists is warranted and they are provided with reasonable working conditions. It is just also a matter of perspective, if it happened two times to you then it is of course already too much. For example, when the police block the entrance to an area or blocks the objective of your camera. These things happen in the heat of the moment and yes, maybe the police are not always 100% neutral. However, I would say that in general the state lives up to its obligation to protect press freedom and the security of journalists.

8.2 Interview with Carsten Thureau, ZDF, 21.07.2016

Question: Since 2014, there is an increasing number of reported attacks, threats and insults against journalist in Germany, mostly in social media and in the surroundings of demonstrations. Do you also notice such an increase? I am hereby interested in your personal experience but also in how this issue is discussed in your editorial office.

Carsten Thureau: I would say we were noticing it as the first ones here in Saxony, already in fall 2014 along with the first PEGIDA demonstrations. The slogan 'Lügenpresse' emerged very quickly and it irritated me a lot as I didn't expect this hostility, even hate, against journalists at all. I could imagine that a lot of people were concerned, that they want to enunciate their concerns on the street and that they are just not satisfied with many of the political developments. This is legitimate. But these extremely hateful slurs against the media and politicians, the harassment which then sometimes turns violent, I didn't consider this possible. It is not a very nice feeling to stand in the middle of a PEGIDA crowd, back then together with 20.000 people, and be shouted down by the 'Lügenpresse' chants. Dealing with this situation wasn't easy, also not for my colleagues. From the beginning it wasn't really 'fun' to go there, some of the colleagues also said they were afraid. We wanted to take that very seriously right away,

discussed the issue and also agreed on procedural methods in order to protect us. The continuance and extent of this development is really surprising to me.

Question: Do you think this is an 'East German problem'? Or would you say that there is a difference between violent attacks, that are very much related to the protests in Saxony, and online-harassment which might be a more national phenomenon?

Carsten Thureau: I would say in Saxony the issue is more visible. Here the people, though not as many anymore, go to the streets which makes the protest, and the attitude behind it, physically visible. I also believe that there are a lot of Saxon particularities that made PEGIDA so extraordinarily strong in the East. However, this movement, together with the AfD, has caused the bursting of a dam in large parts of the society. Independently from the region, the insults and anonymous hate mails have become socially acceptable. Suddenly people dare to say and do things that they wouldn't have dared to say or do before. It affected the general atmosphere negatively, however here in Dresden it also becomes physically visible. But I also don't want to stigmatize the region, it started here but has followers everywhere.

Question: Would you say that this development can entirely be associated with the political far-right or are there breakouts in the demographic of those who became increasingly media-adverse?

Carsten Thureau: No, these are ordinary people. It is people who haven't subscribed to any newspaper anymore and don't watch a lot of TV. It is people who have a regular job that suddenly feel appointed to act against the press. Also in the next step, the exercise of violence, for example the people who throw Molotov cocktails into future refugee shelters, these are people out of the midst of society that were never conspicuous or presented themselves as far-right. This extent of frustration and hate is really distressing. We are being harassed even by pensioners who insult us in the most drastic terms. People who never made an appearance in this regard, now dare to do unspeakable things, particularly as part of a big group of people.

Question: Even if we speak of ordinary people that are not related to any of the far-right organizations, the hostilities do however have a politically far-right background?

Carsten Thureau: Of course, the big majority of insulting posts regarding our coverage of the refugee crisis, on Facebook for example, are racist and far-right. In the demonstrations of PEGIDA and also in the AfD, there is always a group of people involved that is associated with the extreme right and the Neo Nazi scene. The lines are a bit blurred in this regard. This is also what I blame many people for, protesting on the street together with Nazis. It was the morals I was raised with, that you don't collaborate with Nazis. Not all of them are Nazis of course, but the thing you hear on the streets now are dangerous. Many of them say: "Well, then I am a Nazi!" although they probably aren't. Maybe a lot of them don't even realize that they are openly xenophobe and racist. I could very well imagine that.

Question: Do you think the movement sort of reached a certain critical mass that made people let down their restraints?

Carsten Thureau: Yes, but this critical mass was reached way earlier, already a year ago. There is a certain sympathy for and willingness to do certain things which are socially acceptable now in large parts of the society and weren't before. This is consistent and it won't become less, I believe

Question: Of what nature and quality are the incidents in this regard? Do you have examples?

Carsten Thureau: The most common thing are verbal attacks, meaning insults, threats and harassment. We are frequently insulted and threatened at shootings for our program. It was said they will chase us out of the country with Kalashnikovs, things that are not just an insult but a threat. When a PEGIDA demonstration is passing you, you get touched and pushed, they try to block the view of your camera with their flags or to get hold of them. Colleagues of mine experienced such things also at AfD demonstrations.

If we shoot footage with our camera at a PEGIDA demonstration for just three minutes, there is almost nobody silently passing without insulting us in one way or another. If you look into their faces, you can see the deep hatred. At the beginning I always tried to remain calm, but it is getting harder and harder. It is difficult because I also want answers and to tell the people how it feels to be constantly insulted. You don't want to stand there like a little lamb for the people to abuse without any reaction. This is extremely difficult for me; I have to control my emotions in order to prevent these situations from escalating. There are also of course 'nice' moments when you are able to discuss with the people. Although you won't be able to convince anybody, you can listen to what motivates them and often the speak very openly about it. This is actually the purpose of journalism, to capture the opinion of these people in order to report about them. Our strategy was trying to get interviews when the people were gathering before the events had started. As soon as the people are agitated and adrenalized it simply doesn't make sense anymore.

Question: Is this 'Lügenpresse' narrative, meaning the allegation that the media is directed by either political elites, the government or foreign powers, at the very core of the incidents? And do you think that such a simplifying, symbolic narrative is benefiting the widespread use of the concept?

Carsten Thureau: Yes, of course, that is the central allegation. It is the theory that we, but also other media, are the media tool of the chancellor. This is an accusation against public broadcasting that is naturally the core of this critique.

Question: Do you think that the ZDF as a public broadcaster is attacked even harder, due to the perceived proximity to the state?

Carsten Thureau: I think so, yes. There are conspiracy theories that the ARD and the ZDF receive orders from the government via secret communication. Also, that we intentionally leave out certain aspects, falsify numbers and commit other similar manipulations. There is also a lot of hostility against teams from other media like RTL

or NTV, but in our case this frustration and suspicion is also linked to the fees that people have to pay for the public broadcast. It enforces the anger, if the people have the impression they even have to pay for a directed media that is lying to them. It is interesting, the extensive and diverse offer of information, by us and many other media, doesn't reach the people. Facebook and other internet sources seem to be the preferred way of acquiring information now. For example, we are receiving notes from people who believe they can prove that we are lying by referring to articles in the far-right magazine 'compact'. I can hardly believe that people seriously see such claims as a proof of us lying. It is really sad. I have the feeling that the East is a bit more receptive for this narrative, also because many of the people grew up with an actually directed press and think history repeats itself at the moment.

Question: Would you also say that if the media aversion is embedded in such a symbolic narrative, that is easier to spread among people?

Carsten Thureau: Absolutely, yes. It is not about single journalists or articles. A few weeks ago I did a reportage on the right-wing movement in Saxony. One of the PEGIDA demonstrators saw the reportage and his single reaction was: 'That Thureau is again calling all the Saxon lazy and right-wing!'. If you watch that reportage for half an hour you notice that I have tried to make the reportage as balanced as possible, with a professional distance and by giving a voice to a lot of different people. I do not at all conclude that Saxons are all lazy and right-wing. If this is what sticks in the mind of some people, then I think those people are lost, I can't reach them anymore. And at some point I also have to accept that I won't reach these people anymore.

Question: There are a few studies that suggest that there is generally an increasing distrust in the media. Although only few would speak of a 'lying press', many seem to doubt the credibility and neutrality of the media. How do you, but also your colleagues, deal with this distrust?

Carsten Thureau: I am not sure if that's true. I make contradicting experiences. A lot of people, not only in my personal surrounding, view the *heute journal* for example as a very credible source. A lot of people also tune in ARD and ZDF in times of crisis because they feel well informed. I also know a study that doesn't suggest an increasing distrust in the media. However, something definitely changed in the attitude towards the press and for us, it carries the responsibility to be even more meticulous in our work. It motivates to do the research and reporting even more accurately, following a clear and strict professional ethics. It is necessary to apply these ethics consistently and to deal openly with mistakes. It is essential as a reaction to the distrust, to be transparent and to explain our working methods more precisely. However, we should also not lose our confidence. The ZDF is market leader already for many years, we, and also the ARD, have excellent informational programs that monitor very closely the actions of the government. Programs like *frontal21* or *Monitor* thoroughly investigate and regularly uncover nuisances which makes it actually quite difficult to infer we are directed by the government.

Question: Have there been actual, practical impediments to work of journalists according to your experience?

Carsten Thureau: Well, not everybody is willing to take the risk of being targeted at PEGIDA demonstrations and I perceive it of course as an impediment of my capability to report when I get constantly insulted. If I get attacked, if I have to protect myself, if I can only report from outside the demonstration and not move freely, then this is a drastic impediment to my work. It is also important to note that this movement has managed to survive for a long time via the help of the media. They are of course yearning for being featured in the *heute journal* or the *Tagesthemen* as much as possible. And consequently, they continuously gave good reasons for us to observe AfD or PEGIDA demonstrations. At the same time, it is impossible to have an interview with Lutz Bachmann or the people who participate in rallies.

Question: How does the ZDF react to attacks, threats and insults in a practical, journalistic but also legal sense?

Carsten Thureau: We have the full support of our legal counsels in relation to hate speech or defamation in the internet. We are able to call an emergency number to make use of our attorneys. We are also receiving a lot of moral support on behalf of our chief editorial office. There are also, in my opinion, very useful seminars for affected colleagues, providing guidelines on the right course of action in such situations and helping to deal with the mental consequences of these incidents. For me, this is a particularly important aspect because it is just getting harder every day not to react to being insulted for 30 minutes straight. It is very good that the journalists are now being trained, prepared and receive guidelines on how to deal with that.

Question: So insults, like hateful comments in the internet, are frequently reported to the police?

Carsten Thureau: Yes. I don't know the exact numbers on how often this is the case but the journalists always have the possibility to press charges in such cases.

Question: Several representatives of special interest groups have called the attacks on journalists an attack on press freedom. Do you also believe that we are not talking about mere criminal acts anymore but about an attack on press freedom in Germany?

Carsten Thureau: This is the most difficult question. I don't think so. I believe we have to be very careful that it doesn't develop into such a situation but I don't think the press freedom as such is in danger in Germany. It would be that way if it were entirely impossible to report or if we were limited in what we can report. Press freedom is maybe not a self-evident virtue anymore but I don't believe its threatened in its entirety. It is more a culmination of little things, for example when the press is excluded from AfD conventions and is maybe allowed to come in afterwards to ask some questions and take some pictures. In this handling of the media by a political party, I do see

serious danger. We also have to communicate that clearly, that we can't report properly on it because we were not allowed to enter. This is actually a scandal and it happened a couple of times now. However, I wouldn't go that far and say that in Germany a fundamental right is in danger.

Question: Still, would you say that a violent attack on a journalist is by principle an attack on press freedom?

Carsten Thureau: Yes, I would say so, however only with the premise that the attacker also sees it exactly that way. I believe people are perceiving journalists with their cameras as a provocation and don't seek to limit the press freedom. However, there were terrible incidents here in Dresden that are rightfully called attacks on press freedom. I believe that the term 'Lügenpresse' moved from the football stadium to the streets. The term is of course older, but in its current use it originated in the stadium. I am here for six years now, and I know the term from the coverage of Dynamo Dresden. And via this clientele it made its way to the streets.

Question: Do you think that the German state, or the government respectively, fulfils its obligations in terms of protecting the human right of free expression? And if not, which reaction would you wish for?

Carsten Thureau: It would be wrong to accuse Heiko Maas (Justice Minister of Germany) not to do his job properly. On the other hand, I don't have the feeling that the latest de-escalation strategy of the police, to be present in the smallest extent possible, is contributing to a better protection of journalists. The police also say that it is not their job to protect our work and that we would have to take care about it on our own. But I also don't want to be forced to conduct my work under police protection.

Question: It is strange though, because even if you were there as a private person, it is job of the police to ensure your safety.

Carsten Thureau: That's correct but we are told that it is at our own risk to enter the crowd at demonstrations. This just means that they don't send us 3 policemen to accompany us, which is reasonable. Of course, if something happens I hope the police is near and protects me but again, I don't want to conduct my work under personal protection by the police. In general, I think that it is sometimes useful to ignore the issue of protection to some extent. It just unites the people when they get stigmatized and can rant against Heiko Maas and his state agents. As long as there is no criminal act, I think ignoring might be a better way to go. Of course, you can't ignore when concentration camps are advertised. On a more general note however, ignoring certain incidents might be a better way to deal with it. In the end, you are just helping those people because it makes them seem more significant and that's what they actually want.

Question: Reading the comments made by Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Joachim Gauck, I got the impression that the political sphere tries to be diplomatic and pragmatic by condemning the attacks but also admonish the press to learn from its mistakes. What do you make of that?

Carsten Thureau: As of now, I am not aware of the statements you are referring to. In general, I don't think that very careful, diplomatic statements make much sense, as they can be interpreted as a justification for attacks on journalists. But again, I believe that certain things would be already behind us if less attention was given, if there hasn't been this circle of PEGIDA provoking with a slogan and then receiving a reply from Sigmar Gabriel or other politicians. At some point you have to realize and live with the fact that the core of this group can't be reached anymore. It is sad, but why should we constantly direct all attention to this and react to every single provocation? I believe that to be very counter-productive.

Question: So as a conclusion: Would you say the state reacts appropriately?

Carsten Thureau: It is a fundamental right to demonstrate as well and also that demonstrations are protected even if it is PEGIDA and alike. But one should also

question why there is such inappropriate ferocity in the police action against counter-demonstrators for example.

It is also questionable that PEGIDA in Dresden is always allowed to use the nicest streets and places for its demonstrations. I think this could be handled differently, like it is done in other cities like Leipzig. The minister for economy here in Saxony said once: “The police here is in large parts PEGIDA” and you have to admit that also the police resembles the society which is just noticeable in some situations. However, I don’t want to generalize, not at all. I expect the police to protect me, but again, I want to be able to do my work without specific protection. It would be the beginning of the end of press freedom in Germany if I was required to hire security personnel or demand police protection in order to be able to do my work. In the end, I don’t see any way how the police could protect press freedom at demonstrations better without applying counter-productive measures.

8.3 Interview with the East Germany correspondent of a national German newspaper, 25.07.2016

Question: Since 2014 there is an increased amount of reported attacks, threat and insults against journalists in Germany, in particular surrounding demonstrations and in social media. Do you also notice such a trend? Hereby I am interested in your personal assessment but also how the issue is discussed among your colleagues.

East Germany correspondent: I do notice this rise, yes. This has also something to do with increasingly widespread use of social media. Before, the people maybe also have held such opinions and maybe insulted a journalist from their yard if he was standing on the other side of the street. This is just different now, writing a quick post on the social media is easier than an actual letter. So there is less restraint. That’s why I would say that PEGIDA is maybe the trigger but not necessarily the cause of the issue. In the physical world, in the confined framework of the demonstrations every Monday, these incidences have increased. However, outside of this framework, I would say they didn’t. On these Monday demonstrations it happens that you get insulted, pushed, sometimes spit upon. However, without trivializing it, you have to keep in mind that these incidences originate from an intense but very small group, and this group is frequently present at these Monday events. That is why I try to loosen myself from the thought that

the whole world became crazy. It is a very confined, very small group of people. Regarding my colleagues, it is also a topic, yes. There are female colleagues who refuse to go to such demonstrations alone, a colleague of the MDR was punched recently, others were threatened. It is indeed a topic, however it is discussed objectively and also self-critically. Of course, the first reaction is that you try to resist such attacks but, after that, also to wonder where the hate and distrust are coming from. I am experiencing very good collegueship in this regard.

Question: To what extent are these incidences related to the to the right-wing political movement or to which extent do they originate from it. In other words, is there also such a media aversion among the political left or the general society?

East Germany correspondent: That's a bit difficult to say because I am in the eye of the hurricane, so to speak. I have to admit that I have a problem with differentiating in this regard. I was born in the region and I am a citizen of this region and am therefore very much focused on what happens *here*. And I have the feeling that there is fewer public space and social life here, that there is less social interaction and that people are less forced to deal with each other in a respectful manner. I think this contributes to the issue, however this is my personal opinion and not based on studies.

Question: So you would say that in general the atmosphere has deteriorated to some extent, not just in relation to PEGIDA or right-wing populism?

East Germany correspondent: In relation to journalists I would say there is a clear majority of hostilities coming from followers of right-wing populism. If you look to the left, I think they actually never really thought much of journalists, particularly in far-left. But again, regarding the current situation is very much related to the political right.

Question: Of what nature and quality are the incidents? Could you give examples from your personal experience but also of your colleagues'?

East Germany correspondent: There is a very broad spectrum. Everybody was at least met with silent hostility or suspicion, the majority was also verbally attacked in some way and a minority experienced physical attacks. Sometimes a journalist just gets constantly poked in order to annoy him, sometimes they get pushed and sometimes somebody also throws a punch. However, the more severe the attacks are, the fewer of them occur. I don't want to trivialize it but it's just also not the case that we all got beaten up here.

Question: Would you say that the 'lying press'-narrative, meaning the allegation that the media is controlled by either the government or some other power, is the central element of the media aversion and critique?

East Germany correspondent: It is very much a central element, yes. Also, there is no 'in dubio pro reo' applied in that accusation, it is impossible to rebut. For example, in parts I disclosed the process of my research for people who accused me in this sense. However, that doesn't help. It's such a nice, confused idea, *especially* because it is so hard to refute, and this makes the theory that we are all directed in some way attractive. And yes, it is the central element. By the way, the allegations from the right-wing populist spectrum always also have a bit the connotation that we would be intellectually restraint in addition. There is to some extent an atmosphere of a distrust, recognizable even in the circle of friends, which is different from a healthy skepticism towards media coverage which everybody should apply. It is more the idea of, look, those journalists way too long allied with other elites, getting nicely along with each other - but now there is the time to fight back.

Question: Is it easier for this narrative to spread, for example via social media, exactly because it is such an attractive concept?

East Germany correspondent: That is an interesting question. Maybe yes. For me, the social media has always been a promise of social empowerment. Everybody can raise their voice; everybody is able to weigh in according to their opinions; everybody is allowed and able to actively live the right to free expression. However, people became

so full of high spirits that certain things you could count on, a certain respect, became obsolete. There is a rhetorical disinhibition. Before, you wouldn't insult politicians, churches or the press but now everybody is fair game. We are in a phase in which, I think, we haven't realized that also in the internet we should deal with each other in a respectful manner.

Question: There have been a few studies in the recent weeks and months that, however not necessarily conclusive, suggest that there is a general distrust in Germany in the credibility and neutrality of the media. Do you experience this distrust and how do you deal with it?

East Germany correspondent: It think it exists. However, you also have to be a bit careful to not only consider those who have this distrust and express it but also the thousands who have subscriptions to newspaper and don't do that. Still, I think there is more distrust. I also believe it is legitimate and good to have certain degree of distrust because the journalistic rule of not making cause with anything, even if it is a good cause, this rule was broken quite some times. There are journalists who are also activists and also those who take pride in belonging to the inner circles of politicians' periphery. In some parts, the distrust is justified. But again, there are things that are not justified and simply irritate me. In the past, I didn't consider it to be necessary to explain my work methods. I changed my mind in this regard and I try the best I can to do my part in demystifying these theories, at least in my personal surrounding.

Question: Are there actual, practical impediments to the work of journalists due to this development. For example, that journalists would not cover a demonstration anymore or adept their articles due to threads they receive?

East Germany correspondent: I don't know of any incidents concerning the latter. That would of course be fatal. Sure, there are people who don't want to go there anymore, so maybe some articles were never written in first place. Regarding myself, I stopped taking notes in a notebook because if you get seen, you are a light bulb with all moths

around you. Some people will immediately start harassing you. I am using my smartphone because everybody is constantly staring at their phones anyway. This is the practical impediment to my work personally. Also my girlfriend is more worried, however I would never arrive at the conclusion of not going there anymore. That will be the day, when it is impossible to go to a public place and do my work as a journalist!

Question: How does your newspaper deal with this issue? What is the reaction, in a journalistic but also in a practical, legal sense?

East Germany correspondent: That varying, depending on the case. There are colleagues and also publishers who are very consistent in reporting every single incident. In our newspaper, we are more reluctant in this regard. I wouldn't press charges just because some people are shouting slurs. I also don't take the insults personally because I honestly don't think they are directed at me as a person. So I usually don't act upon that. However, this is how I and also my newspaper deals with it and there are a lot of varying approaches.

Question: Several representatives of special interest groups have called the attacks on journalists an attack on press freedom. Do you also believe that we are not talking about mere criminal acts anymore but about an attack on press freedom in Germany?

East Germany correspondent: I understand that point of view. However, I believe it to be a bit over the top because we are talking about a certain social dynamic in a very confined environment in which these incidents take place. Of course when a camera crew can't go there anymore then it is an attack on press freedom, yes. But I don't think that laws should be changed now or anything like that. These are problems that are to be solved locally and in the concrete situation. This includes for example a constructive dialogue with the police but not legislative measures. Again, the point of view is reasonable but it has to be addressed by concrete actions on the ground and not by general measures.

Question: So you would say that attacking a journalist can definitely be assessed as attack on press freedom but that the general situation does not qualify as to say press freedom is in danger in Germany?

East Germany correspondent: It's not that way yet, no. Again, I am in the eye of the hurricane but apart from that, press freedom has never been an issue for me. In that perspective we rather have to talk about access to information of public institutions. Regarding press freedom, this is more interesting than the few, but of course tragic, cases of criminal acts against journalists.

Question: Do you think that the German state, or the government respectively, fulfils its obligations in terms of protecting the human right of free expression? For example, in regard to reactions from the political sphere but also to the work of the police in the concrete situation. And if not, which reaction would you wish for?

East Germany correspondent: It is just that I am missing a concrete, practical idea of handling the matter differently. It is discussed as a fundamental rights issue, what else should be done for us? We are talking about a loss in authority, which I believe can't be solved when one authority, the media, is protected by another authority, the government. That just might not work in this context. I rather wish for a more peaceful atmosphere, for a society that discusses and argues with a minimum of respect. That would be my objective. Regarding the question of how to get there, I think we are rather talking about upbringing, education, culture than about laws or clear statements by the chancellor. That's why I don't want to pinpoint my critique in the political realm.

Question: However, in relation to the concrete situation on the ground, I have read a number of interviews with affected journalists who reported problems in the interaction with the police. Would you say there are issues with the operational strategy on behalf of the police or are these just incidents that can't be avoided due practical constraints?

East Germany correspondent: This a question that has also cultural and ideological aspects. I do believe that the police have to be sensitized more on who they have to protect and on doing their job regardless of personal opinions and convictions. There is a big majority of policemen and policewomen who are doing a great job but I also feel a lack of understanding for the protection needs of journalists sometimes.

8.4 Interview with Ulrich Wolf, Sächsische Zeitung, 26.07.2016

Question: Since 2014, there is an increasing number of reported attacks, threats and insults against journalist in Germany, mostly in social media and in the surroundings of demonstrations. Do you also notice such an increase? I am hereby interested in your personal experience but also in how this issue is discussed in your editorial office.

Ulrich Wolf: I do notice this rise, yes. There is a significantly more aggressive attitude towards journalists, regardless the political motivation of the demonstration. I am doing this job for 30 years now and I have never experienced anything alike. I was at the May 1st demonstrations in Berlin and in Gorleben, however, for that is a different category, especially because it wasn't that frequent. Even if the situation as eased this year, at least in Saxony there are demonstrations almost every week, in small towns and the big cities. They are, to put it simple, sometimes against and sometimes in defense of refugees. The majority however, also regarding the number of participants, is against refugees. At the beginning, these demonstrations were direct against the asylum policy, now they have a more and more racist message and are directed against the people, against the refugees. We, as journalists on the ground, are the most accessible representative of a political system, which, according to asylum opposers, is a regime, the so-called Merkel-regime. For many of the protesters, we are symbol for this political system. We are even accused of having contracts with the federal government or the secret services, that we are all synchronized and so on. This resentment is then wreaked on colleagues from time to time. Last year, we had 35 confirmed incidences, ranging from simply pushing to bodily injury, meaning beatings and kicks in the abdomen. These incidences were reported and registered, among others, by the police and the

European Centre for Press Freedom in Leipzig. I myself have just been pushed, but that's maybe because I am quite known, due to my research on PEGIDA and its organization team.

Question: Is there a distinction in the perception of regional, national or public media, respectively?

Ulrich Wolf: I don't think that there is a difference, however as a radio or TV journalists with a lot of technical equipment, you are way more visible. It is rather coincidence and also dependent on how agitated the atmosphere is at the moment. Recently, the MDR made the decision to cover anti-Asylum and PEGIDA demonstrations only in the company of security personnel.

Question: Following the media coverage regarding that issue, it seems that there is a clear connection to increased number of reported attacks on journalists and the rise of right-wing populism in Germany. Is it that simple to link these two developments or is there also an increasing media aversion regarding other political backgrounds?

Ulrich Wolf: In my opinion, there has always been a certain media version within parts of the political left. Now, it is maybe even more polarized. I am a frequent user of Twitter and it is striking that even among academics, tweets and news which are offensive to the political left, result in insults just as much as some posts on Facebook result in insults by the political right.

Question: So you would say that the media aversion is a societal issue and can't be simply linked to the political right?

Ulrich Wolf: You would first have to clarify who the 'political right' actually is. The majority of people marching with PEGIDA were very much unpolitical before. Apart from political stereotypes, I would say it are 'the frustrated'. They are caught in a

vicious circle that begins with an already existing material insecurity which is further intensified by the immigration of refugees, meaning potential competition for jobs. A lot of those marching with PEGIDA can be referred to as the ‘service precariat’, without meaning this in a pejorative way. However, they provide services to the middle and upper classes. Those ‘frustrated’ people started in a phase of insecurity and then entered one of fear, then one of anger and, finally, one of hate. This frustration and bitterness was then supported by angry seniors in the last 15 months and materializes then from time to time.” Mostly by verbal insults, but sometimes by pushing around or other things.

Question: Of which quality and nature are these incidences?

Ulrich Wolf: Some incidences have been made bigger than they are, also by the media. I personally don’t think that PEGIDA demonstrations are that unpleasant or threatening. In more rural areas, this is however different. At PEGIDA it is mostly the Dynamo Dresden hooligans, who are hired as security personnel and have no motivation to deescalate when some agitated pensioner attacks you, together with three others. In rural areas, where more radical groups like the NPD are still very apparent, it is worse. There are also a lot of 30 - 50-year-old men who are frustrated by the lack of women. It is fair to say that the quality of incidences is in rural areas different than in the big cities. In rural areas, the atmosphere is worse. I experienced this myself, when working in places like Heidenau or Chemnitz-Einsiedel.

Question: Is the ‘lying press’ narrative, meaning the accusation that the media is directed, a central element in attacks and hostilities against the media, but also single journalists?

Ulrich Wolf: I find threats and insults that target the psychology of a person much more troublesome. I am at the forefront in this regard, because I researched the organization team so thoroughly, including their lives before PEGIDA, their biographies and their leisure time activities. Concerning journalists, I am probably the enemy No. 1. I was

insulted on Facebook and Twitter, which is also an occupational risk, however, I would have never imagined that extent. For example, that my name appears on Remember-the-names-lists. I also never made a secret of my biography and won several prizes for my work on PEGIDA. That is why there is a lot of information on me in the internet. I find it much worse if I find a little note in my personal mailbox, saying: ‘We know where your little daughter goes to elementary school’. That is of a quality, where have to discuss the matter with the chief editorial office and the family.

Question: In the last weeks and months, several studies were published that suggest a generally increasing distrust in the neutrality and credibility of the media. Do you also perceive this distrust and how would you assess it?

Ulrich Wolf: “The allegation of a lack in credibility and neutrality of the media, is indeed not a new one. In Saxony it escalated because PEGIDA became a subject of national and international media coverage. Even in my vacation in France, people asked me about PEGIDA. It became sort of a brand for Dresden. Now it is interesting to contemplate the origin of the ‘lying press’ – accusation and why it spread from Dresden to all Germany. One of my colleagues in the sports department covers the football club Dynamo Dresden already for 30 years, a club that always created trouble. In his office, he has three pictures that show the K-zone of the stadium, the zone of the Dynamo Ultras. On these pictures, you can see gigantic banners, reading ‘lying press Sächsische Zeitung’ or just ‘lying press’. Whenever my colleague wrote an article about the partially asocial and violent behavior of these ‘fans’, those banners appeared. This first picture is from the beginning of the nineties, the second one from the end of the nineties and the last one from 2004. Now it is interesting to observe that at least from the second demonstrations onwards, ‘lying press’ chants were shouted by Dynamo fans. In PEGIDA’s most successful time, in winter 2014/2015 when there were 25,000 people on the streets, Dynamo fans of the K-zone positioned themselves every other 100 meters in the protest march, and shouted ‘lying press’. So there is a very trivial reason for why the term ‘lying press’ entered the public debate. These football fans initiated the national media attention. The positive aspect of the discussion is, that we, particularly in

the Dresden region, started to question ourselves. There have been discussions about this issue, where reporters, correspondents of the big newspapers as well as bloggers and TV journalist exchanged their ideas. PEGIDA managed to make ourselves question whether or not we're doing anything wrong, and if so, what it is. We also exchanged thoughts with PEGIDA-affiliated citizens and realized that there is little understanding on how media works. Also that, apart from the public broadcasters, media are products and people can freely choose which to purchase, isn't understood very well. Those exchanges of opinions usually don't end on a very constructive way.

Question: So you would say that the distrust in the media has its reason in a lack of understanding for the working methods of journalists?

Ulrich Wolf: Yes, but also because we became a little bit more superficial, due to more competition, for example in the internet. PEGIDA affiliates are just waiting for us to make a mistake. That puts us under a healthy pressure to our work even more meticulous and to maybe publish an article a day later, when we are sure that all our information is correct. However, our industry made often made mistakes, for example due prematurely published articles. That contributes to a justified media critique, which also exists. Usually, this sort of critiques stemmed rather from the political left. The critique from conservative and nationalistic middle class and academia is a new experience for our industry. It is very difficult to deal with that kind of critique, especially because a parliamentary election among journalists would result in a coalition of the green party and the social democrats. It is then particularly annoying to make a mistake in this regard. The increasing economic pressure that the media industry is facing, is an aspect that doesn't receive appropriate attention. Particularly in the internet, there are a lot of different business models tested. However, except of isolated cases, none of these models are able to refinance cost-intensive research. Those who have a subscription for the Sächsische Zeitung for example, are of an average age of 63. It is probably very similar with other regional newspapers. Of course, this leads to decreasing subscription numbers and decreasing revenues, which also affects the professional training. At our newspaper, it is still quite ok. But there are more severe cases, and a lack in professional training usually results in a lack of quality. Then there

is the aspect of time. We are reporting on a strict up-to-date basis for which you should apply even more restraint. You can't just publish unready, lurid stories if you can't be sure that the information is correct. That is more important, in my opinion, than short-term economic success.

Question: Are there any practical impediments to journalists as a result of the attacks and hostilities? Are there, for example, journalists who don't want to cover demonstrations due to security concerns?

Ulrich Wolf: I can imagine that there are journalists who are afraid. There are, like with any aspect of life, more anxious and less anxious types of people. However, the constant critique below the belt does leave its mark. And you ask yourself why you are enduring all this.

Question: Is there, simply put, the situation, that a journalist is sitting in front of his computer in the evening, thinking: 'If I am going to write the article like this, I will have 100 mails in my inbox tomorrow.'? And does he change the article then?

Ulrich Wolf: Regarding the first question, yes. I also have been in the position of exactly knowing about the reaction I would receive the next day. Maybe there are colleagues who choose to not write an article then. But there are also colleagues, and I consider myself one of them, who just accept the problems associated with it. It is part of the job to cope with that. However, there is of course a limit. If threats are directed to my family, I also begin to wonder if I rather take it down a notch to not get my family involved even more or if still do it in order to not appear intimidated. I already mentioned my little daughter before. My older daughter was affected by the events of new year's eve 2015, not in Cologne but in Hamburg, and we notified the police which PEGIDA found out somehow. They posted online: 'That is the journalist who sacrifices his daughter on the shrine of the multicultural society', accompanied by 500 hate comments. If you are at the forefront in that regard, like the Sächsische Zeitung, you have to find ways to cope with this, to find a balance. Doing sports, for example.

Question: How does the Sächsische Zeitung or its chief editorial office respectively, react to such kind of incidences?

Ulrich Wolf: We are debating of course if we take legal action, however art. 5 of the German Basic Law is superior to the criminal code. To say that I am ‘the journalist who sacrifices his daughter on the shrine of the multicultural society’ is not even an insult, it is an opinion.

Question: So, do only physical attacks result in legal action?

Ulrich Wolf: Not only, also when you receive hate mails such as caricatures picturing journalists that are about to be executed. One has to decide if the effort of pressing charges is worth it in the end. These hostilities have the sole purpose of intimidating and one should consider very carefully, whether or not to allow being intimidated. Because, the more I act upon such hostilities with legal action, there more aggressive the situation gets. Sometimes, it is maybe better to remain cool and just cover other topics for a week or two.”

Question: Several representatives of special interest groups have called the attacks on journalists an attack on press freedom. Do you also believe that we are not talking about mere criminal acts anymore but about an attack on press freedom in Germany?

Ulrich Wolf: “In my opinion, this is not an attack on press freedom. It is an attack on the ‘living together’ in our society. It is an attack on our representative democracy, of which press freedom is of course an elemental part. In the eye of the attacker, an attack on a journalist is an attack on the political system with us being the most accessible member of that system. I find some things that are said in this regard to be very exaggerated, although it is the job of the lobbyists who make such statements. A real attack on press freedom is what is happening in Turkey, or already for a long time in Russia. We tend to an emotional exaggeration in Germany. For a long time, we lived in

a kind of ‘cuddly democracy’ and this doesn’t exist anymore. Now is the time to take a stance and not to see press freedom in danger in such a hysterical manner. Of course, I was never beaten up, so it’s easy to say. There is of course a latent aggression from parts of the AfD and PEGIDA and we have to deal with it. But that is not the beginning of the end of press freedom in Germany. Those circles are simply not that powerful.”

Question: Do you think that the German state, or the government respectively, fulfils its obligations in terms of protecting the human right of free expression? And if not, which reaction would you wish for? One the one hand in terms of a political response and on the other, in terms of the strategy and actions of the police in the concrete situation?

Ulrich Wolf: I can only speak about the case of Saxony. After the first incidences, there have been talks with the Interior Ministry and the police presidents in order to discuss how journalists can be protected at demonstrations. After that, you really felt better protected. If I notified the police on the ground, they kept an eye on me. That worked out well. For politicians, I think there are more pressing issues. Why should they make a statement, just because of some lobbyist are crying out loud?

Question: However, I had the impression that Angela Merkel and Joachim Gauck made very diplomatic statements as they always also reminded the press to fulfill its responsibility. Isn’t that contra-productive?

Ulrich Wolf: If the situation would be as bad as some people make it, then democratic politicians had taken a very clear stance on it. If there would be a deadly assault on a journalist by one of the ‘hateful’ or if these incidences would have increased massively, there was a different reaction on it. It is an appropriate reaction to also remind the media on its responsibilities. Not all clichés on journalists are wrong.

Question: I would like to briefly talk about the role of the police. There have been comments that the police, especially in Saxony, would be very close to PEGIDA and in

concrete situations rather disadvantage journalists. Even the Saxony's Minister of Economy, Martin Dulig made such a comment. How would you assess the relation between the police and PEGIDA?

Ulrich Wolf: Mr. Dulig said that half of the police is pro PEGIDA. I don't know where he has that number from. I don't want to dismiss the idea and I also hinted in that direction before. The police are also just humans and a resemblance of the regional society. How intense the affiliation to PEGIDA is, I can't tell exactly but I think it exists. After we pressed charges concerning my older daughter, it was demonstrated that there are contacts between the police and PEGIDA.

Question: But does this sympathy translate to the practical work of the police on the ground? I mean, is there a fiercer treatment for counter-demonstrators or are attacks on journalists trivialized?

Ulrich Wolf: Personally, I didn't make such experiences. I find it remarkable, however, that at PEGIDA's best time, the police always positioned themselves with their backs towards PEGIDA and face towards the counter-protests. Obviously, the police considered the counter-protests to be more dangerous than PEGIDA. Maybe that is even true, considering the big picture. The hard core of hooligans and right-wing extremists at PEGIDA is probably not that visible among the whole crowd of people. Maybe there was also a more targeted observation of these people, I can't tell. It is also remarkable that PEGIDA usually applauds and praises the police and tries to pull them on their side. However, we are now just talking about Dresden, in Leipzig for example, we have police president who has a very clear stance on PEGIDA. In general, I have the strong feeling that there has been a change in the police this year. There are more criminal investigations and trials and the police shows off its power towards radical far-right groups. There is also a higher success rate in finding those responsible for attacks on refugee shelters. There has been a change within the police, also due to the pressure by the media, to clearly name attacks on our democracy as such and strictly react to these attacks."

Question: So it depends on the concrete situation, rather than speaking of a clear bias on behalf of the police?

Ulrich Wolf: Yes, but it also depends very much on the leading personnel at the police and general attitude of officers in the lower and middle ranks. You have to see how much democratic values are established in these circles. Recently, several trainees for higher police ranks from the police school Rothenburg visited our editorial office. You had the feeling that many of them choose a career in the police to have a secure job and not because they are all amazing democrats. In a situation like in Saxony, it's the key question then, if you are on the side of democracy and put limits to PEGIDA or if you want to feel like a big man and think: 'Well, actually they are right!'. That has also something to do with the fact, that the extreme left sees the police as enemy no. 1, rather than setting refugee shelters on fire. That is something, that also shapes the police.

8.5 Interview with Stefan Schölermann, NDR, 26.07.2016

Question: Since 2014, there is an increasing number of reported attacks, threats and insults against journalist in Germany, mostly in social media and in the surroundings of demonstrations. Do you also notice such an increase? I am hereby interested in your personal experience but also in how this issue is discussed in your editorial office.

Stefan Schölermann: Let's start with the second part of the question. Since the first attacks on journalists occurred at PEGIDA demonstrations, the editorial office receives more enquiries on the level of threat for colleagues. I am not really covering PEGIDA but I was at demonstrations in Hannover and didn't experience the atmosphere as very threatening. I also have to say that the issue of threats against journalist is by no means a new issue. This is frequently occurring for already for many years at demonstrations of the extreme right. This particularly the case for press photographers due to a strong aversion towards cameras on behalf of the participants. This seems also be the case at

PEGIDA demonstrations, so there seems to exist a certain commonality to what we are experiencing in extreme right sector. In addition, journalists who compiled a certain profile in this scene, who might be in a way dangerous for them, are singled out and targeted. They are getting photographed, for example, in order to intimidate them. However, we don't have to hide our faces now. I don't really care if I get photographed, there are already so many photographs of me already on websites of the extreme right that this doesn't bother me. There are, however, also physical attacks and it wasn't always the case that the police demonstrated much understanding for reports on threats. This issue has improved a lot in the last years, but it's also an issue we are still working on and where there is still a lot of work to do.

Question: Subjectively, it appears that there are a lot of far right opinions that changed from being a taboo to being openly discussed also in the center of society. Would you say that the 'lying press' narrative is one of this ideas that has, due to certain ideological intersections, developed a social dynamic?

Stefan Schölermann: I would say, it's more diffused now. The use of the term 'Lügenpresse' is anything but a new phenomenon. Every journalist who is covering the extreme right in Germany is affected by this. In comparison to PEGIDA, the hostilities are even more aggressive, even nasty. At PEGIDA they are shouting 'Lügenpresse, halt die Fresse' (Shut up, lying press!), at extreme right demonstrations it is 'Lügenpresse, auf die Fresse' (Batter the lying press!) or the more radical version 'Linkes Gezeter, 9mm' (loosely translated: A pistol is the answer to leftist nagging!). These are very popular slogans that have proofed to be catchy at demonstrations. The problem is the underlying mindset, that media which doesn't share the ideology are collectively accused of lying, of being part of a so-called 'Systempresse'. This mindset, which I only used to know from extreme right, has now maybe not become mainstream, but finds a lot of sympathizers among certain circles in the PEGIDA movement and the AfD.

Question: Would you say that this media aversion requires a right-wing mindset or does it also exist among those who are associated with the political left or how are unpolitical?

Stefan Schölermann: I don't think it is justified to discuss this matter as only having a single cause. There is also critique among the political left because the media is perceived as a part of the ruling regime and as not able to freely express opinions. However, it is much more apparent in the far and extreme right spectrum. There are different aspects to this. The social media, for example, which I don't consider very social. Also, not too long ago we had a very limited media landscape, also regarding what was editorially processed, so some issues were just not covered. Now, there is a media sub-level with a highly impactful network of social media. Many people perceive reality almost entirely from within their personal social media environment. And because such prejudices are then repeated over and over again in this environment, they perceive these prejudices as reality. It is difficult for quality journalism to make clear what is reality, and what is not, based on the result of thorough research. The view on what is reality is askew.

Question: Of what nature and quality are the incidents in this regard? Do you have examples?

Stefan Schölermann: The range of incidence begins with verbal abuse, threatening behavior, spitting and throwing objects and ends with attacks on technical equipment, physical attacks and actual beatings, situations in which the police has to intervene. Every journalist is well advised to be perceptive to threats, to consider the distance to protesters, and police respectively, at any time. Normally nobody talks about security measures, however, this perceptiveness is absolutely necessary.

Question: Is this 'lying press' narrative, meaning the allegation that the media is directed by either political elites, the government or foreign powers, at the very core of the incidents?

Stefan Schölermann: Considered with a certain professional detachment, these allegations are quite comical. In some cases, it even goes to the point where people are solidary with us journalists because we were simply not allowed to freely report. They consider us to be in the same boat as them, not allowed to express opinions. That's of course an ironic assessment now. These allegations, that we do not control our work, that we are following orders, that there are clear directives, these prejudices are coming frequently from the extreme right scene, and nowadays also from other circles. However, this is merely an effort to justify and defend one's own perception of reality against the reality as depicted by quality journalism, which is based on thorough, precise research.

Question: Is it for such a theory easier to spread when it is able to integrate such often confuse feelings of distrust in an all-encompassing, seemingly reasonable concept?

Stefan Schölermann: It is very convenient indeed, to have such a concept that explains without much further consideration why everybody is against oneself. It is the idea that actually nobody is against oneself and that they are all just puppets on strings pulled by others. Consequently, if one doesn't share the reception of reporting, he or she can claim that it's not a perception at all, but directed on orders from others. This is not just a narrative but an ideology that leads certain versions of reality to be pushed aside.

Question: Following from that, do you think public broadcasters are attacked even harder, due to the perceived proximity to the state?

Stefan Schölermann: I can't confirm that. Considering how colleagues get harassed by the extreme right, at the TAZ in Berlin for example, considering how free lancing press photographers and camera crews get attacked, then I don't see a big difference. On the ground, those who are actively provoking do not make a difference.

Question: How do journalists themselves deal with the general distrust in the credibility and neutrality of the media?

Stefan Schölermann: I can't speak for the majority of journalists but only for myself. There is no agreement on how to deal with this. I, as very experienced in the media industry, worry that journalists might take the accusation as 'lying press' too seriously in respect of being even more thorough and cautious. Mistakes are always made, it's human. Decisive is how you deal with mistakes, that you are transparent and take responsibility. Of course, you always have to work on improving the quality, but I don't see any reason, to view this allegation as the sword of Damocles, and to lose the courage to take a stand. Facts are facts, whether people claim the reporting to be directed or not.

Question: Have there been actual, practical impediments to work of journalists according to your experience? For example, are there journalists who just don't cover demonstrations anymore or who refrain from covering risky stories?

Stefan Schölermann: Well, that depends on the attitude towards risk. In general, I would say 'no'. There is definitely no structural, systematic impediment to the work of journalists. Another aspect, however, is the size of the respective medium. Somebody, like me, who works for a large TV station, has of course also have the corresponding protection in every shape or form. We have a constantly available legal department, there is a certain market power, a certain respect for the size of the station, there is certain anonymity to which one can retreat. Colleagues who work in regions in which certain phenomena are much more obvious than in major cities, local newspapers for example that have to deal with this issues every day, are under a completely different level of pressure. I don't think these colleagues are afraid to do their work, but in these circumstances it is necessary to develop strategies on how to deal with it. I don't want to see those, who are attacking journalists, succeed. However, I also realize, that the colleagues on the ground have to deal with this question way more than a journalists reporting from a major city.

Question: How did you perceive the reaction of NDR in this regard? What measures, like workshops or common security guidelines, have been launched?

Stefan Schölermann: I am working as a journalist for many years, and I have much understanding for those who inform themselves on the level of threat. Some journalists are single out and pilloried by media of the far-right spectrum, with huge articles and photos. That isn't easy to take, also because oneself as a person is in the crosslines and more and less directly threatened. The NDR shows full support and understanding for such case, and if there is somebody who would like to retreat for a while, can definitely do so. In general, there is good colleagueship, great solidarity and empathy.

Question: Several representatives of special interest groups have called the attacks on journalists an attack on press freedom. Do you also believe that we are not talking about mere criminal acts anymore but about an attack on press freedom in Germany?

Stefan Schölermann: The intention is very often to restrict press freedom, because those talking about a 'lying press' don't have any interest in free reporting. Insofar, yes. However, we are not in a situation in which free reporting isn't possible anymore. In regard to the NDR, I have no knowledge of any attempts to restrict free reporting. Journalists should be cautious in victimizing themselves. We live in a very free country, colleagues in other countries have to with restrictions on a whole different level. In comparison, we are in a very lucky situation. I don't see any actual restriction of press freedom in practice.

Question: So yes, it is an attack, but no, press freedom is not endangered in Germany?

Stefan Schölermann: We should be confident. Of course press freedom is endangered when parties and civil movements exclude us from the gatherings and say: "You are not allowed to report and form an opinion!". That is a restriction of press freedom! However, that is a structural issue. It is not the case that journalists in Germany are prevented from expressing their opinion or present the results of their research.

Question: Do you think that the German state, or the government respectively, fulfils its obligations in terms of protecting the human right of free expression? And if not, which reaction would you wish for? One the one hand in terms of a political response and on the other, in terms of the strategy and actions of the police in the concrete situation?

Stefan Schölermann: To speak of ‘political response’ is too non-specific in order to assess it. However, my concrete experiences with the police have been improving over the years. The appreciation for the role of free reporting, in relation to the extreme right and those at margins like Pegida, is much higher. The relation between journalists and the police is dynamic, in my opinion. What goes around, comes around. It is poor to say the police would restrict free reporting because it prioritizes harm reduction or because the reporting is against their interest. Maybe in isolated cases, but then it is about single persons. It is definitely not a general issue and there have been massive improvements in the last years. The police culture has changed, the way how journalists approach the police has changed and there is recognition for the different roles that media and police play in a society. The police can be the subject of media coverage as much as journalists can become involved in criminal investigations. There is, of course, still conflicts that have to be addressed and discussed. However, I don’t see any general issue in that.

Question: Do you think that there is a difference between the German police in general and the police in Saxony in how to deal with far-right and extreme right movements? This was suggested, also by the Saxon Minister for Economy, Martin Dulig.

Stefan Schölermann: I am not able to make a judgment about that because I don’t want to generalize on the basis of isolated experiences. However, I experienced that security guards tried to keep me and a few colleagues from entering the premises of a public NPD event in Berlin-Reinickendorf. A police officer coincidentally overheard the discussion and came asking if there was a problem. When we noted that this NPD guard would keep us from entering a public building, he talked to the head of NPD security at that time, Manfred Wörns, and made clear in a few sentences that this entry has to be

cleared within 3 minutes. And as they did clear the entry, within a few minutes two police unit in corresponding gear cleared they entry for them. There are also this kind of incidences, were there is the necessary decisive action. In my experience, the majority of such situations are dealt this way. Most of the times, it works just fine when I go up to the police and tell them about why I am here, what I have to do and why I need access to somewhere.

Question: So is the critique towards the police that was raised by some journalists just based on practical constraints at demonstrations?

Stefan Schölermann: Let's say, I expect the police to not only enable a demonstration but also enable a proper perception of the demonstrations as this is the idea of a demonstration. Perceptions means in this sense the one by the locals and citizens but also the one of counter-demonstrators and the media. That has to be provided by the police as much as it has to be provided that the actions of the police can be observed. I think every head of operation within the police does understand that and the less confrontational the interaction with the police is, the less problems there are. If the police recognize the necessity to also report about its operations and includes this in its strategy, then most of the issues are already solved. There isolated cases, also a few more of them, where I, as a reporter, say, this is inappropriate police behavior. But to infer, that there would be a general problem, is simply wrong.

8.6 Interview with Stefan Raue, MDR, 29.07.2016

Question: Since 2014, there is an increasing number of reported attacks, threats and insults against journalist in Germany, mostly in social media and in the surroundings of demonstrations. Do you also notice such an increase? I am hereby interested in your personal experience but also in how this issue is discussed in your editorial office.

Stefan Raue: It is important to make a difference between verbal abuse in social media and via the audience office, meaning the letters and calls we receive, on the one hand, and physical attacks on MDR journalists on the other. I would like to keep these two issues separated. The rise in physical attacks on MDR employees was a phenomenon, which I, in my decades as a journalist, have never experienced in this form. It ranged from threats to actual beatings and the damaging of equipment, like cameras and vehicles. This development had its peak maybe half a year ago, when also the PEGIDA demonstrations peaked in regard to participants. In the last few months, the situation has significantly eased. This has to do *inter alia* with the decreasing approval for these organizations and events in all the region. In all Central Germany, even in Dresden, we are witnessing that less and less people are marching along and consequently, that less aggression is emerging at these events. In regard to verbal threats, I didn't experience this magnitude until around 6 years ago. However, it reminds me very much of the conflict related to the first book of Thilo Sarrazin which emotionalized a lot of people and led to the allegation, that the media wouldn't cover Thilo Sarrazin's insights and wisdoms in an appropriately vocal manner. Insofar, it is not a completely new phenomenon, however the intensity and emotionality are extraordinary. I quickly looked up the amount of calls that we received yesterday. The audience office provides us every day with a folder containing the protocols of all calls. It shows that we receive every day around 15 or 16 calls, which are classified as hate speech in one form or another.

Question: So there is also an increase in these hate mails in the last years or was it always that way?

Stefan Raue: Yes, of course. In the last two to three years, there has been a significant increase in threats against the media, already before the refugee crisis. PEGIDA had started already a year before, with some sort of non-specific message against foreigners, which, nevertheless brought a lot of people on the streets. The 'lying press'-slogan was from the beginning an integral part of PEGIDA's message, at a time when there still hadn't been much coverage yet. When the refugee crisis emerged, the aversion surged

even more. Also in regard to insults against Angela Merkel or to the blockade of refugee shelters, there has been an increase in aggression at that time. Now, I have the feeling that the aggression is decreasing, most of all because the activity of these organizations on the streets is decreasing.

Question: There is a strong chronological correlation between the rise in media aversion and rise of right-wing populism in Germany. However, is there also a clear causal relation between the two phenomena? Or is PEGIDA just the most visible manifestation of an underlying societal development?

Stefan Raue: You have to consider that already at the last state election in Saxony, the extreme right NPD just came short of the 5% threshold and the AfD achieved a two-digit-result. Bernd Höcke and his AfD in Thuringia also smoothly entered the parliament even before the refugee crisis. The mobilization of the right-wing and far-right political spectrum has occurred a long time before. That is a fact that shouldn't be neglected. However, there is of course a connection, because the refugee crisis made the issue of foreigners and refugees noticeable, even in the local communities. So far, we rather had the phenomenon of xenophobia without actually having foreigners around, so to speak. Immigration in Saxony used to be more or less limited to university cities which, of course, have a very specific type of immigration. Suddenly, the refugee crises brought a few hundred people from different cultural backgrounds to the local communities. This additionally enforced the already existing, latent xenophobia. However, we have witnessed the mobilization of the political far-right already way before the refugee crisis.

Question: In relation to journalists, do you think that those shouting 'lying press' are pressing a button in the head of the society or is it a rather confined mindset?

Stefan Raue: Also in regard to journalists, it developed over time. I already mentioned the Sarrazin debate. I was still with the ZDF back then, as deputy chief editor in the politics department, and all reporting that didn't portray him as man of wisdom was met

with a sheer wave of hate. This hate came also from very educated people, large parts of the middle class solidarized themselves with Sarrazin. There also has been the accusation, that we conceal the public debate about him, that we belittle Sarrazin, although he became more and more popular, sold a lot of books and received a lot of media attention by us. Then there was a movement here in Germany called 'Montags-Demos' in appeal to the historic Monday demonstrations. This was a very little movement that addressed the Ukraine conflict. Their claim was, that we would only criticize Russia, that we would try to destabilize it and that we would conceal the troublesome actions by Ukraine and the NATO. Almost every editorial office in Germany received calls on a daily basis. However, it was never more than 100 or 200 people on the streets, some from the extreme right, some from the extreme left. The AfD has started targeting public broadcasters at a very early stage. It is the only political party that demands the dissolution of public broadcasting. It is addressed quite frequently, also loaded with the allegation that we conceal information and do not cover the party sufficiently. Although this is easy to prove wrong, they used it politically. Finally, even before PEGIDA and the refugee crisis, there already had been media critique. However, the fact that this 'lying press' concept has gained so much momentum and became so strong, cannot only be explained with the aforementioned aspects mentioned above. I think the reason is that there is a discomfort towards a critical media environment in which the reality, that a lot of people perceive or believe in, is constantly challenged.

Question: Of what nature and quality are the incidents in this regard? Do you have examples?

Stefan Raue: The phenomenon of verbal abuse and physical attacks against journalists, is a quite new one. I already have been reporting for decades on topics like the G8 events, the Stuttgart 21 protests or the demonstrations against nuclear power plants. Here, the movements, except of violent parts of the far-left, always tried to include the press and win it over for the respective message. As a representative of the press, you were accepted and treated with respect, in parts based on the intention to exploit the

press for their cause. A movement, that wants public attention and insults and targets those, who it needs to get this public attention, never existed. Therefore, it was also a completely new experience for the journalists. The spectrum of threats is relatively broad. It indeed goes up to physical attacks, beatings, material damage. Among others, a MDR radio journalist and a camera crew were affected. In addition, there is consistent verbal aggression and abuse, for example via threatening mails, including death threats. Especially worrisome is, that at some AfD and PEGIDA events, journalists are singled out and named publicly. This creates an atmosphere in which the journalists are downright mobbed by the thousand people who follow the organizations' appeal. For the reporter, covering the event on the ground, this is an extremely difficult experience. You have to be very experienced and hard-boiled in order to remain a distant, factual view on the issue.

Question: Is this 'lying press' narrative, meaning the allegation that the media is directed by either political elites, the government or foreign powers, the central element of the incidents? Also, is the MDR, as public broadcaster and regional media at the same time, even more in the crosslines of critique in this regard?

Stefan Raue: Concerning the latter, we are experiencing the very interesting phenomenon, that there is, on the one hand, a peak in insults and threats against our journalists but also the print media. On the other hand, however, there is also a peak in affirmation and appreciation for our programs, for our information offer, for our news and political programs, that we haven't experienced either in the last years. We also commissioned an inquiry about the reception of our program, here within the region, with the result that the gap between those who have an aversion against us, and those who appreciate us, is becoming increasingly big. It is a bit puzzling, but I have the feeling that the phenomenon is similar to the gap between those appreciating the established, democratic parties and those sympathizing with AfD and PEGIDA. There is a strong, increasing division in the society in this regard, and also in relation to the media. Concerning the accusation of being directed, I want to start by saying that I usually attend every civil or political event I get invited to, as long it is not extremists.

And at these events, the first accusation is that we are assessing a whole variety of facts wrong. Then you answer, that the work is based on thorough and precise research and because also other media is doing it this way, a majority of them will come to similar conclusions. This is exactly the moment, when the accusation turns from being wrong into being directed. This theory has the purpose of explaining why so many, independent media arrive at very similar conclusions as opposed to how the person itself perceives reality. As nobody is able to provide evidence, the justification is that every news channel starts with the same headline and has the same style of reporting. The fact, that our profession has something to do with methods, with competence, that it is a craft, this isn't well-understood by many. Of course, this has something to do with the democratization of media, the social media and blogging for example. It has led to the feeling that journalism isn't a craft but something that everybody can do at the same level of quality.

Question: Do the facts, that it is actually impossible to confute these claims and that so many different aspects can be summarized under the umbrella of 'lying press', contribute to the wide spread of the theory?

Stefan Raue: We invited people from PEGIDA and AfD, for example, quite some times. There is also a member of the AfD in the public broadcast council, whom I invited very early to visit our editorial office. What we are doing then, is to drag them into all our conferences and discussions that occur all day long, to show just how much discussions we have, how many different voices weigh in and how much different opinions have to be addressed before a program is finally aired. Most of the time, they realize the difference between the 'chaos' (process of discussion) they are witnessing and a directed press that just follows orders. With this, I want to illustrate that people who do not have this insight in our work, have a completely unrealistic impression of our processes and might think differently if they would know them. There is an interesting contrast between reality and the people's perception in this regard.

Question: A certain distrust in the media exists since the press exists. In addition, there are studies that suggest that a general distrust in the neutrality and credibility is increasing in Germany. How do you and your colleagues assess this distrust?

Stefan Raue: First of all, the accusation of being directed, meaning that our chairmen receive orders from the government, is just ridiculous. There isn't any evidence for that, in no shape or form. Of course, the political sphere always tried and still tries to influence the media coverage in their favor, that's completely normal. That is why we have chief editors, to make it clear to politicians, that we send, report and assess the issues as we choose to based only on journalistic principles. Apart from that, I want to avoid at any cost to call the allegation absurd, that some media are too close to the political sphere or political parties. This has also to do with the fact, that the media have a unique position within a society. We are, so to speak, contemporary, critical observers, in a way positioned a bit outside society. We are investigating the nuisances in every social and political class regardless of any hierarchy. The question is, do we, because of that, just have to live with the fact that actually nobody really likes us. The other question is, something I also discuss with my colleagues and supervisors, did we choose to make it ourselves too easy? Did we enjoy it too much, being in the surrounding of the powerful? Not in relation to a specific party or politician, but did we overestimate our significance because we are so close to the powerful? Does it damage our reputation when we are on pictures with top politicians at receptions organized by the press? Doesn't it lead to the impression that we are in cahoots with each other? Did we perceive ourselves too much as political actors? Do we make proposals and suggestions that we are not entitled to make? At the end of the red-green government, for example, there was a certain mainstream within the media to work towards the end of this political experiment. I think the debate on our relation with the political sphere provides us with important, thought-provoking ideas for us to reflect upon. It would be way too easy to just accuse PEGIDA affiliates, because there is a distrust on much broader societal basis.

Question: Are there actual, practical obstacles to the work of journalists according to your experience? For example, are there journalists who just don't cover demonstrations anymore or who refrain from covering risky stories?

Stefan Raue: No, however we are also prepared for threat scenarios. First, we only send journalists who volunteer, so if somebody says that it's too risky, for example in regard to the family, then this is of course accepted. We only send people who are experienced enough to assess the level of threat and how to behave in these situations. We also started to send employees that have a look on technical equipment and have the job to protect it. This is necessary because if there are thousands of people and some start to shake the broadcast van, sensitive equipment can be damaged which also constitutes a fire hazard. We employ security personnel in order to protect the equipment, and in particular circumstances, also to support the camera crew by watching their backs as they can't just look around. That quickly led to a discussion about our decision. It was said, that we are now sending bodyguards with our journalists. However, this is nonsense.

Question: In a broader sense, how does the MDR react to this development? In a journalistic sense, but also in regard to possible legal actions.

Stefan Raue: We already had a working group on right-wing extremism. This working group has been expanded and meets regularly with experts, with members of the police, with members of the office for the protection of the constitution, with legal experts, and inquires on recent developments. In such threatening situations, it is very important that experiences are shared quickly so that our directorate can react in a swift manner. This was the case in regard to our technical equipment and our communication with the police, for example. We also have an internal supervision system in order to maintain constant communication between the chief editorial office and the reporters on the ground, also to clarify in which way we can offer support to them. Then, there is legal counsel in order to assess which incidences should be reported to the police and which ones should be ignored. The policy of our legal counsel, and also my own, is to of

course provide full legal protection but at the same time not to force anybody to press charges. There are cases of both types, there are some who prefer to ignore incidences but also some, especially those affected by more severe incidents like beatings, who choose to report to the police. All our employees are experienced grown-ups and can very well decide for themselves on how to react. Naturally, we support and protect our journalists by all means, however only an individual person can press charges and start a criminal investigation anyway.

Question: Several representatives of special interest groups have called the attacks on journalists an attack on press freedom. Do you also believe that we are not talking about mere criminal acts anymore but about an attack on press freedom in Germany?

Stefan Raue: I have a lot of understanding for the DJV and the BDVZ to discuss this aspect. However, it would be wrong to push this debate too far and say that press freedom is strongly restricted in Germany. We are still able to report freely. Everybody with an understanding of the situation in Turkey, or Poland, knows how a truly restricted press looks like. In Germany, this is absolutely not the case. The problem is, that a permanent aggression and hostility towards representatives of the media mean certain restrictions to reporters. However, we have covered PEGIDA for months in such an intense way, exactly because we were targeted by them. We could have covered a lot more and different topics, if we weren't blocked by this constant pseudo civil war that was proclaimed. That is of course restriction, but such kind, that we have to be able to handle as professionals. Such a situation bears its dangers and reporting would be different if there weren't such threats and attacks, that is correct. That's why I understand when special interest groups try to politicize the issue and to raise awareness. I find that justified and it's also their job. However, we shouldn't pretend that free reporting was impossible in Germany, there are much more severe cases around the world.

Question: Do you think that the German state, or the government respectively, fulfils its obligations in terms of protecting the human right of free expression? And if not, which reaction would you wish for? One the one hand in terms of a political response and on the other, in terms of the strategy and actions of the police in the concrete situation?

Stefan Raue: Also in this regard, I would advise a more relaxed approach. These situations are also extremely stressful for the police. It is not their purpose at demonstrations to ensure a perfect working environment for the press, but to maintain order and also protect the demonstration as such. I don't think that journalists have to have a privileged status in their relation to the police. We are responsible for ourselves just as the police has to set its priorities. I can't demand from the police to come running in full strength, just because I was insulted or harassed. We as journalists also have to know our limits and recognize our self-responsibility. However, it needed a learning process. At the beginning, it seemed that the police had underestimated the aggression towards journalists when planning their operational strategy. Now, the sensitivity for the issue has risen and there have been talks between the media and the police on how to improve the situation. However, the police ought to be neutral and also we should be careful, because if we just march along the police, our reporting would be influenced and compromised. There has to be a balanced approach. In regard to violent cases, there are some in which the police could identify perpetrators, and others in which the perpetrators managed to get away without the police investigating further. Still, to say the police would fail in protecting journalists is simply not true. They have a very difficult job and we can't expect to be permanently guarded by 3-4 police officers. You also have to realize that the police were in a 'state of emergency', so to speak, with the weekly demonstrations and football games every weekend. There is already a lot of potential for aggression. Then there are young police officers, who also have to deal with fear and are impressed by the agitated atmosphere. This issue has to be addressed on a case-by-case basis, and if there is a problem, the police should be notified and alerted. In my opinion, it shouldn't be portrayed as a major conflict.

Abstract:

In Fall 2014, the civil, anti-Islam movement PEGIDA started to organize protests against the ‘Islamisation of the occident’. Already at the beginning, the xenophobe message was accompanied by ‘lying press’- chants, a term with an infamous past. Particularly in Nazi-Germany, the term was used to defame foreign and allegedly leftist media.

In the following two years, there has been an increased amount of reported verbal and physical attacks on journalists in Germany, especially in the surrounding of PEGIDA demonstrations and in social media. The spectrum of attacks and hostilities comprise simple insults but also death threats and even aggravated assault. In consideration of the consequences, which this level of threat can have on free reporting and the safety of journalists, the question is, if the press freedom and the right to free expression are impaired in the course of this development.

This study examines if the incidences reached an extent in which press freedom and free expression are interfered with in Germany and, if so, the German state, ultimately responsible for the protection of press freedom and free expression, fulfills its positive obligations regarding these fundamental freedoms. The results of inquiries by state and non-actors as well as the analysis of qualitative interviews with journalists, suggest, that although there are isolated cases of practical impediments and criminal attacks on journalists, press freedom and free expression are not systematically endangered. Therefore, the German state does not violate its positive obligations under national and international human rights law.

Keywords: free expression, journalist safety, far-right movements, state obligations, Germany

Kurzbeschreibung:

Im Herbst 2014 begann die islamkritische, bürgerliche Bewegung PEGIDA, wöchentliche Proteste gegen die „Islamisierung des Abendlandes“ zu organisieren. Schon in den ersten Demonstrationen waren neben fremdenfeindlichen Botschaften auch „Lügenpresse“ – Rufe zu hören, ein Begriff mit unrühmlicher Vergangenheit. Insbesondere in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus wurde der Begriff „Lügenpresse“ verwendet, um ausländische oder politisch vermeintlich linke Medien zu diffamieren.

In den folgenden zwei Jahren häuften sich Berichte über verbale und körperliche Angriffe auf Journalisten, insbesondere im Umfeld von PEGIDA Demonstration und in den sozialen Medien. Die Bandbreite der Angriffe und Anfeindungen erstreckt sich hierbei von einfachen Beleidigungen über Morddrohungen bis hin zu schwerer Körperverletzung. In Anbetracht der Konsequenzen, die diese Bedrohungslage auf die freie Berichterstattung und die Sicherheit von Journalisten haben können, stellt sich die Frage, ob die Pressefreiheit, und damit die Meinungsfreiheit in Deutschland im Zuge dieser Entwicklungen beeinträchtigt wird.

Die vorliegende Studie untersucht ob die Vorfälle ein Ausmaß angenommen haben, in dem die Pressefreiheit in Deutschland eingeschränkt ist und, falls ja, ob der Staat, letztendlich verantwortlich für die Wahrung der Presse- und Meinungsfreiheit in Deutschland seine positive Verpflichtung zur Wahrung und zum Schutz dieses Grundrechts, nachkommt. Eine Analyse von staatlichen und nichtstaatlichen Untersuchungen, sowie die Auswertung von qualitativen Interviews mit Journalisten, kommen zu dem Schluss, dass, obwohl es vereinzelt zu praktischen Einschränkungen und strafbaren Angriffen auf Journalisten kommt, die Presse- und Meinungsfreiheit in Deutschland nicht grundsätzlich bedroht ist, und der Staat dementsprechend nicht gegen seine nationalen und internationalen Menschenrechtsverpflichtungen verstößt.

Schlagwörter: Meinungsfreiheit, Sicherheit von Journalisten, rechtspopulistische Bewegungen, staatliche Menschenrechtsverpflichtungen, Deutschland

